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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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November 10, 2015

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Faculty Senate Minutes

November 10, 2015

Meeting convened Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at 7:00pm by Michael Barnett, Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Senators in attendance: Rachna Prakash, Charles Ross, Kris Belden-Adams, Patrick Curtis, Brice Noonan, Robert Doerksen, Greg Tschumper, Brad Cook, Tossi Ikuta, Feng Wang, Tom Garrett, Richard Gordon, Adetayo Alabi, Jay Watson, Andrew O-Reilly, Yang-Chieh Fu, Oliver Dinius, Darren Grem, Noell Wilson, Robert Magee, Antonia Eliason, Stacey Lantagne, Lorri Williamson, Ashley Dees, Savannah Kelly, Kristin Rogers, Dwight Frink, Milam Aiken, Lifeng Yang, Sasha Kocic, Heather Allen, Amy Fang-Yen Hsieh, Mary Roseman, Michael Repka, Meagan Rosenthal, Travis King, James Bos, Breese Quinn, Ben Jones, Danielle Maack, Jody Holland, Amy Fisher, Marcos Mendoza, Allan Bellman, Joe Sumrall, Michael Barnett

Senators excused: Adam Estes, Ann Fisher-Worth, Tom Garrett, Kristin Rogers

Senators absent: Sasan Nouranian, Ahmed Al-Ostaz, Jim Lumppp, Dennis Bunch, Tejas Pandya, Michael Gardiner, Minjoo Oh, Mark Ortwein

Approval of October 13, 2015 and October 22, 2015 Minutes

Minutes of October 13, 2015 and October 22, 2015 meetings were approved by the Faculty Senate as a whole without comment.

Adopt a Basket Program

Students from ASB came to talk about Adopt a Basket Program – gather items from list and ask that you donate it to ASB, which it will then be taken by different groups and the groups deliver baskets to families in need.

Old Business

Guidelines for Distinguished Professor Appointments

The process of reviewing the Guidelines for Distinguished Professor Appointments was reopened pursuant to the tabling of the discussion at the October 13, 2015 meeting.

Vice-Chair Dinius presented amendments to document, providing for more faculty input.

Concern was raised that we are just being shown the amendments now, since they are quite substantive.

Comment: This seems to clarify aspects of the document.

Comment: There are some aspects to the original proposed amendment that are preferable.

Chair Barnett: This doesn't preclude including language from the original amendment at a later point.

Comment: The suggested amendments strengthen the document by presenting more of a role for the faculty.

Motion to approve amendment passed unanimously.

Additional amendments

Proposal for amendment to subsection relating to annual performance review as reason to rescind title to being "a result of three "unsatisfactory" annual reviews in any period of six consecutive years, excluding years when the faculty member is on leave", since if it is based on one review, it would seem to dismiss a lot of previous achievements.

Motion to approve amendment passed unanimously.

Proposal for amendment earlier in the document from "the annual review" to "annual reviews". Additional amendment to change the number from no more than 5 per year to no more than 5% of the eligible faculty per year. Language relating to 5 changed to 5% across the document.

Comment: There is a potentially counterproductive effect to this since there would be a shrinking pool of eligible Distinguished Professors.

Motion to approve amendment passed unanimously.

Proposal for minor editorial amendments. Proposal to change order from teaching, service and research to research, teaching and service under section II – Criteria for Appointments. Amendment seconded.

Motion to approve amendment passed with one vote in opposition.

Motion to vote on the Distinguished Professor Guidelines.

Motion passed 41 in favor. 1 opposed. 1 abstention.

Senate Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Nothing to report.

General Academic Affairs:

Statement on Commitment to Freedom of Expression adopting the "Chicago Principles"

Background is that many universities have restrictions on freedom of expression, including speakers and phrases and other limitations. The University of Mississippi is a very rare exception

to this – we have some of the best policies protecting free speech of any institution. But our policy statements are somewhat negatively articulated in terms of defining what is not allowed.

The resolution before us is a very positive affirmation of the type of activity we should be embracing – the things we should be doing. The cure for any idea we oppose is through open discussion rather than through inhabitation.

Reason to look at this: the principles here are a much broader statement than what we have. This is a very visible action to our peers. It would be one that could help lead our peers away from the trend of stifling speech. We have a very unique history of coming to embrace the principles of free expression – one that gives us very strong, and unique credibility on this issue, which really puts us in a unique position to lead other universities. The academic life that we offer can be our calling card if we endorse this and promote this. This will attract students who don't want to be shielded from tough ideas but learn to defend against positions they disagree with.

The Chicago Principles are very beautifully articulated – a couple of other institutions have adopted resolutions like that. We have high ratings in terms of freedom of expression – which those other institutions don't have. This could really put us in a leading position on freedom of expression and debate of ideas in an academic setting.

Resolution is consistent with all of our existing policies. Provost's office will endorse should we decide we adopt this. Academic Affairs Committee unanimously endorses this.

Question: Why adopt this language and not use our own?

Answer: Because this is the best articulation I have seen on this topic, and it reflects a lot of the values we hold already in our university.

Question: How is it amended form the original Chicago document?

Answer: There are portions specific to the University of Chicago that are removed.

Question: Are there any concerns in affiliating ourselves with an organization like FIRE that provides ratings that to some eyes has a very distinct motive and agenda?

Answer: Chicago developed these first. FIRE liked them and endorsed them after the fact – there has been no communication with us and FIRE over this at all. This does not associate us with FIRE in any way.

Proposed amendment to call it a modified version of the Chicago Principles. Amendment rejected.

Question: Why do we want a group like FIRE to endorse us?

Answer: We don't. This is a good principle to endorse, to attract future students.

Question: Why do we think free speech is under attack?

Answer: Lots of institutions have free speech zones, or limitations on things that can be said. It would be a positive to strongly articulate to the world that we really do stand for freedom of expression.

Comment: We have areas where you can have staged protests on campus, but we are accepting of free speech anywhere on our campus, but there are certain restrictions that we place on certain protests so they don't disrupt the functioning of the university.

Comment: Attended a conference on Evolution that had to be relocated off the university it was being held at – this is a significant problem.

Comment: Principles have value on their own – they express something we already value, which serves a purpose not only for us but also for our campus.

Question: If this is proactive, how much of this is to help with issues like trigger warnings and things like that? Is anyone having issues with their classes, as it has been with other universities?

Answer: Yes, it would mean you can teach on that – this applies to that.

Comment: But in the absence of a policy, this wouldn't really help?

Comment: This is a political message, since it doesn't achieve any purpose other than as a resolution. This brings in organizations like FIRE to come into play.

Answer: Fundamentally disagree – this is primarily an academic message. It would be a good idea to adopt this because the best way to address this issue isn't to wait for a problem and then deal with it – it is better to articulate strongly what we value and what kind of activity we want to promote at our university.

Comment: Worry that the danger of the message being misconstrued outweighs the need for the document. Something about this document conveys an undermining of the strides we have made towards diversity.

Motion to table passed, 23-20-1.

Update on GradeBuddy.com Resolution

Issue of usage of GradeBuddy.com by students where students get paid to post their study materials.

Proper use doesn't violate IP rights since it is supposed to be user generated content.

Had some recommendations to deal with this:

- 1) Conduct a review of legal issues of GradeBuddy.com and similar websites
- 2) Create a webpage with descriptions of such sites, legal issues involved and Faculty Senate disapproval.
- 3) Encourage course professors to include warnings on documents that are distributed electronically and in hard copy in class.

Provost has forwarded it to the Legal Counsel's office to review the legality. Waiting for the review and then they will continue to pursue the recommended specific language as well as the website.

Comment: Please ask Provost Office to officially send it out, but our voices will have more of an impact on individual faculty members. Please distribute to colleagues in Faculty Meetings.

Question: This is optional. If I don't care I don't have to do anything, right?

Answer: Yes. Not mandatory. Just let the faculty know.

Update on Guidance for Departments Regarding Academic Discipline

Education on academic discipline process should be made available to faculty, but this should be left to the discretion of faculty members.

Departments should have some flexibility in how they determine what is academic misconduct. Departments should educate new faculty about what academic discipline is, through a mentoring process, but this hasn't been done much.

Syllabi should express expectations for academic integrity and discipline.

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning have also had luncheons to discuss the process.

It is important that this happens within the departments, since they have their own standards for what academic misconduct is.

School of Liberal Arts have suggested they would like guidance on a step-by-step set of rules as to what happens when certain events occur. Sense of Senate was that this really should be at the Department level and not at the Faculty Senate level.

Comment: We should make attendance to some seminars on this mandatory. A lot of departments don't have good or any mentoring for young faculty, and there are lots of stories of old professors going through the process and hating the academic discipline process. So suggest having mandatory training on academic discipline.

Academic Support Affairs:

Revision to E-mail storage capacity and security

All SEC schools use either Microsoft Exchange for Faculty or Gmail for students. Storage space ranges from 1GB to 50GB – our minimum is half that. Meeting to be held to discuss this issue and hopefully we can have a representative to discuss this in more detail in December meeting.

Finance: Nothing to report.

Governance: Nothing to report.

University Services: Nothing to report.

New Business

Seeking endorsement to work with other Faculty Senates on draft statement regarding state flag design

Consensus is that other Faculty Senates would like to draft a statement on this, to advocate for the state to redesign the flag.

Requesting Faculty Senate endorsement – in any case, would not present language to us without giving us a chance to approve it. This does get into political areas, to request an endorsement to go into this process.

Question: Is this to recommend that the state flag be redesigned or to recommend a specific design?

Answer: Not a specific design – just a recommendation that the flag be redesigned.

Motion passed for work to go on with this with one no vote.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting is Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 7:00pm.