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Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

11-9-2021

November 9, 2021

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Faculty Senate Minutes – November 9, 2021

Zoom – @ 6:00 pm (details at end of Agenda)

Senators Present: Kenya Wolff, KoFan Lee, Shari Holt, Kerry Bowers, Alex Watson, Joseph Carlisle, Joe Sweeney, Melissa Bass, Lance Yarbrough, Robert Barnard, Angela Green, Dan Durkin, Carrie McCormick, Matteo D’Alessio, Lauren Cardenas, Sasan Nouranian, James Cizdziel, Mike Cinelli, Donna Buckley, John Berns, John Lobur, Cole Stevens, R.J. Morgan, Carolyn Higdon, Whitney Sarver, Christy Nielson, Hans Sinha, Andre Liebenberg, Joel Mobley, Brian Boutwell, Carrie Smith, Brian Reithel, Heather Allen, Gabriel Garrido, Brad Jones, Sujith Ramachandran, Yunhee Chang, Jennie Lightweis-Goff, Scott Mackenzie, Randy Dale, Michael Repka, SueAnn Skipworth

Senators Absent (Alternate): Simone Delerme (for Willa Johnson), Macey Edmonson (for George McClellan)

- **Call Meeting to Order** – Provost unable to attend due to traveling but might pop in at the airport. As a backup, our new General Counsel, David Whitcomb, was scheduled to join us tonight but his flight was rebooked for now. No replacement available for this evening. Questions can be emailed to Chair Durkin. The Executive Council spoke with Noel the other day and we may be able to answer some questions on a tentative basis, but new guidance changes regularly.

- **Approve minutes from the October 12, 2021, meeting**
 - Motion -
 - Second -
 - Vote – APPROVED

 - Update from Associate Provost Rich Forgette on Faculty Activity Reports (**See attached documents**)
 - 1) Moved to calendar year
 - 2) Status tags created
 - 3) Modifying annual evaluation to include workload distribution report for providing a basis for research expenditures, which will be prospective for the coming year, can be modified throughout the year, and has flexible workload policies
 - 4) Modifying T&P policies to include a workload distribution for your unit such that it would be a baseline for discussion with chair
 - 5) Sunset provision for revisiting and reapproving T &P guidelines for 8 years but with slighter longer options for units with longer professional accreditation cycle

Questions:

Q: Will there be a rollout for faculty, such as a webinar or talk, or will this just happen? What should we expect?

Forgette: We had a chair workshop and went through all this information so hopefully your chair will bring that back to your department and that will be the basis for discussion. The template likely won't look much different from other years, but this is a transition year, so we are really just reporting this 9-month period and it may need modifying to make it an annual review, but this year is transitional.

Q: The statement about teaching, research, etc.: is that just the mixture each department already has?

Forgette: There is not explicit language requiring that distribution in all guidelines, so we want to make that standard across units, by percentage.

Q: Section 2, something is in red. Does that indicate a change?

Forgette: Yes, that indicates a change.

Q: If our accreditation cycle is 7 years, can we use that instead of 8?

Forgette: Yes. They are all over the map as far as cycles.

Q: Transitional period means if we run up against any bugs or irregularities, should we not worry too much about any glitches related to the changeover?

Forgette: As always, tech is glitchy. FAR has gotten better over the years, and this is just a tweak, including the statuses, which could indeed be glitchy. So fingers crossed.

Q: Is part of the issue whether we need it in .pdf?

Forgette: I will check with Chris Reichley on that. They prefer to move to .html and not .pdfs, which don't allow clean transfer of data. I don't know if that will be in place for the first year. I don't think it will affect faculty.

Q: Should we contact you directly or someone else?

Forgette: For IT matters, Chris Reichley is a good point of contact, but otherwise, please contact me about T & P matters. FTDC, and Penny Rice, are great places to go as well for FAR completion.

Dan: I will invite Chris Reichley to our next meeting.

- Update from Associate Provost Rich Forgette on Teaching Evaluation Task Force
 - Task force recommended a second task force charged with implementing the steps the initial task force outlined.
 - Original task force will have overlap with former one and new members.
 - We decided that some of the questions could be swapped out particularly those related to instructional behavior, which have been found to be less valid, and focusing on learning outcomes instead.
 - The continuity of longitudinal data is important, so we only want to swap out a few questions.
 - Greater resources will be allotted for faculty development related to the changes.
- Chair Durkin with COVID-19 Update Q & A
Met with Provost recently and will try to field questions.

Q: Timeline for mask mandate mentioned?

Durkin: The Provost suggested we meet with our departments to get a feel for how people are feeling about masks. He wants feedback to go along with health department guidance. These questions should go to all faculty, staff, and graduate students:

- Stick with status quo and revisit in spring?
- Not require masks in hallways but in classrooms and offices?
- Anyone vaccinated does not have to wear a mask, but how to police?

Q. Are we not still very far from reaching the threshold where masks could be gotten rid of?

Watson: County-level severity of Covid activity (MDOH) is the threshold the Provost gave us. Our risk in Lafayette County is still “severe,” the highest level. Our mask mandate seems tied to this policy.

Q: What level of Covid activity would need to be reached before reconsidering the mask mandate?

Durkin: We can find out what that is.

Wimberly: I thought he said we had to reach the “low” level before we could reconsider masks. Mississippi Department of Health website:

Ballou: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/10472.pdf

Q: Campus mask mandate doesn’t apply to the county, even though the numbers provided by the county justify our mask mandate?

Durkin: Yes. I will get back to you with answers.

Update from Josh Eyler, Director of Faculty Development for the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning on the resolution to expand eligibility for all teaching awards to NTT faculty

- Bowers: moved to discuss
- Sinha: second
- Barnard: called the question

Barnard: my department was not in favor of this resolution as written but want to suggest we refer this to Academic Affairs to see if this is the best way to acknowledge NTT for their teaching.

Lobur: My department is very much in favor but need some modifications so as not to inadvertently play into the hands of those who are trying to undermine tenure altogether. Placing TT and NTT placed in such direct competition it does not recognize some key differences in types of classes taught and the time commitment one gives to teaching. We recommend we create a suite of awards equal to those in question, with equal funding, but open only to NTT, to recognize the different roles we all play.

Ballou: In the asterisk section there is not a section for clinical faculty, of which my department has many.

- Mackenzie: Against motion to end discussion. Called the question.

Barnard: Nothing about referring this to Academic Affairs suggests we are trying to avoid the question. Equity and equality are not always the same thing. We need to spend a little more time figuring out what is the best way to recognize the excellent teaching by all kinds of faculty. This runs the risk of dividing the whole faculty. Referring it to the committee whose purpose is to consider something like this is the appropriate way to move this forward.

Nielson: My department also wants to recognize the teaching of NTT faculty but also expressed concern. Clinical faculty, yes, but should we consider only FT employees?

Sinha: Academic Affairs is one of the senate committees?

Watson: Yes, I chair that committee but I do not know who among the committee are NTT and thus in the best position to speak on the matter.

Sinha: Is there a charge if we refer it to the committee? Is this a way for it to die in committee, or will they be a charge that requires a report.

Sinha: Made a friendly amendment to charge the committee.

Barnard: discretion of chair to define the charge or use an ad hoc committee of Academic Affairs to consider whether this is the best way forward.

Ballou: You can include a timeline such as reporting back at the December meeting.

Chair Durkin: I'm reluctant to send anything to committee without a charge or without providing sufficient time to conduct the work. Is a month sufficient?

Watson: That will depend but I will conduct a poll to see. It seems difficult given Thanksgiving and end of semester.

Durkin: No sense of urgency so take more than a month.

Lobur: These awards are usually granted at the end of the term, so perhaps we look at it in early spring.

Durkin : At the February meeting?

Furst: My department was 100% in favor of this resolution. I want to disagree with the premise that different faculty do different types of work, so this is rewarding people for a specific type of work, when this is a type of work we all do. I think we just need to deal with it and vote as a group.

Durkin: Josh Eyer is here to address your concerns.

- Barnard: Point of order: who introduced the resolution if Josh is not a member of the Senate?

Chair Durkin: I did and I should have said so.

Eyer: This is my third year here and the end of every award season I hear from many NTT faculty who feels demoralized that they are ineligible to be recognized for the major work they have been hired to do. Students also feel left out in the cold when they can't nominate their favorite teacher for an award. I went to Executive Council back in August and brought data from meetings with people in various positions and we laid out the case back in September. I looked at several options for deliberating the matter, so I hope the committee, if charged, does turn up the best vehicle, if this turns out not to be it. The idea of separate awards for NTT faculty feels worse than not being eligible in the first place, as they do the same work all faculty are doing.

Sinha: Separate but equal is abhorrent. We should have one award for everyone who does the same thing. There is huge discontent among NTT and this would be throwing gasoline on the flames if we did not move forward. A committee would kick the can down the road.

McCormick: Logistical note about the memorandums of understanding might require new donors and new MOUs to consider.

Eyler: We discussed this last month. New awards need new money and new MOUs. Current MOUs, should they be open to all, will need to be reinterpreted, and that is the job of the task force.

Lobur: Our intention was not to create any segregation-laced language in respect to these awards. Will the criteria for selection change as well, to account for the different kinds of classes different faculty teach?

Eyler: Once nominated, these issues will likely be hashed out in the committees that will review these nominations, as they are now. Much of this already happens through a collegial decision-making process.

Sinha: I did not mean to refer to your language as segregationist and apologize.

Mackenzie: Can you clarify what you mean by distinctions in types of teaching?

Lobur: Someone teaching 500 students who also does lots of great one-on-one work with students might be recognized differently with perhaps a different award. Some people are afraid this will drive a wedge between NTT and TT faculty and play into the hands of those who seek to bring down tenure and academic freedom.

Wimberly: How does this undermine tenure?

Lobur: They will argue that tenure is unnecessary because TT faculty are not adding value to the university.

Barnard: The issue John is talking about is that if the primary purpose of a faculty member is to teach, and if we dialed down the relative importance of research and service, what is the purpose of tenure, to the extent that tenure exists for a purpose, the erasure of the difference in status is the issue and provides ammunition to people who want to call all our work into question.

Wimberly: The teaching award does not extend to all aspects of our jobs, just to teaching.

Barnard: Teaching is about 40% of my job but nearly 100% for NTT faculty so the jobs are not 100% equivalent in that respect and there are issues other than recognizing teaching that can be brought to bear on the question.

Bowers: What's happening in Ohio is happening everywhere, but this is simply a teaching award so all the other awards related to all the other aspects would still be available, whereas NTT have few other opportunities for recognition of their work.

Sinha: This is recognizing teaching and there are differences between NTT and TT faculty already built in. So we should focus on the fact that this is just related to teaching and there are other benefits to TT that NTT faculty don't have. We shouldn't base our actions on how other people might react to what we say and do here or we will be frozen into inaction. We need to do the right thing for the right reason for UM and deal with how other people perceive it later, if at all.

- Sinha moved to amend the motion to add a time-limited charge to the Academic Affairs committee
- Barnard accepted the friendly amendment.
- Bowers seconded
- Vote to refer to Academic Affairs a time-limited charge issued by the Chair of the Senate.

Mackenzie: Josh Eyler has already done the work of looking into the matter.

Barnard: This should be the Senate's business so let's make sure this is something the Senate should consider.

- Lobur moved to vote on original resolution, ensuring adequate representation by NTT.
- VOTE: 33 Yes and 12 No

Discussion of amendment:

McCormick: Motion to amend, under 3rd "whereas," strike "favorite" and substitute "most effective."

- Barnard moved to adjourn to a committee as a whole
- Reithel seconded

Ballou: Add clinical faculty at the bottom.

Reithel: Simplify to say “all tenure track, non-tenure-track, and adjunct faculty.” This one size fits all approach is not a good fit.

Smith: “Support faculty” is the term the university uses, but perhaps we say “be it resolved that all faculty are eligible?”

Eyler: “Included but not limited to” includes a whole range of positions. But if left too general it can lead to questions, so I prefer the more specific language making it clearer to administration groups that this is the process we will go to.

Smith: If the resolution is for a working group, everyone already knows that all “support faculty” means everyone except tenure-track. “NTT/Support Faculty” seem to be used officially.

Bowers: Defining different kinds of faculty was a difficult part of this resolution in my department.

Reithel: There are so many terms used on this campus, so nothing is more inclusive than saying TT, NTT, and adjunct faculty.

Wimberly: Can we not state that “Whereas not all those who teach at the university are eligible”?

Eyler: There are a variety of terms but IREP uses NTT when reporting externally.

Chair Durkin: Everyone ok with NTT?

Lobur: Who will be involved in the selection process for these awards?

Chair Durkin: The working group will be tasked with figuring out some of these issues. For the purposes of this resolution, we don’t need to hash out all the details.

Barnard: Insert into resolution that a majority of the working group will be comprised of a diverse collection of the faculty, including members of the Senate?

Barnard: Easiest way is to allow Dan to appoint members and be approved.

Ballou: Modify the language to say the faculty senate chair will appoint members?

Durkin: I can invite individuals, as I am sometimes called upon to do by the administration. We already have a large number of NTT faculty on the senate. Everyone okay leaving it at that?

Barnard: Does that mean you will be appointing the entire working group?

Durkin: Yes, if everyone is okay with that.

- Chair Durkin moved to return to ordinary business for further discussion and vote.

Further discussion on amended resolution:

Reithel: The last sentence is a mistake as the faculty have no authority over colleges, schools, and departments, and this group will have no authority to tell specific departments they have to change their teaching awards. That will have to come from the Provost, as this body is purely advisory.

Sinha: Amend last sentence to say “to create a working group in conjunction with the administration.”

- Durkin accepted friendly amendment.
- Bowers moved to accept
- VOTE: Passed 38 Yes, 4 No, with 1 abstention
- Discussion of Afghan resolution with introduction by Blair McElroy, Senior International Officer
 - The Intensive English Program organization found that 148 women had been evacuated and are in Wisconsin awaiting admission for pursuing degrees. Dr. Sarver also spearheaded this effort to get these Afghan women to our campus. It didn't work out. We put together a budget and determined their immigration status. They are legal non-immigrants, similar to permanent resident status. We were looking to fund them for 4 ½ years to include the IEP. We even saw their faces and chose them, but rather than separate them, they went with a larger group to another university, in Chicago, so they will be in a community with other Afghan citizens.
 - We have not been approached to assist with any Afghan families or scholars, but this was particular to students who would have been coming here.
 - Humanitarian parole is a legal status that includes vetting and often leads to asylum. They are assessed by FBI, Homeland Security, and others. Memphis has a relief organization but we have not been approached for help. Everything at this point is mostly word of mouth and through these organizations.

Durkin: What is the correct term? Not refugees, as under Katrina.

McElroy: “Refugee” is fine but it’s a very particular status. Most come under humanitarian parole, but it is ok to call them refugees or immigrants but they have come here legally.

- Sinha: Lots of veterans groups are calling for this kind of work to be done. I wanted to get the university to take the lead in sponsoring some of these people and get them off of the military bases where they are currently staying. We have a unique ability as a university to finding a path to sponsor a few families, and we have an obligation to help those who helped us during wartime and get them assimilated into American society.

Mackenzie: I in no way disagree with the idea, but this resolution is entirely too abstract. It situates the university as a sort of component of the state, which we are not, and we should not think of ourselves as such. We are not speaking as a nation but as a faculty. This could be something as broad as saying we are in favor of resettlement of all refugees at all times and places, and we should offer something much smaller and more specific in our aims. Also, the military has inordinate resources to address this issue, so it seems inappropriate for us to use university resources where it should be relegated to the military.

Reithel: There are any number of worthy causes this senate might support, given the wide range of issues affecting our communities. I too am not unsympathetic to the good heart behind this but we have spent a lot of time in the senate and I worry that we will pick up one pet project after another when instead we should offer only the most carefully crafted, thoughtful resolutions brought through a committee structure, that will be aligned with the university's fundamental mission.

Mobley: I agree completely.

Wimberly: When we talked to the Provost last week, didn't he say the university was trying to keep names and details of the women private so as not to draw unwarranted attention by those who would do them harm? Should we not wait until after the university publicizes its own attention to this matter?

Lobur: We maybe need to strike a more neutral stance. Going back to Scott, it is not our job to support what the American military is there to do. It tends to come across as an endorsement of our military.

Sinha: Some of the language may be overbroad but the wherefore is very limited. The point was to get a discussion going. I wasn't thinking of this as pro- or anti-military but that we have an opportunity to do some real good here, especially for our veteran students.

Barnard: What does fulfillment of this resolution look like?

Sinha: Is this a possibility, asking if there is something the university can do along with other organizations to sponsor a few families?

Mackenzie: The broader sense implied here is to provide encouragement, but even that would involve discussion as to how narrow or specific we want to be in our goals. This does invite even more resolutions to get this body to adopt an endless number of causes.

Q: Have these things come before Senate before, perhaps during Katrina?

McCormick: Constitution deals only with policies, so we might be overstepping just a bit. Can we look into past minutes to see if this body has adopted similar resolutions?

- Lobur moved to table discussion
- Carlisle seconded then withdrew

Mackenzie: Should it be sent to committee?

Chair Durkin: I will appoint an ad hoc committee to address this.

- **Committee Updates**

- Academic Instructional Affairs (chair: Alex Watson) – Nothing to report
- Academic Conduct (chair: Kenya Wolff) – Nothing to report
- Finance & Benefits (chair: Joseph Carlisle) – Nothing to report
- Development & Planning (chair: Jon-Michael Wimberly) – Nothing to report
- Governance (chair: Carrie Smith)
 - Committee met with new director of EORC and the new General Counsel to discuss the grievance procedure and other policies and there may be a Provost's working group on governance.
- Research & Creative Achievement (chair: Donna Buckley)

Met with Josh Gladden and Jason Hale, who want to meet with our committee monthly to help us and the senate with issues related to grants.
- University Services (chair: Heather Allen) – Nothing to report

- **Old Business** – Statewide faculty senate organization is sending a letter of thanks to IHL on their change of policy and for not fighting the federal order, but also asking for inclusion on matters that affect faculty. We are reviewing the “contumacious behavior” clause in contracts, firing of TT faculty, and the ombuds policies at all universities, possibly looking into having similar ones at all universities. Tuition assistance is another issue we are looking at.
- **New Business**
- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

- Motion
 - Second
 - Vote

NEXT MEETING: December 7, 2021 @ 6:00 via ZOOM

Zoom details:

Join Zoom Meeting:

Daniel Durkin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Faculty Senate Meeting November 9, 2021 6:00 pm
Time: Dec 7, 2021 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

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