FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT | 21 January 2016 meeting
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OVERVIEW
The 2015-16 Faculty Senate held its ninth regular meeting (and first of the spring 2016 term) on 21 January 2016, from 3:45 to 5:35 pm in the Riggle Room of ADUC. Variations on a PAc theme continue, as Senate business was again consumed with PAc discussions, revisions, approvals, and (administrative) stipulations. The other major bit of business was the presenting and discussion of a report on class scheduling drafted by Senator Sue Tallichet, based on the work of the Senate Academic Issues subcommittee. The Provost was scheduled to deliver a report, but was ultimately unable to attend this Senate meeting.

GOOD NEWS, EVERYONE

Before proceeding to the major business, some important news must be shared. Faculty Senate has established a Blackboard shell, accessible by all MSU faculty. Faculty members should see "MSU Faculty Senate" listed under "Courses in which you are enrolled" when they log in to Blackboard. Any faculty member who does not have access to the Blackboard shell, or otherwise has difficulty with it, is encouraged to contact the Faculty Senate Secretary (the incomparable Sherry Surmont, s.surmont@moreheadstate.edu).

The purpose of this Blackboard shell is to facilitate communication between Senate and the general faculty population, particularly with respect to the distribution of important documents. Furthermore, Senate intends to use Blackboard to conduct surveys of general faculty opinion, mood, etc. In fact, a **survey entitled "Paths Forward"** (located within the aptly named "Surveys" area of the Blackboard shell) is **currently available**, and will remain open **until 4 February**. This is an open-ended survey, wherein faculty are asked to provide feedback on several questions. The survey is completely anonymous, and Chair Adams repeatedly assured Senators that responses to the survey cannot and will not be tracked. All faculty, both Senators and non-Senators, are strongly encouraged to participate; any feedback that can be provided will be invaluable to the Executive Council, and can help guide future Senate business.

As alluded to above, documents will also be posted to the Blackboard shell. Chair Adams stressed the need for transparency, and made it clear that she will share anything she receives by posting to Blackboard. Consequently, moving forward, these Communications Reports will direct readers to the Blackboard shell when referencing documents.

VARIATIONS ON A PAC THEME

PAc-22: The administration has delivered a response of "concur with stipulations" to the PAc-22 draft passed by the Senate on 19 November 2015. Currently available on Blackboard are the November Senate-approved draft (labeled as "PAc 22 11-2015 FS approved) and the administration's response (labeled as "PAc 22 Approved w/stipulations"). The major stipulation is that the administration has rejected the Senate's changes on length of time allotted at important points in the disciplinary process.

To review, at the 5 November 2015 Senate meeting, there was a tremendous amount of debate on these lengths of time, and the Senate ultimately voted to make two key changes. The first was an increase in time to initially respond to a "Notice of Intent to Discipline" from 10 to 20 business days (see line 144 of the 11-2015 FS passed PAc-22). As a reminder, the major concern of the Senate on this point was whether 10 days is sufficient to engage and consult with appropriate legal counsel. The second was an increase in time to prepare a detailed written response to the "Notice of Intent" (if that option is elected) from 15 to 30 business days (see line 156 of the 11-2015 FS passed PAc-22). This change was made as a corresponding adjusted to the first change, as these time amounts are cumulative. In other words, the original language provided 10 business days for the initial response and then an additional 5 for the detailed written response (15 days total), while the revised language provides 20 business days for the initial response and then an additional 10 for the detailed written response (30 days total).

As mentioned above, the administration has rejected these changes, meaning that the original time frames (10 and 15 days, rather than the proposed 20 and 30 days) will stand. Please note that these stipulations are difficult to pick out in the currently available "Approved w/stipulations" document, as Chair Adams has not been provided with a cleaned-up electronic copy and had to scan in the paper copy given to her by the Provost.

Aside from the issues above, Chair Adams indicated that the administration has generally accepted the other minor language adjustments made by the Senate at the 5 and 19 November meetings. Essentially, the PAc-22 approved by the administration is the version agreed to by the Reconciliation Committee, prior to the November Senate actions, with the minor language clean-up included. The President apparently intends to present this PAc-22 together with the revised PAc-26 at the next Board of Regents meeting.

On the Senate floor, Senator Ron Morrison raised the question of whether the Senate can and/or should respond formally to these PAc stipulations. Chair Adams responded that the President can ultimately take whatever he wants to the Board of Regents, but promised to put further discussion on a future Senate agenda following the distribution of the "concur with stipulations" document. Senator Morrison also pointed out that the Reconciliation Committee is not a constitutional entity, but rather something that has been established separately by mutual agreement between Senate and the administration. In response, Chair Adams stated her position that any documents produced by the Reconciliation Committee are not guaranteed approval by the full Senate, although the administration has been viewing reconciled PAcs as the final word in many cases of late. Further discussion on these issues seems likely in the months ahead.

PAc-27: The Senate resumed its consideration of PAc-27, which was worked on but ultimately tabled without passage at the last (3 December 2015) Senate meeting. The version of PAc-27 opened for consideration at this meeting was the version generated at the last Senate meeting (i.e., already including the changes made at that time).

The passage subjected to the most discussion by far was the bit detailing the composition of the College Tenure Committee (CTC, see section 8, lines 146-151 of the PAc-27 draft posted to Blackboard). Senator Gary LaFleur voiced concern about the wording of this section, in particular the sentence, "The College Dean will select committee members from a pool of candidates selected by the faculty in each department." In the subsequent debate, it became clear that the concerns were mainly focused on the language giving too much power to the Dean and on the ability of all faculty members in a department to participate in CTC candidate selection. The first concern was addressed by changing the language to "one or more" after "pool," the idea being to empower departments to nominate only as many candidates as seats available. To address the second concern, it was proposed to insert the word "tenured" after "faculty," thereby restricting the selection process to only tenured faculty. After much debate, including a non-tenured, tenure-track perspective provided by Senator Tim Conner, the Senate approved this change by a secret ballot vote. The final revised language can be found in the lines referred to above.

The other major point of discussion was raised by Senator Elizabeth McLaren regarding whether a 50% affirmative vote for tenure (or reappointment) really means "yes," and if the vote itself provides the recommendation or if the committee must also include an explicit statement of their recommendation in its report. After some debate, it was determined not to change the percentage required for an affirmative outcome, and some language changes were made to clarify these components of the process. Specifically, in section 8, line 187, the "requires" was replaced by "consists of" (i.e., a positive recommendation now "consists of," instead of "requires" a 50% vote). Additionally, language in section 10-1 (lines 262-263) was changed from "the…Committee will recommend, in the form of a vote by secret ballot, tenure or non-tenure" to "the…Committee will vote by secret ballot on the tenure or non-tenure…" (the corresponding language for reappointment in section 9-2, lines 203-204 was also changed). Furthermore, the phrase "will explicitly recommend tenure or non-tenure" was added to the sentence describing the committee's report in section 10-1 (lines 263-265), with the corresponding language for reappointment again changed as well (section 9-2, lines 205-207).

Once the above changes were concluded, the Senate proceeded to a vote, and approved the newly-revised PAc-27 draft.

PAc-10: No business has occurred yet, but Chair Adams alerted the Senate that the administration wants to revise PAc-10 ("Extraordinary Faculty Compensation") in the near future. The Provost first mentioned a potential issue with PAc-10 at the 20 August 2015 Senate meeting, in reference to the new winter term, which is obviously not reflected in the present version of PAc-10.

SUBCOMMITTEE TIME

Governance: Elections for seats on the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee from the Caudill College (Tom Kiffmeyer) and the College of Business [and Technology?] (Scott Meisel) have been completed.

Evaluations: As Senator McBrayer has not yet had a chance to meet his new subcommittee, there was nothing new to report, although Evaluations will be participating in the new survey initiatives through Blackboard.

Academic Issues: As mentioned in the opening, Senator Sue Tallichet presented her report on the recent (fall 2015) changes to the class scheduling system at MSU. This report is based on the work of the Academic Issues subcommittee last term, and also addresses some of the issues and suggestions contained in Senator Eric Jerde's separate report discussed at the previous Senate meeting. Senator Tallichet's report is available on the Blackboard shell, in the "Reports" section under "Scheduling Solutions." All faculty, especially those affected by the change in scheduling regime, are encouraged read the report.

In brief, this report attempts a broader view of the scheduling issues affecting campus, including difficulties experienced in the Caudill College and College of Education; Senator Jerde's report was narrowly focused on difficulties experienced in the College of Science. Senator Tallichet also proposes a number of possible "paths forward" to ameliorate these difficulties, including but not limited to the longer-length laboratory period mentioned in Senator Jerde's report. The College of Science, at least, has been given approval by the Provost to experiment with longer-length (i.e., 3 clock hours versus 2 clock hours) laboratory periods for the fall 2016 schedule build. It remains unclear, though, whether any redress will be provided to the other affected colleges. This Academic Issues report will likely receive further discussion at a future Senate meeting, once Senators have had a chance to read over it in detail.

Senate Issues: Chair-elect Dobranski has, at long last, made headway in the effort to better understand the university budget. He is now in the process of setting up a Q&A-style meeting between his subcommittee and MSU Chief Financial Officer Beth Patrick. The details are still being settled, but he expects the meeting to take place soon. He encouraged all Senators to attend, schedule-permitting, or to submit questions to be posed. If any faculty members have questions of their own, they are encouraged to share them with their Senator(s).

POTPOURRI

Performance funding: Chair Adams received an update on this issue from the Provost during their pre-Senate one-on-one meeting. Apparently, the CPE wants to see the new performance funding metrics tied only to new higher education funding, rather than to the entirety of funding provided. However, it seems likely that our new governor will push to tie all funding to the performance metrics. But, as Chair Adams noted, it is better to have the CPE on our side than not.

Welcome: Senator Tim Conner (alluded to earlier) has rejoined the Senate for this term after being away for the previous one. Also, Senator Janelle Hare will be substituting for Senator Sean O'Keefe from the Department of Biology and Chemistry for the spring 2016 term.