

FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT | 19 November 2015 meeting

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OVERVIEW

The 2015-16 Faculty Senate held its seventh regular meeting on 19 November 2015, from 3:45 to approximately 5:00 pm in the Riggle Room of ADUC. This session comprised an official report from the Provost, the completion of work on PAc-22, a special election for an Executive Council seat, and a smattering of other minor announcements or updates.

WHAT'S UP, DOC[TOR RALSTON]?

On instructor workload: The administration has rejected the revised version of PAc-34 passed by the Senate on 15 October, stating that “matters associated with PAc-29” require attention first. PAc-29, of course, is the “Faculty Workload” PAc. According to the Provost, the current versions of PAc-34 and PAc-29 in combination allow for the recent increase in Instructor workload from 27 to 30 hours per annum, as called for by the Self Study of 2014-15.

For purposes of clarification, here is the relevant text on workload from the current PAc-34:

“Instructors (formerly referred to as fixed-term instructors) are full-time employees contracted with full benefits for a one-year term with a teaching load of no more than 27 credit hours recommended.”

Please note that the revised (and now rejected) version of PAc-34 deletes the specific description of Instructor workload and replaces it with a reference to PAc-29.

And here is the relevant text on Instructors from the current PAc-29:

“Instructors: The standard teaching workload for instructors is 27 hours per academic year as calculated by the formulas for determining faculty teaching load based on instruction type.”

During discussion of this issue, Senator Remillard referenced the following additional language from PAc-29:

“Faculty may be requested to teach an overload (more than 24 hours/year for assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, and more than 27 hours/year for instructors) when necessary to fulfill program, department or school needs on an occasional and temporary basis. No faculty member is required to teach an overload.”

Senator Remillard argued forcefully that the combination of the above, currently in-force statements does not allow for the blanket increase in Instructor workload as has been implemented; the Provost disagreed with this argument. In response to a different question from Senator Ron Morrison, the Provost stated his belief that 30 hours per annum is an appropriate workload for Instructors, provided they have no other official responsibilities beyond teaching.

On the looming university website redesign: The university has narrowed the field to three finalist web design companies who will visit campus on 30 November and make presentations. The Provost mentioned that, once a vendor has been selected for the redesign, the real work will be in figuring out who on campus will be responsible for generating content to fill the new webpages.

On new academic program proposals: The proposed family nurse practitioner program has now undergone two different levels of review by the market research firm Eduventures. The results have apparently been positive, and so the proposal will proceed to the next step, namely developing a “business plan” for the new degree program. The next proposal slated for the Eduventures treatment is geospatial science and technology (GST). Additionally, the Provost mentioned that an idea for some sort of “eco-/sustainable tourism” program has been floated.

PAC-22: THE THRILLING CONCLUSION

In contrast with the previous Senate meeting, only a very few minor adjustments were made to the PAc-22 draft. On line 378, the phrase “for cause” was added after “removal,” and on lines 489 and 526, the phrase “Designated Administrator” was changed to “Dean” for consistency with the remainder of the document. Otherwise, the version subjected to a vote at the 19 November meeting is identical to the version distributed with the last Communications Report. The Senate approved this version, moving it up the chain for review by the administration.

INDECISION 2015

The Senate held a special election to replace the recently resigned Ken Henderson as Executive Council (EC) member for the college formerly known as Business and Public Affairs. Nominations from the floor were Senators Beverly McCormick, Timothy Hare, and Greg McBrayer. After two rounds of voting, Senator McBrayer was elected as the new COBPA EC member, the majority seemingly swayed by his Hoover-esque promise of “a chicken in every pot.” In addition to joining the EC, Senator McBrayer will also take over as chair of the Evaluations subcommittee.

THE SMATTERING

PAC-26 update: The administration has reviewed the PAC-26 draft approved by the Senate on 5 November. They have objected to the first two paragraphs of language added as a result of Senator May’s motion, but have essentially agreed to the balance of the draft. Put another way, the administration has indicated their approval of the initial reconciled version brought to the Senate floor last time. According to Chair Adams, the official response from the administration is likely to be a “concur with stipulations,” the stipulation being that the added language is undone.

Very old business: The Senate has finally received a response from the administration on a resolution passed in February regarding FYS evaluations. The wording of this resolution was as follows:

“FYS evaluations conducted through First Year Programs should not be shared with anyone except the individual faculty member.”

The resolution has been rejected, on the grounds that is inconsistent with UAR 120.02.

The latest from TAB: Senator Kim Sharp provided a brief report from the most recent Technology Advisory Board (TAB) meeting, with the most salient information being an update on the new campus wifi network. The new network for faculty and staff usage, replacing “unstrung,” will be “msu_secure.” Migration from the old to the new network will begin on 1 December with Baird Music Hall and the AAC, and will then continue in a piecemeal fashion across campus.

Senate subcommittee business: Senator Simpson (Governance) brought forth a slate of nominees for the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities committee, which were approved without incident. He also mentioned that, once these nominees are seated, the membership rosters for all university standing committees will be fully updated and accurate.

Senator Tallichet (Academic Issues) informed the Senate that she will be drafting a report for the Provost on the work her subcommittee has been doing with the various matters related to the new scheduling framework. This report will be delivered to the Provost after the first of the year.

Senator Carlson (Faculty Welfare & Concerns) announced that she will be bringing forth a new draft of PAC-27 for a first reading at the next Senate meeting on 3 December.

Chair-Elect Dobranski (Senate Issues) stated that he is still working with the relevant parties to set up a meeting on the university budget. He also mentioned that, when this meeting occurs, he intends to raise the issue of spending on athletics, inspired by the recent report from the Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/interactives/ncaa-subsidies-main>) that shows MSU subsidizing approximately 86% of the athletic budget from non-athletic revenue sources.

Benefit concerns: Senator Brent Rogers raised a question about the university to employee ratio (75:25) of health insurance costs. In his estimation, his share is greater than 25%, but clarification was provided that the 75:25 ratio is an aggregate across the entire university, and individual ratios may vary on a case-by-case basis. Senator Rogers also voiced a concern about the change to an age-based rate schedule for the supplemental group term life insurance. Senator Carlson mentioned that even the university benefits committee was not informed of this change until the very last minute.

From the Faculty Regent: Faculty Regent Berglee reminded Senators of the upcoming quarterly Board of Regents business meeting, to be held on 3 December 2015 at 9 am in the Riggle Room. He further informed Senators that a \$2 million bid has been submitted for purchase of the Rowan County Board of Education building, and that the President has been empowered to negotiate as needed to secure the acquisition.