

FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT | 3 December 2015 meeting

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OVERVIEW

The 2015-16 Faculty Senate held its eighth regular meeting on 3 December 2015, from 3:45 to 5:35 pm in the Riggle Room of ADUC. This final session for the fall term predominantly included yet more PAC business, a report on and discussion of the quarterly Board of Regents (BoR) meeting, and a Q&A period with Senator Eric Jerde on the work of his *ad hoc* class scheduling committee. There was also some further discussion of the recent report and associated administration response on athletic spending and a brief update from Dr. John Ernst, filling in for the Provost.

THE NEVERENDING PAC STORY

PAC-26: As alluded to in the previous Communications Report, the administration has responded to the PAC-26 draft passed on 5 November by accepting the version agreed to by the reconciliation committee. The administration will not accept the language added (i.e., the first two paragraphs of the 5 November draft) but will apparently accept the reconciled version without further Senate action. It is the President's intention to present that version of PAC-26 to the BoR along with the revised PAC-22 (passed by the Senate on 19 November). The Senate has not as yet received any response on PAC-22, so it remains unclear precisely when these revised PACs will be presented to the BoR.

Previously on PAC-27: Earlier this term, the Senate received an official response from the administration to the revised version of PAC-27 passed by the Senate in April 2015. Said version eliminated the College Tenure Committee (CTC) from the tenure review process while retaining the University Tenure Committee (UTC). This change which rejected by the administration with the counter-offer of eliminating the UTC and retaining the CTC only. However, both the President and Provost have indicated that they would "welcome" (but not "approve") a version of PAC-27 which retains both the CTC and the UTC, essentially restoring *status quo ante bellum*.

And now the latest episode of PAC-27: In response to the administrative overtures, Senator Carlson brought forth a new draft of PAC-27 as produced by the Faculty Welfare & Concerns subcommittee. Although this draft starts from the April 2015 Senate-approved version of the PAC, given the re-addition of the CTC, it is functionally not significantly different from the current, in-effect version.

The action primarily relates to the section with the general description of the Department (DTC), College, and University committees. This section has been shifted in its location, now coming prior to the sections describing the reappointment and tenure review processes. Efforts have also been made within the committee description section to clarify how the committees will be constituted and what role a faculty member has if serving on either the CTC or UTC in addition to their own DTC. To further that end, additional language was added by the Senate to the DTC paragraph directing faculty members also serving on the CTC or UTC to recuse themselves from the DTC review of tenure candidates.

Because it is technically a new PAC-27 draft, this discussion should have been considered a first reading. However, following a motion by Senator Morrison, the Senate elected to suspend the rules and consider this a second reading. Nevertheless, even as the Senate seemed headed for an up-or-down vote, Senator Eric Jerde motioned to table the draft on the grounds that this was originally intended to be only a first reading. The motion carried, meaning any further work will have to wait until the next Senate meeting on 21 January 2016.

HELLO FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Faculty Regent Berglee led the Senate in a discussion of the quarterly business meeting held by the BoR earlier in the day on 3 December.

Of PACs and chair appointments III: The BoR approved appointment with rank of full professor for the chair of the Department of Art and Design. This particular appointment was, of course, subject to no small amount of discussion by the Senate earlier in this term. Regent Berglee made a statement during the BoR meeting to the effect that there has been controversy over whether the relevant PACs were followed. He especially expressed his concern that the appropriate promotion committees, as outlined in PAC-2, were excluded from this process.

Presidential bonus: The BoR officially approved a one-time “incentive” bonus for the President in the amount of \$150,000. This approval was *pro forma*, as a previous BoR had instituted this incentive some years ago. It was to be paid out at the present time provided satisfactory performance reviews for the President in the intervening years, a condition which was met. This bonus is described as “privately funded,” the source apparently being the MSU Foundation.

Consulting on the rise: Senator Morrison raised a question regarding a budget item approved by the BoR to pay for outside consulting firms. His concern was mainly related to the increased amount being spent on outside firms in recent years, and whether these firms are really necessary and cost-effective. At present, outside consulting work includes the market research firm Eduventures, retained to help evaluate new academic program proposals, and the Harris firm being used to generate candidate pools for various positions on campus. At present, the searches involving this outside firm include the new Vice President for Student Success position, the Dean of the College of Science, and an endowed chair position in entrepreneurship. There was discussion as to whether the outside firm was necessary or the relevant units should be capable of finding and selecting job candidates on their own.

REPORT FROM THE FACULTY-DRIVEN TEAM ON SCHEDULING

The recent change in class scheduling framework has been painful for much of the campus, particularly for those in disciplines such as the sciences, music, and education. In other words, the shift has been especially difficult for disciplines which have extensive coursework (e.g., laboratories, musical performance, and educational field experiences) that falls outside of the traditional 3 credit hour lecture scenario. The Faculty Senate Academic Issues subcommittee has been working on this issue throughout the fall term. Separately but concurrently, Senator Eric Jerde approached the Provost and Dr. Gerald DeMoss with his concerns about this issue, and was tasked with forming an *ad hoc* committee to evaluate and prepare a report on it. The resulting document, which has been submitted by Senator Jerde to the Provost, will be sent as an accompanying attachment to this Communications Report. It should be noted that Senator Jerde’s team included only stakeholders from the College of Science; consequently, his document focuses on issues in the sciences and mathematics.

On the Senate floor, Senator Jerde provided a brief overview of the document. In short, the shift to the new scheduling system has caused a significant loss of instructional time in various areas. Laboratory courses have, on a weekly basis, lost either 20 minutes (for 1 lab per week) or 40 minutes (for 2 labs per week). These losses are generated by redefining a schedule period from 60 minutes (2 periods had a total value of 130 minutes, including the 10-minute inter-block period) to 50 minutes (2 periods plus the 10-minute inter-block period now equal 110 minutes). At the same time, 4 credit hour lecture courses such as Calculus I or Engineering Physics I/II have lost 40 minutes per week (going from four 1-hour meetings to four 50-minute meetings per week).

To address the laboratory issue, the Jerde report recommends allowing an “extended” lab meeting beyond the present maximum of 1 hour and 50 minutes (i.e., 110 minutes). Senator Jerde described this extended lab as a 150-minute period; his report describes it as a 165-minute period. To clarify, the viable options for an extended lab would be either a 3-period block on M/W/F, totaling 170 minutes (including the two 10-minute inter-block periods), or a 2-period block on T/TH, totaling 165 minutes (including one 15-minute inter-block period). Even if these extended labs were made available as an option, it is unclear whether faculty would be free to make use of them based purely on educational need, given the Provost’s directive that total faculty workload in a department not be affected.

Senator Jerde also makes other recommendations for current 2-2-3 and 2-4-4 courses that seem well-suited for his own, relatively low-volume program (Earth Systems Science) but less so for other science programs, such as Biology/Biomedical Sciences, which has 522 undergraduate majors according to the recent fall 2015 enrollment report. [CO note: In designations for courses with lecture and laboratory components, the first number indicates lecture hours, the middle number the lab hours, and the final number the credit hour value for the course. For example, a 2-2-3 course would comprise two 50-minute lecture meetings and a single 1 hour, 50 minute laboratory meeting per week. Despite their length, laboratories are designated as 1 credit hour; this is standard practice at all universities, not just MSU.]

To address the loss of time in 4 credit hour lecture courses, the Jerde report recommends “recitation,” a mode of instruction new to MSU, although frequently used at other institutions. A recitation would essentially be an extended-length lecture period officially dedicated to “problem-solving activities.” The proposal is to replace one of the 50-minute, traditional lecture meetings with a 75-minute recitation. This would generate a total of 225 minutes of instructional time per week, up from the present 200 minutes, although still reduced from the 240 minutes provided under the old framework. It is unclear whether recitations would be spun off as separate courses, as laboratories are, and whether they would be available to other disciplines.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Senator Tallichet stated that she will be preparing and submitting to the Provost a separate report based on the work of her Academic Issues subcommittee. The goal of this report is to dovetail with the Jerde report but provide a more expansive take on and recommendations for the present class scheduling issues. Both Senator Tallichet and Chair Adams expressed their desire to come up with solutions that can help all affected parties on campus, and also requested input from the broader faculty community. **Any faculty members experiencing class scheduling difficulties are once again encouraged to contact Senator Tallichet as soon as possible with a description of said difficulties and possible solutions.** Senators have been told that the schedule build for fall 2016 begins in February; however, it is unclear when faculty will be informed of what, if any, alternatives are acceptable to the administration. One perfectly clear point, though, is that a return to the old scheduling framework is out of the question.

SUBSIDIZING OF ATHLETICS

As mentioned in the previous Communications Report, a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/interactives/ncaa-subsidies-main>) shows MSU subsidizing approximately 86% of the athletic budget from non-athletic revenue sources. Since then, a response from the university has appeared via “The Source” and accessible via MyMoreheadState. This response was given some discussion on the Senate floor; Regent Berglee also stated that the Chronicle investigation was mentioned at the BoR meeting.

In particular, problems were found with the way the university response addressed fees. The university claims that the amount of the athletics subsidy is distorted because MSU does not charge an official, dedicated athletics fee. However, as Chair Adams noted, according to the methodology used in the Chronicle investigation, any fee charged to students regardless of how it is labeled counts as part of the non-athletic subsidy and not as part of athletic revenue. The university also claims that the relatively small size of the MSU athletics budget compared to an institution like UK mitigates the impact of the subsidy. Nevertheless, as Chair Adams also noted, it would seem that the proportion of the athletics budget subsidized by non-athletics revenue is a more salient point. Even given the relatively small size of the MSU athletics budget, the non-athletic subsidy still amounts to over \$9 million in the 2010-2014 time frame covered in the Chronicle investigation.

WHAT’S UP, DOC[TOR ERNST]?

Dr. John Ernst, filling in for the Provost, provided a brief report to the Senate. Dr. Ernst updated the Senate on the enrollment for the inaugural winter term (satisfactory), the status of the university website redesign (final recommendation on outside vendor coming soon), and the status of tenure recommendations and sabbatical requests (currently being processed by the Provost and President, respectively). Dr. Ernst also addressed the recent issues with the MAP Works software program. In his words, MAP Works has “imploded,” and its usage has been discontinued by MSU. Apparently, the university was able to negotiate a refund of the money spent on MAP Works, and options to replace it are presently being evaluated.