



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

September 1, 2016 meeting

Infinity made manageable (or, an overview of the meeting)

The 2016-2017 MSU Faculty Senate held its second regular meeting of the year in Breck 302. The bulk of the meeting was taken up by a discussion of the proposed revisions to PAC-26.

“Tu-whit!—Tu-whooh!/And hark again!” (Announcements)

- Howard Bunsis, Chair of AAUP’s Collective Bargaining Caucus, will be visiting campus on September 16th to give a talk on financial issues: “Breaking Down University Budgets: What Faculty Members Need to Know.” The presentation will take place in Breck 002, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. on Friday (the 16th). Please encourage your colleagues to attend.
- Senators Reigle and Adams met with the new VP of Student Success (J. Bentley) and the Assistant VP (J. Ernst) to discuss the important issue of retention. Senator Reigle had a follow up meeting with J. Ernst to discuss what her committee (Academic Issues) could do to aid in retention efforts.
- On Sept 20th, the Executive Council of the Senate will be meeting with the Presidential Search Consultant (Funk) to discuss MSU’s search for a new president. Please contact a member of the EC (M. Dobranski, K. Carlson, S. Tallichet, S. Reigle, C. Cottingham, or A. Adams) with your concerns. (Please also note that there will be another Senate meeting before this consultation, a meeting wherein your concerns may also be voiced.)

Monody on the Dearth of Ralston (a.k.a., why we lack a *Biographia Academia*)

Provost Ralston was unable to attend and offer a report. Dean McBride served as his proxy (and had no report).

“This Lime Tree Bower [Our] Prison”? (a PAC-26 update)

The PAC-26 faculty committee (Senators Carlson and Adams and former Senator Remillard) drafted a faculty response to the proposed revision of PAC-26. This response primarily addressed the concerns identified by BOR Chair Goodpaster (see the 8/18/16 CR for more information, as well as the response itself, which has been sent along with this report). The response also continued to state faculty resistance to the inclusion of “consolidation” and “reorganization” as criteria for faculty elimination. As Senator Carlson clearly articulated, the presence of a faculty response to the revised PAC is not, in any fashion, an endorsement of the revised PAC-26. The

draft is and remains a deeply problematic document that should concern all faculty, as it erodes tenure.

The not-so Ancient Geographer stoppeth us with his “long grey beard and glittering eye” (Regent Report)

The discussion of the PAc-26 response created a natural segue into the Regent’s report, which was primarily concerned with the PAc revision. Regent Berglee noted that he shared the already articulated concerns regarding the revised document and asked the Senate to help him formulate (and voice) these concerns “from a regent perspective.” He then presented a document (sent as a separate attachment along with this CR) that endeavored to show the ways in which the PAc-26 revision is violating state statute.

According to Regent Berglee, Chair Goodpaster has been made aware of the potential legal problems with the BOR’s revision of PAc-26, and he (PG) does “not have a good response” to these problems. All Chair Goodpaster could state, according to Regent Berglee, is his belief that the fiduciary responsibility of the BOR—a responsibility that is outlined in state statute—may supersede the statutes on tenure.

During a general discussion, the Senators who were at the most recent BOR meeting claimed that President Andrews said he was willing to “defy the law” in regards to the PAc revision. Senator Reigle, who was not at the meeting, noted that the recording could confirm the exact language the President used. Within that same discussion, Senator Caric asked the Senate to consider what it could do to help the faculty who will, in his estimation, be illegally fired once the new draft of the PAc has been approved by the BOR.

“Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve” (or why confidence [and hope] is being lost)

Senators Aagaard and Shack asked what authority the BOR is given in regards to policy making. Senator Adams noted that state statute KRS 164.350 (General powers and duties of boards of regents) grants BORs the authority to “adopt” and “enforce” policy, but adoption and enforcement do not necessarily encompass or imply the authority to “write” or “develop.” She also maintained that the BOR might be violating its own bylaws by granting itself unilateral power to develop and approve or enshrine policy.

After weighing all of the evidence presented in the discussion, Senator Tallichet concluded that MSU faculty were in an untenable position. According to Senator Tallichet, the highly contested process of PAc revision has disclosed the fact that MSU has a President “who lies” (in regards to statements and positions on the PAc-26 revision) and a BOR that wishes to “defy state law.” These points do little, in Senator Tallichet’s estimation, to inspire confidence. Instead, they suggest that faculty should consider having a vote of no confidence. Senator Tallichet urged her fellow Senators to discuss these troubling issues with their constituents and to determine what support there may be for a faculty-wide vote of no confidence.

“Reality’s dark dream” (Senate Committee Reports)

Governance

Chair Cottingham presented a slate of 5 replacements for University standing committees. This slate was unanimously approved. He also reported that we need

both a College of Business representative and a College of Science Senator to serve on the Planning Committee and promised that a proposal for a new Diversity and Inclusion Committee would be forthcoming.

Academic Issues

Chair Reigle and her committee are exploring retention issues. They are also investigating new edicts regarding what LMS systems faculty may use. In particular, they are determining whether or not the new policy violates academic freedom and asking if faculty are contractually obligated to use only BlackBoard approved vendors.

Evaluations

Chair Tallichet's committee is surveying faculty to determine what qualities they would like to see in the new President. Senators have been provided with electronic and hard copies of the survey that they have been asked to distribute to their colleagues and return to the Senate office by the 9th of September. Senator Tallichet acknowledges that this is an incredibly tight turn around time, but her committee is working within scheduling constraints that they cannot control.

Senator Aagaard encouraged Senators to offer guidance to their faculty when they distribute the survey so that the results can be meaningful. If faculty were to limit their responses to, say, their top five qualities, the results would more clearly show faculty preference. Senator Shack also reminded faculty that all of the search committee meetings that do not discuss personnel issues are open to the public, so faculty may provide feedback or delineate preference in that way as well.

Faculty Welfare and Concerns

Chair Carlson's committee has not met yet because it is waiting to begin discussions with the Provost regarding which PAcS the committee will work on this term. The first discussion will occur on September 12th.

Issues

Chair-Elect McBrayer announced that his committee will be addressing four particular issues: (1) the budget (point-Senator is Adams); (2) a "wish-list" of where faculty want MSU to be in five years, a list intended to work in concert with Evaluations' survey of Presidential qualities (point-Senator is Brown); (3) getting faculty representation on the President's cabinet (point-Senator is Caric); and (4) the creation of a University ombudsperson (point-Senator is Sharp).

In regards to the issue of an ombudsperson, Senator Shack asked about the possibility of retaining a legal professional specifically for MSU students, and Senator Caric postulated that Senate could create its own internal ombudsperson for faculty.

"The Hour When We Shall Meet Again": 3:45 p.m. on Thursday, September 15th



"This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow" has been submitted by Annie Adams, 2016-2017 Communications Officer