



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

September 15, 2016 meeting

A report *not* of a most alarming nature (Overview)

The 2016-2017 Faculty Senate held its fourth regular meeting in Breck 302. Announcements and reports were augmented by discussions of productive paths forward on the reconciliation of PAc-26 and considerations of MSU's physical and virtual presence.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it” (Announcements)

Chair Dobranski informed the body regarding:

- The Faculty Senate Secretary search
 - Senate is currently without a secretary. When the Provost's ADS, Ms. Davis, returns to work, she will put out a call and work on hiring a replacement.
- The Executive Council's revision of UAR 331.01 (Mass Electronic Communications)
 - The EC has submitted a revision to the Provost that would allow strategic stakeholders (the Dean of the Graduate School, the Chairs of Faculty Senate and Staff Congress) to send mass emails to people in their areas/divisions. The Provost will review this revision and submit it to the President's Cabinet.
- The EC's thoughts on the President's 9/23/16 email noting that money withheld from employees will not be returned in the wake of the recent KY Supreme Court decision reversing Governor Bevin's budget cuts
 - The President clearly stated last term that furlough funds would not be returned to employees, even if the Supreme Court ruled in favor of universities (a ruling the President did not deem likely).
 - The Senate has already formally voiced its criticism of the President's poor planning in the censure passed last term, a censure that explicitly contends that MSU's financial problems are not coterminous with the actions of the current Governor.

- The President’s decision to retain the funds from a furlough that was designated, in press releases and internal messages, as a direct response to the Governor’s cuts, is thus corroboration of the claims made in the censure. In consequence, it could be said that the problem has already been addressed by Senate.
- The EC views the decision as important historical evidence that can be used to justify the vivification of the Planning Committee and an increased presence of faculty on important decision-making bodies.

Senator Caric, who was not a member of Senate last term, noted that there is widespread faculty discontent with the President’s decision. (Editorial aside: Senator Caric is not the only Senator who has heard complaints.) He questioned the wisdom of treating the problem as an historical issue, and wondered aloud if an increased faculty presence on committees were enough redress. After a brief discussion, both Chair Dobranksi and Senator Caric agreed: MSU needs to rethink its priorities.

“Much as I respect them, I believe, I thought only of” MSU (Provost Report)

Provost Ralston updated the body on:

- The most recent CPE meeting
 - The consortium agreement (SARA) passed unanimously. Each Kentucky school now has an option to join.
 - The yearly fee for consortium privileges (e.g., being able to offer classes in other consortium schools in other states) is \$13,000. We will pay \$6,000 to SARA and \$7,000 to the CPE. (Note: the Provost did not know why the CPE fee exceeded SARA’s annual charge.)
 - The CPE’s new Diversity Plan has passed. In order to address the specifics of the new plan, and make sure that we are in compliance, the Provost is, with Senate leadership help, formulating a small committee of already interested and involved faculty who will designate a working group that will set the parameters for the plan’s implementation on campus and oversee the creation of a standing committee that will monitor that implementation and address diversity issues going forward. (Note: the small committee and working group [which succeeds the small committee] will dissolve once their charges are completed. That said, the Provost earnestly hopes that motivated faculty will be willing to function as “bridges” by serving in successive groups.) The goal is to have a realization of our plan, and a standing committee to oversee it, in place by April of 2017.
- The revision process for PAc-26
 - The Provost heartily endorses the Board’s recent decision, which demonstrates a commitment to consensus.
 - He is pleased to begin work on the reconciliation committee for this important PAc, particularly because he believes that the Academic Affairs community can produce a mutually agreed upon document. (Editorial aside: the last reconciliation meeting with the BOR Chair, and the information relayed by the Chair of the Senate in his 9/21/16 email regarding the PAc-26 compromise, did highlight a number of areas of consensus. The faculty members of that

- reconciliation team are in accord with the Provost—a mutually agreeable policy is within sight and can certainly be crafted within the academic year.)
 - The exact parameters of the new reconciliation committee have not been set. The Provost is waiting to hear if the faculty favor 3 or 4 members per team, and he has not designated his exact members yet. What he can say is that he and possibly a chair and a dean will be on it. All members will be able to draw on the head of HR and UC, but these folks will only serve in an ex officio capacity. The committee members will all be from Academic Affairs.
- The blue-ribbon taskforce
 - The Provost spoke briefly of the blue ribbon task force empaneled to explore MSU’s role in the region. (For more on this taskforce, including its composition, see the President’s 9/30/16 email.) The recommendations made by this body, which will be presented to Dr. Andrews in March, will be a “gift to the next President,” who will be able to use them to productively map the institution’s future.

In the discussion that followed, a number of issues surrounding MSU’s commitments and priorities were raised:

- Senator Schack urged the administration to focus on the physical campus, and the experience of students in material classrooms, even as we increase our online presence.
- Senator Caric wanted to know why a blue ribbon taskforce was even necessary, given our Center of Regional Engagement. (According to the Provost, the Center’s knowledge of the region and activities, while extensive, does not encompass a thorough enough understanding and assessment of MSU’s significant investments in the region, such as our regional campuses.)
- Senator Guerin, who is on the taskforce, promised to update the Senate on the taskforce’s activity.
- The Provost noted that any effort to bolster our online presence will have to show differentiation and value. The recent move to make all MBA instructors Quality Matters (QM) certified offers MSU a way to differentiate its program from others in the pack.
- The Provost also informed the Senate that the institution was putting out an RFP to market graduate programs. No one knows what we’ll be able to afford or do, but the people at the institution currently have their hands full (the new VP of Student Success is in charge of marketing undergraduate programs) or are underfunded (the Dean of the Graduate School doesn’t have the budget to market), so we would have to hire someone to market our programs and secure funds to do so. The Provost would like to see us do this, as we have yet to market any of our graduate degrees.
- In a general discussion of the enrollment report, it was noted that overall head count is down, but not as down as we had supposed, and there is reason to think that the decline in numbers in graduate programs may not be precipitous (as we may have lost only non-paying students). Chair Dobranski noted that retention was nonetheless up, and asked if faculty, who were put on the line for retention numbers last year, should be rewarded. The Provost said yes. He believes that faculty efforts are what retain students.

“You must therefore allow me to follow the dictates of my conscience on this occasion, which leads me to perform what I look on as a point of duty” (Regent Report)

Regent Berglee submitted a report via email shortly before the Senate met (that message is being sent as an attachment alongside this Communications Report). After acknowledging the difficulty of serving on the Board during what have been challenging times, Regent Berglee noted that he is desirous of having both the faculty and the Board “on the same page,” and he is willing to do his best to bring about this common understanding.

“Elizabeth made no answer.” (Committee reports)

Due to the special session last week (see the September 22, 2016 Communication Report), Senate committees did not get a chance to meet. In consequence, only Governance and Evaluations, which were dealing with actions that predated the special session, had reports.

- Governance: Chair Cottingham put forward two nominations for the Planning Committee (which the Senate, working with the administration, is working to vivify): Scott Meisel (CoBT) and Chris Cottingham (COS). The appointments were approved by the body.
- Evaluations: Chair Tallichet is still accepting and tallying faculty surveys for the presidential search. The information gathered so far was already shared with the consulting company when the EC met with the consultants on campus.

“Adieu to disappointment and spleen.” What are UARs to Boards and VPs? (New Business)

Chair Dobranski noted three areas of new business, and the body acted on one of them.

- A revised copy of UAR 136 (Instructional Delivery) has been circulated. Chair Dobranski asked that comments and questions regarding this document be submitted to him in a timely manner so that faculty may aid in the revision of the UAR.
- Chair Dobranski announced that the EC would be sending a short letter to the Chair of the Board of Regents, thanking the Board for its decision to remand PAC-26 to a faculty and administrative reconciliation team. He then inquired if the Senate, as a body, wished to endorse the letter. After some minor discussion, the Senate voted to do so. Chair Dobranski will draft the short missive and send it to Chair Goodpaster on behalf of the body.
- Chair Dobranski has heard complaints regarding the parking plan recently circulated by VP Bentley, especially from faculty who teach in Ginger. Faculty with parking concerns should contact their Senators or Chair Dobranski with specific issues. Senate will then use this information to attempt to modify the plan.

Because it is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single Senator in possession of a Fall schedule, must be in want of a meeting, however little known the feelings of such a Senator

may be on his/her first entering a legislative body, the next full Senate meeting is set for October 20th.



Attractive Woman, Wealthy Man Somehow
Making It Work



Most respectfully submitted by the 2016-2017 Communications Author, a
Lady (and, occasionally, an “Obstinate, headstrong girl!”)