



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

October 20, 2016 meeting

“Great God! what a scene has just taken place! I am yet dizzy with the remembrance of it. I hardly know whether I shall have the power to detail it” (Overview)

The 2016-2017 Faculty Senate held its fifth regular meeting on October 20, 2016. The short meeting consisted mostly of announcements and reports.

“One man’s life were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought” (Announcements)

- The AAUP budget specialist, Dr. Howard Bunsis, will be coming to campus Friday, November 4th, to educate the campus community on the complexities of academic finances. His formal presentation will be from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Breck 302. Please mark this in your calendar and encourage your colleagues to attend.
- Open enrollment for benefits begins October 31, 2016. We’re sticking with Anthem for administrative services only; in 2017 we will be self-insured and have three plans:
 - Life Long Saving Plan (high deductible with a Health Savings Account—like our current blue plan, but slightly better)
 - Enhanced HRA Value Plan (lower deductible and higher MSU Health Reimbursement Account contribution—this is new)
 - PPO plan (a traditional PPO plan with an HRA—like our current gold plan)

Senator Thomas asked if someone could come to Senate to explain the benefit options. Chair Dobranski offered to contact HR to see if a representative could attend the next Senate meeting (November 3rd).

“For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation” (Old Business)

After soliciting recommendations for the new PAc-26 reconciliation committee, and receiving none in the allotted time, the Executive Council determined that the needs of the faculty would be best met by a 4 member team comprised of the 3 members who have been successfully working on the PAc since the administration determined the PAc warranted revision (those members being Gil Remillard, Katy Carlson, and Annie Adams) and 1 pair of “fresh eyes” who could be conscripted into service, Senator Edna Schack. This 4-person body was put forward for approval at the meeting.

During a rather free-form discussion, Senator White asked why the body was not comprised of a member from every college (note: the discussion tended to this topic because the Senate Chair stated that he had not received any nominations from the College of Business before the EC meeting). In response, members of the EC noted that no one from Business had expressed a desire to serve, and that the only person affiliated with Business who had formally agreed to step in if needed was Chair-Elect McBrayer, a Government professor who was still designated as “Business” for the 2016-2017 Senate by virtue of having been in the College of Business as of March 2016. Senator Thomas requested that Chair-Elect McBrayer be added to the team so that he could be well versed in the policy before taking over as Senate Chair in 2017-2018. Other Senators expressed support for Senator Thomas’ idea, and there was a rather loose discussion of the number of members needed. Some Senators suggested we could rank order the faculty already proposed whereas others noted that they only wished to augment the team as listed, not cut members. After Senator Aagaard expressed her belief that Provost Ralston would be fine with 5 members, and could add a 5th to his team if he so desired (note: Provost Ralston was not in attendance to confirm this point), Chair Dobranski put forward what he determined to be the Senate motion, which was to affirm a 5 member reconciliation team comprised of Adams, Carlson, McBrayer, Remillard, and Schack. This motion passed.

Chair Dobranski promised that he would contact the Provost about the addition of the 5th member and expressed his opinion that “another 2 weeks” would not significantly delay the reconciliation process.

**“Heavy misfortunes have befallen us, but let us only cling closer to what remains”
(Statement from J. Grice)**

Dr. Grice, a faculty member from the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance, addressed the Senate. Her statement is reproduced in its entirety below:

When the University recently faced a budget shortfall, it reduced faculty and staff salaries to help meet the shortfall. Now that some of the funding has been restored, I recommend that the restored funding go toward reimbursing the cuts made to faculty and staff salaries.

I think this proposed action is equitable and will go a long way towards restoring confidence in the administration’s ability to effectively manage the University’s resources and to protect one of its most valuable resources, the employees.

A number of Senators expressed support for Dr. Grice's statement.

“When I looked around I saw and heard of none like me.” (New Business)

The Provost asked the Senate to name a Senator to serve on the initial (ad hoc) Diversity Committee, a committee designed, at least in part, to identify the faculty and staff already working on diversity initiatives on campus. The Executive Council put forward Senator Riegle's name for approval. She was approved.

“I was shut out from intercourse with them” (Provost Report)

The Provost sent Dr. Laurie Couch in his stead. Dr. Couch had no report.

“No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards” (Regent Report)

After noting that the next two Board of Regents meetings would be a November 11th work session and a December 9th Quarterly session, Regent Berglee registered his concern with statements the Board Chair made during the June 10th BOR meeting. Please see the Regent notes (sent alongside this CR as a separate attachment) for more information.

In the discussion that followed, Senator White expressed his confidence that faculty at large support tenure and do not favor pay cuts. He further noted that the Senate needs to survey faculty and that improved personal relationships between members of the BOR and Senate leadership are not enough to secure that faculty perspectives are being represented to the BOR. Senator Tallichet, the chair of the Evaluations Committee on which Senator White serves, wholeheartedly agreed and asked Senator White to bring forward ideas that could further the work her committee has already done to survey faculty. Senator Adams, who also agreed with Senator White's general comments, noted that the individual meetings between BOR and Senate leadership have actually allowed faculty members to impress upon the Board that elected faculty representatives do indeed speak on behalf of the faculty, and she stated that faculty as a whole need to respect what representative democratic bodies can do. Senator Tallichet followed by urging Senators to “do their duty” by engaging with and speaking to their constituents.

From the workshop of filthy creation (Senate Committee Reports)

- Governance Committee
 - NO REPORT
- Academic Issues Committee.
 - AI is currently exploring three issues:
 - Marketing—more specifically, asking what student voices are used in our marketing efforts
 - The possibility of reconceiving FYS—they have asked Tim Hare (the current director of FYS) to come talk to them
 - Freshmen retention rates for online vs. face-to-face courses—the committee is reviewing scholarship to see if there is a difference in success

- Evaluations Committee
 - The “next journey” of the committee involves retention—exploring what MSU is doing right and what the institution may be doing ineffectively. The group will meet again on the 27th.
- Faculty Welfare and Concerns Committee
 - The committee is reviewing the version of PAc-27 that was returned by the administration with minor suggestions; they will be bringing this document to the next Senate meeting.
- Senate Committee on Issues
 - The committee drafted a 5-year plan that it would like Senate to present to the next President. The draft had its first reading on the Senate floor. It will be up for a second reading on November 3rd.

“If I cannot satisfy the one, I will indulge the other” (Update on the Senate Secretary Search)

The Senate secretary had been working for the Senate 5 hours a week: 2.5 hours at regular pay, 2.5 at overtime. This agreement does not comply with the new FLSA, which will require all of the Senate work to be billed as overtime. Given the fact that there will be no extra funding for the position, the hours any secretary would be able to work for the Senate must be cut. Our options are to either have a secretary who can work 5 hours a week for 9 months or a secretary who works 3 hours a week all year. Chair Dobranski will be discussing these options with the EC and making a determination so that the position can be advertised. He welcomes any feedback.

“It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries” (Motion to adjourn)

Senator Adams moved to adjourn at 4:32 p.m. The motion carried.

Before the hideous progeny that is the Faculty Senate was bid to go forth and prosper, it was reminded that the next regular meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2016 (at 3:45 p.m. in Breck 302).



Submitted by the 2016-2017 Faculty Senate Communications Officer (a.k.a., She who “might [be] ten thousand times more malignant. . .and delight, for [her] own sake, in murder and wretchedness”)