



I AM JACK'S FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

November 3, 2016 meeting

This is your Senate meeting, and it's ending one minute at a time (Overview)

The 2016-2017 Faculty Senate held its sixth regular meeting on October 20, 2016. The body approved a reconciliation team for the revision of PAC-26 and a 5-year plan to submit to the new president.

I know this because Mike knows this (Announcements)

- Dr. Howard Bunsis, Chair of AAUP's Collective Bargaining Caucus and Professor of Accounting at Eastern Michigan University, will present "Breaking Down University Budgets: What Faculty Members Need to Know," Friday, November 4, 2016, from 10:00am – 11:30am in 302 Breckinridge Hall.
- Dr. Jason Bentley, VP of Student Success, will be a guest at the November 17th Faculty Senate Meeting.
- Ms. Jami Hornbuckle, Assistant Vice President for Communications and Marketing, will be a guest at the December 1st Faculty Senate Meeting.
- Chair Dobranksi was unable to secure a representative from HR to come and talk about Open Enrollment, but he encouraged Senators to attend one of the many workshops being offered on campus.

"Which is worse, hell or nothing?" (Old business)

- **PAC-26 reconciliation team:**
 - The Provost does not favor of a 5-member reconciliation team, so the Executive Council moved to approve the 4-member team proposed on October 20th (the team comprised of Annie Adams, Katy Carlson, Gil Remillard, and Edna Schack). During the discussion, the body debated the merits of having all colleges

represented and discussed the feasibility of meeting such a representative goal. The final vote, taken via paper ballot, was 27 yes and 6 no. The motion carried.

- **The 5-year plan**

- The 5-year plan for MSU from the Senate Committee on Issues was up for a second reading.
 - During the discussion, Senator White questioned the purpose and scope of the plan. Although he raised a number of concerns, he made no formal motion to change the document.
 - Senators Caric and Aagaard offered a few suggestions for clarity that were accepted as friendly amendments by the committee.
 - The amended motion passed unanimously.

“[E]ven a soufflé looks pumped” (Provost Report/Blue panel update)

Provost Ralston was in Frankfort and hence unable to make the meeting. In lieu of the Provost report, the body received an update on the Blue Ribbon panel for regional engagement from Senator Guerin. Senator Guerin, who is a member of the School and Alumni Relations workgroup, noted that the panel was looking at what MSU is currently doing and planning to make recommendations by February or March. She urged Senators to contact her with any feedback they may have.

“You just do your little job. Pull a lever. Push a button.” (Regent Report)

The Faculty Regent had no official report. He did, though, have a list of upcoming BOR meeting dates:

- Friday, November 11th—worksession at 9:00 a.m. in the CHER building
- Friday, December 9th—regular meeting of the BOR, when action can be taken
- Friday, November 4th—meeting of the Presidential Search Committee, (Regent Berglee noted that this recently called meeting will mostly be held in closed session)

Senator Adams briefly reported on the October 27th meeting of the Board of Regents Executive Council. During a preliminary overview of the state of the university (an overview that the President is being asked, by the Board, to draft), President Andrews made two interesting assertions: (1) MSU does not need to increase research funding, only maintain the “pockets of excellence” it currently has and (2) there are bound to be more program eliminations as MSU becomes a more “nimble” institution in the future. (Editorial aside: Is this the true Project Mayhem? Because it sure feels like a chemical burn.)

Notes from the Paper Street Soap Company (Faculty Senate Committee Reports)

- **Governance** proposed a slate of candidates that was passed unanimously:
 - Lynn Haller for 2016-18 College of Science seat on University Promotion
 - Replacing B. Reeder (departmental conflict w/D. Eisenhower)
 - Mike Kessinger for 2016-18 College of Education seat on Library
 - Replacing T. Conner (resigned)

- Amber Hughes for 2016-18 College of Education seat on Service
 - Replacing T. Conner (resigned)
- **Academic Issues** is looking at the literature regarding student success in online courses. In their review, the committee found that freshmen taking online courses are more likely to drop classes (and out of the university in general) than upperclassmen taking online coursework.
- **Evaluations** is discussing retention issues. The committee hopes to identify areas where faculty and administration can work together to retain students.
- **Faculty Welfare and Concerns** brought a revised version of PAc-27 to the Senate floor for a first reading. Senator Carlson noted that the majority of the changes marked on the draft passed through the Senate in January (when the revised draft was sent to the upper administration and got put on a back burner due to budget issues). Now that the administration has had time to review the document and make suggestions, the new PAc-27 is being brought forward with some modest revisions and a few questions regarding more substantive changes. Senator Carlson walked the body through the new revisions, which include:
 - A clarification of the fact that faculty and faculty alone decide if they will apply all the years they may have been granted toward tenure
 - The jettisoning of the small binder—the small binder was never consistently utilized in practice, as higher committees inevitably asked to review the full tenure portfolio, so the committee has removed the unnecessary requirement (and hence streamlined sections 6 and 7 in the PAc)
 - A discussion of diversity that includes more than just diversity of gender
 - A clarification of how minority opinions are to be addressed

The discussion frequently veered into the type of arguments and commentary technically not allowed during a first reading. If this discussion is any indication of what will happen during the second reading, the body will debate how minority opinions are to be addressed and determine whether the processes for appointment with tenure should be the same for faculty as well as administrators. (Note: the tenure process for external candidates is necessarily truncated to facilitate timely hiring decisions. Our current policy offers a much more streamlined path for approval for administrators.)
- **Issues** had its 5-year plan approved by the body earlier in the meeting. Chair McBrayer noted that his group has also been discussing the creation of an ombudsperson (aside: ombudsmammal?), but the committee does not wish to pursue a path the Senate as a whole may not endorse. After suggesting that Senate could create its own ombudsperson to serve faculty while a campus-wide position was being proposed, Chair McBrayer asked what the will of the body might be. A number of Senators spoke in favor of an ombudsposition in general but expressed concern that such a proposal might be fruitless, given the unsuccessful attempts to create such a position in the past. Senator Sharp, the member of Issues who actually raised the ombudsposition in the first place, argued that such a position could not be created under the current administration

and suggested that Senate wait until a new President is in office to broach the topic again. No official decision was made.

“Changeover. The movie goes on. Nobody in the audience has any idea.” (New Business) Chair Dobranski introduced an idea that the Executive Council had discussed in a meeting with the President and Provost—ensuring greater continuity in Senate leadership through longer service terms. While a number of Senators noted the need for consistency, and expressed concern that one year may not be long enough for a Chair to serve, they also recognized that any change in length of terms would have far reaching consequences (in regards to faculty leaders’ teaching load, course offerings in the departments of the leaders, and the articulation of rules and regulations in the Senate’s own constitution).

“What you are experiencing is premature enlightenment.” The next regular meeting of the Senate is scheduled for November 17, 2016 (at 3:45 p.m. in Breck 302).



“You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake”



Submitted by the 2016-2017 Faculty Senate Communications Officer (a.k.a., the “infectious human waste” in 8G who no longer has a collagen trust fund)