



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

November 16, 2017 meeting

“Time, with all its celerity, moves slowly to him whose whole employment is to watch its flight.” (Overview)

Faculty Senate held its seventh official meeting on November 16th. It had a first reading of the revision to PAC-2 and five standing committee descriptions. It received important updates from the Faculty Regent, the Provost, and the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Life.

“The truth is that no mind is much employed upon the present; recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments.” (Announcements)

- Senators are reminded that regular attendance is required for both full Senate and Senate committee meetings.
- The complete membership list for the Strategic Planning Committees is available on the Faculty Senate BlackBoard site.
- Problems with the Governor’s proposal for pension reform were raised at the reform rally at Rowan County Middle School last week. More recently, actuarial analyses have shown that the proposed modifications to the KTRS system alone (a system that is only one facet of KRS) would cost taxpayers billions more while providing participants less.
- The annual audit, in its new format, will be approved by the Board of Regents at their December 7th meeting. It will be up on the website shortly thereafter.
- The Board is revising its bylaws. The Faculty Regent, who is on the revision subcommittee, will inform us of their progress.
- The administration’s plans for 3-year NTTF positions (see the October 19th CR for details) are currently on hold.

“To ADMOVE (ADMO'VE) v.a. [admoveo, Lat.] To bring one thing to another” (Pac-2 revision)

Chair Carlson offered a first reading of a revision of PAc-2 (promotion), which is being modified to align with the recently approved PAc-27 (tenure). (A pdf of the marked-up draft has been emailed with this report.)

The substantive revisions:

- References to a “slim” portfolio, a documentary double-step that had been included in both tenure and promotion policies but was rarely used in practice, are removed.
- The articulation of committee organization and membership is now parallel in both policies.
- The level on which committee members serving on more than one committee should vote is clarified. (During the time for questions, though, it was rightly noted that departmental Promotion committees, unlike Tenure committees, do not have “review” or “reappointment” years, so the parallel with 27 here needs to be rethought.)
- Language regarding what happens in relation to a split vote has been changed to parallel PAc-27.

Concerns raised during questions:

- “Time in rank” needs to be more fully specified.
- Official designations of rank need to be capitalized throughout.
- There may be an issue in this PAc, and the recently approved PAc-27, with references to departmental FEPs, as not all departments have one FEP. (This may only apply to recent reorgs in the College of Humanities and the Frankenstein’s monster department of HPIL.)

“Forms of government are seldom the result of much deliberation.” (Revision of committee descriptions)

Senator Finch, standing in for Chair Lennex, presented, for a first reading, the committee’s revision of five standing committee descriptions.

The committee proposed minor (i.e., “housekeeping”) revisions to the “General Education Council” and “Student Disciplinary Committee.” Because Senator Finch noticed that the committee had not made all of the requisite changes to titles in the new descriptions, the drafts were not voted on at this time.

The committee also proposed more substantive changes to “Intercollegiate Athletics,” “Excellence in Teaching,” and “Creative Research and Productions.” In the absence of either institutional record or NCAA clarification of what constituted a “protected class,” the committee reworked the language in the description of “Intercollegiate Athletics” to adequately account for diversity. In consultation with current members of “Intercollegiate Athletics,” the committee also changed the frequency of meeting for that body from at least twice a semester to at least once. (A number of Senators raised concerns about this particular revision.) The membership of “Excellence in Teaching” was changed to account for the changing role of the Director of Leadership and Professional Development and the fact that

Distinguished Researcher and Distinguished Creative Production person are better suited to “Research and Creative Productions.” References to internal proposals and grants for teaching (funding for which does not currently exist) were also removed. (Some Senators asked why the review of sabbaticals are still included in this committee’s description.) The description of “Research and Creative Productions” was changed to reflect the shift in membership already noted in the discussion of “Excellence in Teaching.”

Senator Finch noted that Chair Lennex welcomes feedback for the second reading of these descriptions. She just requested that the feedback be provided by November 27th.

“The duty of criticism is neither to depreciate nor dignify by partial representations, but to hold out the light of reason.” (Regent’s report)

The Board of Regents met last Thursday to reviewed the work of Audit and Bylaw subcommittees.

Important takeaway from the 2016-17 audited financial statements (which will be approved at the December 7th meeting):

- MSU’s pension liability: \$265,430,000
- Net tuition revenue is up: \$37,619,000 (+\$1.6m) [not including Pell Grants]
- State appropriation is down: \$42,036,000 (-\$1.4m)
- The Foundation is doing great work: \$53,389,649 (net assets) (+7.4m)
- Our total long-term debt is a concern. It’s currently \$102.5 m (2017-18), which requires annual debt service payment of \$9.6m (+\$1.1m).

In response to questions about the long-term debt, Regent Pidluzny noted that the figure itself has spiked in recent years, due mainly to our \$10m IT project and construction projects (Andrews Hall, cost overruns at The Rock, the purchase of the Board of Ed building, the Brass Eagle apt. building, etc.). He will have more information to present on the institution’s long-term debt (including capital lease obligations) at a later date.

The revision of the BOR bylaws continues, and it is possible that the work will be completed in enough time to be approved at the December 7th meeting. Contrary to expectations, this revision involves more than just timely updates (such as removals of references to telegraph messages and the like). Our bylaws need to be more definitively aligned with state statutes, such as KRS 164.350, which has this to say about BOR powers and responsibilities:

Each board of regents shall periodically evaluate the institution’s progress in implementing its missions, goals, and objectives to conform to the strategic agenda.

We currently have no reference to the evaluation of our academic mission in our bylaws. A few Senators wondered whether a Board, largely comprised of non-academics, would be able to evaluate the institution’s academic mission. Regent Pidluzny, who was aware of this potential problem, noted that the reference would need to be carefully worded so that it would ensure the necessary oversight while privileging the expertise of academic officers.

Moving on from the specifics of the Board meeting to ECU's recent announcement that it plans to freeze tuition for the 2018-19 school year, Regent Pidluzny provided an overview of MSU's tuition trajectory. Looking at the data MSU and the other regional comprehensives supply to IPEDS, Regent Pidluzny demonstrated that the "average net price for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates paying the in-state or in-district tuition rate who were awarded title IV federal student aid" (in all income tranches) at MSU has increased significantly—so much so that MSU, which had formally been competitive in terms of tuition, was now second only to WKU, a large regional offering something akin to a flagship experience. The data suggests that MSU needs to evaluate its net price.

IPEDS data also suggests that MSU is falling behind in terms of instructional spending. Over the past 10 years, there's been a 21% decrease in the number of full time faculty (T/Tt and Instructors). Not only do we spend less on instruction than other regionals, but we also have the highest faculty to student ratio. If we don't wish to "muddy" the waters with discussion of FTEs (which, in IPEDS, always has to include Early College numbers), we can still point to the fact that MSU has the lowest faculty salary outlay as a proportion of total revenue. Furthermore, for every \$1.00 we spend on instructional staff salary, we spend \$1.48 on non-instructional salary (which is also more than any other regional comprehensive in the state).

"As hope enlarges happiness, fear aggravates calamity." (Provost's report)

The physical moves on campus are proceeding as planned. The Provost will be meeting with the President on the 17th to talk about academic hires for the coming year. The leadership of Academic Affairs has prepared a prioritized list of important positions and is hopeful that we will be able to fill some of these positions. (That said the Provost is cognizant of budget uncertainty, and he, like the President, does not wish to extend offers only to have the "bottom fall out.") The Provost is also in consultation with the leadership of the college of humanities and is looking into the role of associate deans and coordinators in the newly formed school structures. Last, but not least, statewide discussions of minimum requirements for college admission continue at the CPE. Right now, the current thinking is that a 2.5 GPA will be the minimum requirement for enrollment in a 4-year college. There may also be universal requirements for general education placement on the horizon. None of this should "scare" us. We should be able to address any changes with minimal disruption.

The rest of the report was an update from the AVP of Academic Affairs, Dr. Couch. Academic Affairs is looking into software solutions and consultant guidance that can help us "close the gaps" in regards to retention. On Wednesday, November 15th, the Education Advisory Board came to campus to present what they could do to help us "drill down" into data and share information (hopefully across platforms) among various constituents. (MSU has a history with EAB. We've already hired them to help with recruiting, and, according to Dr. Couch, we have seen a good return on investment there.) Based on this presentation, which was attended by a number of constituents across campus (including Chair Tallichet), there is an interest in putting out a request for proposals so that we can get a solution in place to utilize with the incoming 2018 Fall class.

In response to questions, Dr. Couch noted that we are attempting to avoid the problems of the past by changing the process for selecting software and consultant solutions. Unlike ADVISE, the current technological tool that remains “glitchy” and cost prohibitive in terms of full access for all advisors, whatever “solution” we find now will be selected by the leadership of Academic Affairs in consultation with others. In the discussion that followed Senators expressed a desire to have more faculty involved in the decision-making process (currently, the only faculty member involved is Chair Tallichet, and she herself believes that wider faculty input is necessary). In reply, Dr. Couch stated that she was more than willing to publicize presentations and seek feedback, but that the tight time frame (to get everything in place for Fall 2018) may mean that presentations and deliberations may occur when faculty are not on campus.

Faculty with questions, concerns, or recommendations (such as the recommendation that faculty be able to access student information for all students in our classes, not just our advisees) should contact either Dr. Couch or Dr. Tallichet.

“Employment is the great instrument of intellectual dominion. The mind cannot retire from its enemy into total vacancy, or turn aside from one object but by passing to another.” (Senate committee reports)

- Academic Issues—The committee has not met, so no report.
- Evaluation—The committee is still trying to track down all FEPs. If anyone knows of new FEPs, please send them to Chair Dearden. Her committee will also be exploring the issue of fractionalized workloads.
- Faculty Welfare and Concerns—The committee continues to look at policies.
- Governance—Chair Lennex encourages faculty to check committee memberships on the web. Please report any errors to her.
- Issues—Chair Hare will be meeting with Dean Ernst again to discuss issues related to the reorganization of the college of humanities. Harry Lloyd from Travel Services, who has already met with the Issues committee, will be attending the full meeting Senate on November 30th.

“He that runs against Time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.” The Senate adjourned at 5:25 p.m. The next full meeting will be on November 30th.



Galericulate Bash

Provided by the 2017-18 Faculty Senate Communications Officer, who “would rather see the portrait of a dog that [she] know[s], than all the allegorical paintings they can show [her] in the world.”