



FACULTY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS REPORT
January 18, 2018 meeting

“The written argument endures. The oral argument is fleeting.” (Overview)

Faculty Senate held its ninth official meeting on January 18th. The bulk of the meeting was spent discussing the university’s new Strategic Plan.

“[S]o all things considered, it’s better to have it clearer than confusing.” (Announcements)

Chair Tallichet reported:

- There is a “university-wide travel ban” for faculty. Student travel will be prioritized, and professional development funds are still available for faculty who have earned it.
 - Correction from the Provost: there is no official “ban.” Deans and chairs are just being asked to justify expenses and demonstrate that they can be “conservative” with funding.
- A “health check” of programs is on the horizon. Chair Tallichet will share details when she receives them.
- Revisions of program assessments are due January 31st.
- Faculty and staff are encouraged to complete the survey related to MSU’s Diversity Plan. They should also plan to attend some of the forthcoming diversity workshops, if they are able.
- Enrollment in face-to-face classes must be reported by January 25th for federal student aid and retention purposes.
- Faculty and staff are also encouraged to complete the evaluation forms Institutional Research sent out for departmental chairs and Associate Deans. Those who have not received the link should check their “Clutter” folder.
- Chris Howes has been named the new Chief Information Officer and Assistant VP for Information Technology.
- The search for the new Provost has begun.
- Harry Floyd’s visit (to discuss travel procedures) is being rescheduled.

At the end of Chair Tallichet's announcements, Senator Prindle noted that her recital would be rescheduled, and Senator Blankenship thanked President Morgan for his timely notice of school cancelation.

**“If you're going to change things, you have to be with the people who hold the levers.”
(President Morgan's presentation of the new Strategic Plan)**

President Morgan, accompanied by Jill Ratliff and the leaders of the four planning subcommittee teams, presented Senate with a draft of the new Strategic Plan. This presentation is part of a listening tour, where the leadership of the Strategic Planning committee is visiting with key constituencies to gauge feedback on the proposal that was crafted by ten percent of the campus community. If the leadership hears a number of “shouts” about specific elements of the plan, they will rework portions of the draft. Barring significant feedback, though, this draft will more than likely be what the President advances to the Board of Regents.

After the president's initial remarks, the leaders of the various teams (Mindy Highley, Greg Russell, Bob Albert, and Michelle Barber) were left to answer questions.

Q (Senator Dearden): Where do the regional campuses fit in the plan?

A: The “educational needs of the service region,” articulated in Regional Responsiveness, includes, among other elements, regional campuses.

Q (Senator Ahmadi): The plan says nothing in particular about international students. Are these students no longer a focus/concern?

A: “Diversity” includes the category of international. Additionally, there is a specific mention of international students, in terms of scholarship opportunities, in the section on Outcomes.

Q (Senator Adams): Have we considered the fact that we might be pursuing goals that will harm us in the long run? High impact practices are labor and time intensive and may present problems for non-traditional students, and there is research that shows that meeting the needs of underserved students can lower your *U.S. News & World Report* rankings.

A: Everyone knows that high impact practices are labor intensive and require resources, which is why the Academic subcommittee included language that would allow departments, units, and faculty to “have a say” in the decision. Student Success, which was concerned with progression rates, noted that the ideal experience should be linked to jobs and individualized as much as possible. The Reputations and Rankings subcommittee was more than aware of the potential problems with rankings and metrics, which is why they did not draft outcomes that prioritized individual metrics in isolation. Clearly, they could not ignore the ubiquitous *U.S. News*, but they also factored in things like *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* survey of great places to work, as well as various rankings of military friendly schools. This breadth should give MSU a broader and more accurate view of where the institution is (and where it needs to be).

Q (Senator T. Hare): What is innovative in this new plan?

A: In terms of “best practices,” there is nothing particularly new in the document, but there are many elements and ideas that will be “new” to MSU. MSU has never had a “sophomore experience,” and it would be nice to finally have nationally competitive faculty and staff compensation packages. Fractionalized workloads, which have already been implemented to

some extent, are new to our campus, and there are many opportunities for innovation throughout the document. Anytime a strategy starts with “develop” or “create,” there is room for people to innovate.

Q (Senator Dearden): The draft has a number of strategies and ideas. Is there some sort of rank order for them? How are we moving forward?

A (Dr. Morgan): There is no rank order. We have begun moving forward on ideas that we can implement now—such as reducing the foot print of the campus, fractionalized workloads, and assessing our facilities potential. Dr. Morgan does not believe that we will be able to methodically work through and achieve all of the goals listed herein, but he is hopeful that we can work through a majority of these ideas, even in this harsh budget climate. Some of the goals and strategies will require a culture change. Others will require a vision change. Dr. Morgan, though, believes that we are capable of such transformation.

Q (Senator J. Hare): How did changes occur after each subcommittee submitted its report?

A: The heads of the committees reviewed the compiled documents, looking to remove duplication and ensure an analogous level of specificity in every area. In some cases, specifics that were mentioned in multiple areas were ‘rehomed’ to the most suitable location, such as what happened with the recurrent references to MSU’s digital presence.

Follow up: Senator J. Hare was deeply concerned that one of her committee’s strategies—a call to study the ROI of the very significant expense of athletics—was “lost” and “vague-ified” in another statement under Outcomes. Senator Adams, the author of the “vague-ified” statement, explained that her committee’s strategy utilized the language of performance funding to isolate and review costs in the model that were not part of the core mission of the university.

Q (Senator Lennex): Should the plan include student news products like the Trailblazer?

A: The leaders thought this was an excellent point and believed that it could be included when implementation teams were formed.

Q (Senator Ahmadi): How many other schools use fractionalized loads?

A (Dr. Morgan): Murray has fractionalized loads (Dr. Morgan knows this because he started the process there). Other schools, like UK, have the same process without the specific name. (In UK’s case, it is referred to as “percentages.”)

Follow up: Ahmadi is concerned that a shift to fractionalized loads will affect the “tenure density” of classes. Dr. Morgan does not believe that the “fractional” use of a relatively low number of staff persons will affect “tenure density.”

Q (Senator Collingsworth): Who is going to do the work of staff when they are moved from their normal positions into the classroom, and how will we ensure that recruitment and retention won’t be harmed by having people who may not wish to teach in the introductory classroom?

A (Dr. Morgan): Some staff work may have to “drop” in our move to get more people in the classroom, and the President and the Provost have done a very careful job vetting the relatively small number of staff persons who have been shifted to a fractionalized load. While it is possible that this solution could prove, in some respects, less than ideal, Dr. Morgan does not see a better way of dealing with the fact that our rosters have been “coming down,” and will continue to

come down, in these tough economic times. This year alone, MSU is looking to cover a \$7.2 to \$7.4m spread, a spread that has thankfully “contracted” from an initial \$12m. We hope that some of the cuts will be mitigated in the legislature, but there’s no indication that this deleterious trend will reverse. Dr. Morgan is open to “using every gambit” we have to deal with our losses; he just would rather not “can whole areas” of staff, as other universities have done. If people have other options or ideas, please let him know.

Q (Senator T. Hare): If we are facing dire times, and need to explore every gambit, why don’t we consider getting rid of athletics? Athletics is a major cost driver and we could market ourselves as a student friendly institution focused on an academic core.

A (Dr. Morgan): Dr. Morgan does not wish to single out any particular unit. He will not allow staff to say which academic programs should be “cut,” and he will not allow academics to call for the “cut” of athletics. He is committed to carefully reviewing all areas, units, and programs and finding cost savings where he can.

Q (Senator Prindle): Will programs like Music be able to get the positions they need?

A (Dr. Morgan): Performance funding rewards instruction, so that encourages investment in the academic core. That said the investment will not be uniform. When we evaluate needs, some units might lose a position; some might gain.

Q (Regent Pidluzny): If the Strategic Plan is implemented well, what will we see and what will MSU be known for?

A: We will have the wrap around services we need to provide a comprehensive student experience, and we will be a much more fiscally sound institution, better able to direct money to the academic core. If we achieve certain metrics in rankings, we will be “known” in general, which will raise our visibility and aid our recruitment efforts.

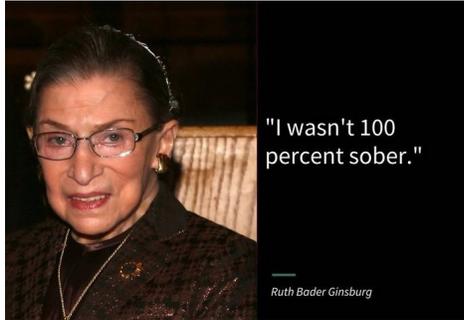
Q (Senator Gonzales-Espada): Transfer agreements are mentioned in the plan. A number of these, especially in the area of P-5, are currently problematic. What are we doing to update these agreements and ensure seamless transfer and progression?

A: This issue will be address by the implementation teams.

“A constitution, as important as it is, will mean nothing unless the people are yearning for liberty and freedom.” (Senate committee reports)

- Academic Issues (No report)
- Evaluation Committee (No report)
- Faculty Welfare and Concerns (The committee would have presented the PAc-2 revision for a second reading today had there been time. They have also been working on a new version of PAc-10, which will come to the Senate floor soon.)
- Governance (No report)
- Issues Committee (Chair-Elect Hare will be meeting next week with the President, the Faculty Regent, and the University Counsel to discuss University Counsel’s role, particularly as it involves the representation of faculty.)

“So often in life, things that you regard as an impediment turn out to be great good fortune.” The Senate adjourned at 5:35 p.m. The next full meeting will be on February 1, 2018.



Submitted by the 2017-18 Faculty Senate Communications Officer, who knows that “Dissents speak to a future age” and, even more importantly, “There is a Constitutional right to prostitution.”