

Communications Report of the Faculty Senate meeting on 2022-April-07

Written by Communications Officer Dr. Dirk Grupe

1. **Meeting start:** 15:45/3:45 PM
2. **Approval of the Minutes** of the March 31, 2022 meeting: The minutes were posted on Blackboard and following Senator Chatham's suggestion, senators were ask to read the minutes before hand. Senator Grupe made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Senator Chatham, motion passed.
3. **Announcements (01:30):** Emily Wiley the President of SGA has circulated a flyer asking for donation far Ukraine. The flyer is available on the Blackboard shell (and appended to this report). President Long asked senators to donate.
4. **Presidents Report:** No report, Dr. Morgan was not present
5. **Provost Report:** (02:25, Provost Dr. Norman) Provost Norman had nothing new to report and was open for questions. Regent Adams asked about the CPE academic program review reports that people are currently working on which is due on April 12. Will this be the review process that we will use in the future or will this change? Provost Norman responded that it is not the plan to use this every year. There had been a staggered review process in place before Gray's Associates every few years. Provost Norman will work with the deans over the summer to work on the best process to move forward. This will also help to do this process more efficiently in years to come.

Senator Hare asked what the consequences were of the whole Gray's Associate's evaluation. We received a full report, but Senator Hare asked if there have been any consequences in response to that report. Provost Norman said it was not clear, they were waiting for CPE and CPE was waiting for Universities to respond. This is also the reason for the new report to see where we stand. Regent Adams asked if this review report is the report which is due on July 15 to CPE, which Provost Norman confirmed. We were looking at some of the Gray data which might be helpful to us.

Senator Sharp asked about the due date of the report and Provost Norman clarified that the report will be due on April 15. Senator Sharp then asked about the questions themselves which are very generic and she as a program coordinator has to answer questions which given her position is not appropriate to answer. Provost Norman said that this was also the conversation with the deans. This year's report is more exploratory. In the past these reports were at higher stakes. This review process was a learning process to build a more robust system in the future. However, Senator Sharp remarked that one of the questions was "What can you program do to help with first year retention?" Their programs have no influence here. Nothing is their program has anything to do with first year experience. Provost Norman said that this is exactly the information he needs to make the process better in the future.

Senator Finch said that the process of the review was not too complicated because it was similar to the process for Grey's Associates and that the same data were used. However she had a question regarding the grow, sustain, fix, and sunset categories. During the assessments by Grey's we were told that the best for almost all programs was "sustain" except if there was something really exceptional. Her question was, if the University is using the same approach, or for her, it would be almost always the best to see growth instead of just "sustain". However, would this be a negative thing to chose this option. Provost Norman responded that his answer might be a bit generic, but what he wants to see is where programs stand, it is a conversation starter. For example a lot of programs might think they could grow and some might provide some robust information that support that assessment, but other programs may not have the evidence to actually support that. The second question put forward by Senator Finch was regarding the graduate profile, if there would be a follow up in a few years regarding changes to the curriculum. What would be the next steps after the initial review? Provost Norman said that the goal here is to learn to see what the programs need to get them into a particular direction and to talk with CPE what the first steps into this direction would be. Right now it is tell us where you are so the University can make a case to CPE to support what we need.

Senator Grupe asked regarding the to previous meeting's report by Senator Dunman that he is leaving and so far in his growing department there has not been even a search committee put together to replace him. Other departments are in similar situations. Fortunately Physics hopefully will get a new person (they did), but many places are really scrambling. Provost Norman responded that he is working with the deans on this and that he has advocated for particular faculty lines. He has talked with Dean Davison about the situation in Legal Studies.

6. **Regent Report** (Dr. Adams, 20:50): Regent Adams reported the the Board of Regents met last Thursday, March 31 and that she had uploaded the full report to the Faculty Senate's Blackboard site (it is also appended to this report). The Board approved the 3% base pay raise for all employees and a salary floor for faculty ranks (e.g. the minimum salary for a new assistant prof is \$53000). The tenure for Drs. Gretchen, Stanton, and Xu was approved. There were also several updates for debt restructuring plans and also the new Website. Regent Adams reported that the new website looks great. Most updates regarded the good news from the (KY) legislature of giving more money to Higher Education. The President also believes that we can start to compete within the performance funding model. Institutions can also receive money for asset preservation. This would be money to help out with new roofs, new HVAC system, or new elevators. However, Morehead has to put up $\$6 \times 10^6$ to gain $\$3.5 \times 10^7$ in state funding. Morehead also received \$250000 for the Space Science Center and $\$1.5 \times 10^6$ for the Craft Academy to accommodate an eventual increase in the number of Craft students. The President also noted that he thinks we have the funding for building a new Science Center.

Because the Board was discussing the Quarterly financial report and the bookstore was mentioned in it, Regent Adams asked why the transition to Barnes and Nobel was done in the middle of the semester. The President responded that this was in consultation with CFO Mary Fister-Tucker that this was a good time, because then compared with the end of the semester the University would be off the hook with book buy backs. Now this would be Barnes and Noble. The reason why Regent Adams asked was because there were several

incidents of disruptions where students all the sudden lost access to their electronic books. Regent Adams noted that this had been the concern of the staff regent even before she had been made aware of the potential problems.

There were two issues Regent Adams voted against. The first one was an increase in tuition. Also the Student Regent voted against this. Regent Adams voted against the tuition increase because students are having a lot of fees. For example completely online students still have to pay a fee for the Rec-Center although they are never on campus and can not use it. However, referring to Legal Council this is a legal issue so every student is paying a blanket user fee. The second item Regent Adams voted against was a plan to move the authority of selecting an optional retirement plane (like TIAA-CREF) from the Board to the President. The plan now is to have a group that the President deems to be capable of making such a decision determine the options on behalf of the institution and the inform the Board. The reason why the president wanted to delegate the authority is because other institutions are doing this. The reason why Regent Adams voted against is was that retirement is different than health care which changes year to year. The President noted that only a few people are in an optional retirement plan, however as Regent Adams pointed out that some people with optional retirement plans might be affected of the retirement plans will change and all the sudden their plan is not available anymore. However Regent Adams was the sole vote against this and the delegation of authority occurred.

Senator Kmetz asked regarding the asset preservation funds if there are any strings attached to this. Regent Adams responded that this is for the conversation of building because they are aging and need to be updated and maintained. This type of money will help us to preserve the buildings.

Senator Morrison wanted to know why the Employee Benefits Committee was cut out of the discussion about the retirement plans. Regent Adams said that this is a very valid question and that the Benefits Committee is often even cut out of Health Care decisions too. They ask for information and they never hear anything back. Regent Adams pointed out that the President wishes to have this new committee which will consist of himself, the HR director, the CFO, and several people with doctorial training in accounting. Regent Adams asked why we need a new committee when we already have a committee. Regent Adams is also concerned about another delegation of authority. Senator Morrison pointed out that expertise is good but the problem with ad hoc committees is that we often already have functional committees that can take care of these issues. He also pointed out that probably nobody in Senate has more expertise about retirement right now than he does, because he is approaching retirement age although he has no law degree or background in accounting. The other question Senator Morrison had was, what percentage of faculty are actually in the optional retirement plan. Regent Adams did not have the number, but said that many newer faculty member opt for the optional retirement system. However, how many new faculty members do we have? Senator Hassan remarked that he actually is the chair of the Benefits committee and that he has never ever been informed about this issue. Senator Lennex responded to Senator Morrison's question that the last time she checked Morehead had the highest number of faculty in the KTRS system next to Kentucky State.

7. **Staff Congress Report** (David Flora, 36:20): Staff Congress just met on Tuesday, April 05. Staff Congress is entering the nomination and elections of officer cycle. The first reading of the motion of changing the titles of Chair and Vice-Chair to President and Vice-President was passed. If it passes the second reading next month this change will be made official. Staff Congress also passed a resolution condemning the violence of the war by Russia on Ukraine.
8. **SGA Report:** (Kelton Crank, 37:40): SGA Representation Kelton Crank clarified that he is now the Vice-President-elect and all officers of SGA get sworn in on April 20. SGA is still working on the Reading Days proposal, which he and Emily will present at the next Academic Issues committee meeting first (April 14). The animal bone bill passed the previous night (donation of bones to the library for vet students). SGA also sent a website resources link to Provost Norman and Dr. Couch.
9. **Executive Council Committee Reports:** (40:00) The Executive Council had several items to discuss:
 - Resolution regarding confidentiality agreements for search committees. Senator Lennex introduced the resolution on behalf of the Executive Council (the text of the resolution is also added to the end of this report). The resolution ask that all agreements that have been signed already to be rescinded. Senator Lennex reminded Senate that we do have a PG (61) that covers all of this. This broad confidentiality agreement is unnecessary. Senator Grupe asked if we should suspend the rules and immediately go into second reading given the urgency of the matter. Senator Lennox appreciated Senator Grupe's motion, but suggested to hear for our constituents first, because not all of them are aware of these agreements and the discussions we previously had. Senator Hare asked for a clarification that the resolution only to rescind those agreements that have been already signed and not to stop asking people immediately to sign this. Senator Lennex clarified that it is correct, it also ask for rescinding this. Senator Hare asked why the resolution does not ask to stop it and Senator Lennex responded that we wanted to send a message out and she wanted to give faculty a chance to ask to include stopping the agreement and that the EC is open for any suggestion for second reading. Senator Hare suggested that the resolution contains two statements one that asked to stop the agreements and another that ask that all those which have been signed to be rescinded. Senator Chatham pointed out the the current language limits us to this year, however, there have been agreements signed last year already. Senator Lennex said that she would not object to this and that this is a good clarification point. Senator Ratliff asked how long these agreements have been in effect. Senator Lennex responded that she thought this was in effect only this year, but now she is learning that it had been in effect already last year. Senator Lennex also said that this has now be even extended to ADS searches and that she had been on the provost search two years ago and it wasn't this kind of agreement. Senator Grupe confirmed that when he was on the provost search committee a year ago that that agreement was very specific. Regent Adams remarked that Provost Norman has stated that there had been previous practices with confidentiality agreements and that he had instituted and asked HR to work on drafting this document. Provost Norman said that the riginal document had been around since at least 2019.

The reason why many people were not aware of it was that they were not on a search committee and even if they were, the signing was not consistently enforced by HR. There was no consequence when you did not sign it. Provost Norman said that he will go back to look for the original document. Senator Lennex pointed out that there are many versions out there which are inconsistent and that the original version was referring to PG-61. The original version also gave us the ability to discuss things. The current agreement is vastly different. The new agreement is very restrictive. Regent Adams thanked Provost Norman for being here and addressing these issues, because this all predates him coming to MSU in 2020. Regent Adams mentioned that HR has been in flux for quite some time with still having an interim director. If previously the agreement was not required then we cannot go back to that one. This means that the current practice started in 2022 and that this agreement is broad. There always have been agreements for dean and provost searches but not for positions below that. Now it is even for ADS and someone working in a lab. This new agreement follows the unsuccessful attempt from last year to put in place an overall confidentiality agreements which Senate submitted a resolution on and which was rescinded by the President. Senator Lennex asked to take this back to the constituents and send comments and amendments to her by April 15.

- (54:40) President Long said that there was a survey sent out by the President to 40 faculty regarding mask mandates and the new changes that will go into effect the next day (April 08). The Executive Council suggested to have a survey among all faculty instead of just a selected group. President Long also said that we need to be respectful because there are some people who are immunocompromized and others who do not feel comfortable in an unmask environment.
- President Long together with some other faculty will have a meeting with interim CIO (Chief Information Officer) Rick Phillips on April 12. President Long asked that if you have specific IT concerns we need to know what the concern is and where it does occur. One problem might be login issues on Blackboard or WiFi problems in many buildings. Senator Brigham informed President Long and Senate when many high school students were here for the Future Business Leaders of America competition that it was frustrating and embarrassing for the University that the WiFi in ADUC did not work properly. He had to judge several competitions and had to be apologetic to the students about the poor internet connections in ADUC. Senator Brigham asked why did this happen and why was the WiFi not functioning properly. President Long brought up another example where he currently has his laptop fixed at the IT department, and they are having trouble connecting to the internet - in the IT help center! President Long again asked to let him know about any of these incidents. Senator Jenab mentioned that he has asked faculty to send him information on IT issues which he collected and forwarded to the provost just the other day. Regent Adams clarified that the Provost can rightfully ask about technology issues in the class room, but this is not the same as general issues with WiFi on campus. We should be able if there is a problem to give our student some kind of answer.

10. Executive Council Subcommittee Reports:

- **Academic Issues:** (Senator Jenab, 01:01:25): The Academic Issues Committee had a meeting with (Associate Provost) Dr. Laurie Couch to discuss the 50% rule. Dr. Couch said that she will bring this issue to the (University Undergraduate) Curriculum Committee and will discuss this further with the Provost and get back to the Academic Issues Committee in 2 weeks. Regent Adams said that are we showing coherence through the curriculum maps. The question is what is going to happen with program changes when for example just a course is changed. The idea here is to streamline the process so we do not do extra work. She also said that she thought that it was a very productive conversation.

Another item coming up is further discussion with SGA on their Reading Day proposal and SGA President Emily Wiley and Vice-President-elect are invited to the next meeting on April 14. Last but not least regarding IT issues, Senator Jenab collected information and has passed this on to Provost Norman.

- **Evaluations:** (Senator Lennex, 1:04:00): Senator Lennex had no report, but said that she will be contacting the Provost regarding the alignment of the annual evaluation with the tenure-track evaluations.
- **Faculty Welfare & Concerns** (K. Kaufman, 1:04:30): Senator Kaufman presented first reading of the Amendment for PAc-27 regarding early tenure:

4. Tenure Review Prior to the Sixth Year Tenure-track faculty may initiate a tenure review prior to the sixth year of probationary service if, in the opinion of the Department Tenure Committee and Department Chair/Associate Dean, the individual's record of accomplishment across all areas of assignment is commensurate with the award of tenure.

The review shall follow the policies and procedures that govern the conduct of the sixth-year tenure review, as delineated below. However, unlike a tenure review conducted in the sixth year of the probationary period, a tenure review initiated prior to the sixth year can be suspended by the Dean. The Dean shall notify in writing the Department Chair/Associate Dean of their decision to suspend the tenure review and indicate that the individual under review shall be entitled to an ordinary reappointment review at the appropriate time.

A faculty employee whose tenure review has been suspended by the dean shall not be eligible for a subsequent tenure review until the sixth year of their probationary period. A sixth-year comprehensive tenure review of an individual whose previous tenure review was suspended by the Dean shall be conducted according to the policies and procedures delineated below.

This language added to PAc-27 is based on the policies at the University of Kentucky. In summary by approval from the department tenure committee, the department chair/associate dean, and the dean a faculty member could go up for tenure prior to the 6th year. The dean has the ability to suspend this if found to be not appropriate. Senator Morrison (who has been around since the time Methuselah was a boy) remarked that he did not see a compelling reason to do this, because Morehead is not an R1 research university. He thinks that the reason at an R1 to do that is an outstanding grant and publication record and he doubts that we run into this here

(remark: actually we do). Senator Morrison was not sure how the committees would assess the candidates eligibility. Senator Morrison also questioned the power that is given to the dean. Senator Morrison was also wondering what would happen to the candidate if turned down by the University committee. Is this the end of the story for this person, or does the person has another chance during the 6th year? Senator Kaufman answered that it would be the candidate who would put the portfolio forward and approaches the department tenure committee and the chair because they feel that have the qualification to do so. Senator Morrison pointed out that it would be good to know when, because tenure portfolios are due at different times during the process.

Senator Ratliff wondered if hypothetically somebody could request this in the first year, but it needs time to judge if somebody is a good teacher or not and teaching is our prime focus here a this university. Senator Kaufman responded that this was discussed in the committee as well and the process would be that the committee and/or the chair would deny the proposal to go up for early tenure if the teaching needs to be evaluated more. Senator Kaufman admitted that this may need some clarifying language.

Senator Jenab remarked that early tenure happened at other institution in Kentucky, not only at UK. Also Senator Jenab suggested that the committee could signal a tenure-track faculty that they might be ready going up early. Senator Hare said that he shares Senator Ratliff's concerns and said that the candidate first needs to go to the tenure committee of their department. Senator Hare also added that at first he was not in favor of this option, but a lot of the discussion in the committee were about encouraging and supporting highly motivated faculty here when normal raises are not on the table. We did not have any merit based pay raises in a long time. It is hard to hire highly motivated faculty at this place to begin with and get them here, and when they stay here and work hard we want them to be the very best and this is what this incentive is all about. Senator Hare said that now he is supporting this amendment to provide incentive, support, and encouragement for young faculty. What we really need would be appropriate pay raises. This is only something little we can do.

President Long supported Senator Hare and responded to Senators Morrison and Ratliff and explained why he is supporting this from personal experience. President Long explained that before he came to MSU ha had spend 5 years as a post-doc at a teaching extensive institution like this one and got good teaching reviews. He also spend sometime at a research heavy institution in an assistant professor rank. So he had both a lot of teaching and research experience plus he has a pretty extensive publication record. When he came here and talked with his chair at the time he was blocked for the sole reason because salaries were upside down. When he came in, his salary was one of the highest in his department. However he took a significant pay cut by coming here. So he went through the tenure process, but now looking at new faculty, it is what Senator Hare said it is in lieu of other incentives how can we keep the best people we can get.

Senator Dunman shared his personal perspective on this matter as a young professor who is now leaving mostly for money. He is one year short of tenure. He has published,

has been on Senate and has done anything else for tenure, but for him personally getting one year ahead of schedule to get tenure would not have made any difference at all. He thinks this is a good gesture, but he has a family to feed and it is very difficult to stay on. You have to feel comfortable financially. He loves teaching and being here, but again with the salaries at Morehead State this is not sustainable. Senator Jenab said that he hopes that the early promotion also applies for going up for Full and for having a Distinguished Prof. too. Senator Morrison said that Senator Hare made some persuasive comments and that he is more willing to entertain the idea of an early tenure. However he still thinks that the policy needs to be more specific regarding for example dates and what happens if the tenure is not granted. He also cautioned that for the administration tenure is a multi-million dollar decision even with our low salaries. Senator Morrison suggested giving energetic young assistant professors more money and reduced teaching loads.

Regent Adams thanked the committee for recognizing that we need to hold on to people and appreciated that faculty is supporting other faculty even though we may not agree fully how the support is done exactly.

- **Governance::** (J. Finch, 1:21:20) Senator Finch reported that the committee got an extension on the faculty interest survey. Currently the response rate is 43% and last year at this time into the survey we were at 49%. Senator Finch also ask Senate to remind their folks in their department.

Senator Brigham remarked that the found out lately that he was on a standing committee where he never know he was on. Senator Brigham asked that the websites maybe updated and also give the contact information for the committees. He second question was if faculty will be formally informed what their standing committees are. He asked to be better informed. Senator Finch admitted that she missed sending out the letters which will be fixed this year. However, Senator Finch also mentioned that the chairs of the committees should have contacted the committee members last fall.

11. New Business: (1:25:10) Senator Brigham ask for 5 minutes of time in one of the next Senate meetings. He is a member of the Kentucky Purposed 1st Initiate which is led by Dr. Laurie Couch and she asked him to give a short presentation . Next week wil be the CPE student success summit in Louisville and the members of the Kentucky Purpose 1st Initiative will be going to that. The initiative is led by a non-profit organization called Complete College America. The idea here is to help universities all over the country to get their retention rates up. It has become increasingly challenging for universities to hang on to their students. Senator Brigham is planing to give a short presentation after he had the meeting in Louisville.
12. Old Business: none
13. Motion to adjourn the meeting by Senator Grupe, seconded by Senator Hassan, approved
The meeting adjourned at 17:15/5:15 PM.
14. The next Senate meeting will be on April 21, 2022.
15. The **recordings of the meeting** can be found at <https://moreheadstate.webex.com/webappng/sites/moreheadstate/recording/3cfff55e98d9103abf6f005056810026/playback>