

Faculty Senate Communications Report
October 20, 2022

Once upon a time, representatives of the Morehead State University faculty met in a virtual meeting. They called this the “Faculty Senate” and it was led by their fearless leader, Dr. David Long. The Faculty Senate meets every two weeks and discusses the state of the university generally and specific things that the Faculty need to address. But this meeting was different – more specific, more anxious, more important.

The meeting started as the meetings typically do: the Faculty Senate approved the minutes from the previous meeting and President Long announced that he did not have any announcements. The next item on the agenda is a report from the University President, but, as is typical, President Morgan did not make it to the Faculty Senate meeting this week. He did send a representative – Russell Mast – but that individual did not have anything to report on behalf of the President.

Provost Norman then took the (virtual) floor to give his report. The first topic that he addressed was revisions to Pac-27, saying that the Dean’s Council and the Faculty Senate Faculty Welfare and Concerns committee have been working on some revisions. These things have not yet been fully “agreed upon” and so the Provost intends to work with the committee further to resolve the “couple of issues” remaining.

*The language of the revision is thus: “The tenure process will consist of review and judgment at each of the following levels: the Department Tenure Committee, the Department Chair/Associate Dean, the College Tenure Committee, the College Dean, the University Tenure Committee, the Provost, and **the President**” and “The Provost and President may also consider the overall needs of the University while adjudicating tenure applicants.”*

Provost Norman also addressed the predicament surrounding Baird Hall and clarifies a misunderstanding that he perpetuated previously. Instead of, as the Provost had previously suggested, Baird being eventually cleared and the department moved elsewhere, the plan is for Baird to receive a new HVAC system in the hopes that having a new system will fix the problems with the building. This process is likely to take quite a while and the administration will do what it can to “take the pressure off Baird” as much as they can until the HVAC system is repaired.

Finally, Provost Norman spoke to the controversy surrounding the position of gallery director in the Art Department. He claims that the position has “not been removed” but they are “looking for some realistic approaches to perhaps fulfilling the needs of someone to be in that position.”

Regent Adams also gave her report, informing the senate that in a September CPE conference, a speaker spoke about “The Great Upheaval” and the challenges facing universities. She felt that these issues would be the core of the CPE’s future initiatives. Additionally, University President Morgan was one of three university presidents who spoke on a panel at this event

about “game changing strategies” their universities are undertaking. Ours are, apparently, FYS and the QEP. Finally, the Board of Regents meeting schedule for 10/21 was canceled. The next meeting is 12/1.

At this point, the Faculty Senate pivoted away from reports to hear from committees. There was one piece of business to undertake before embarking on our most important agenda item. To set the appropriate mood for this very serious business, President Long read a bible verse: Luke 12 verse 2 and 3, from the King James Version

“For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

The one piece of business undertaken by the Faculty Senate was to approve new language in the description of the Academic Appeals Committee. These changes are the result of new legislation that redefine some of the duties of this committee, as well as title changes. These changes were approved without discussion.

To begin the Faculty Senate’s *very serious discussion* about the state of affairs at the university, Dr. Julie Finch and a student, Brooklin Routt, discussed what has been occurring within the Art Department. Then, Roma Prindle spoke of the history regarding Baird Hall. All of these lengthy discussions were eye-opening with regards to what people are told vs what is actually happening, as well as how terrible things really are within these departments. For the art department, not hiring a new gallery director will severely limit how many students are able to come into the department, as well as potentially preventing students from completing their programs. The art department has had three very unexpected departures in the last few years and has not been able to rehire anyone for those positions. In the music department, black mold has plagued Baird Hall for at least 3 years and the heating and cooling system has consistently failed. Neither of these are generally good for people, but they are disastrous for musicians – instruments fail, voices cannot sing, etc. The building has broken stairs and insufficient lighting. Students do not want to come to Morehead State University’s music program.

The Chair of the Faculty Welfare and Concerns committee then took the (virtual) stage and describe some troubling additions to the new HR website (as well as with Pac-27 described above). These additions appear on the “personnel policies” first page. They include:

- “Future revisions of existing personnel policies or the development of new policies may be proposed by university personnel”
- “Policies affecting faculty employees will be submitted directly to the President by the Faculty Senate for appropriate administrative review.”
- “However, in accordance with Section 12.2.c of the Morehead State University Board of Regents By-Laws, the President of the University is responsible “to

develop rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the purposes expressed herein.”

- “Therefore, the President may modify, suspend, or develop personnel policies as the President deems such modification, suspension of policy, or development of new policy to be in the best interest of the University, subject to the Board of Regents’ ratification at the next regularly scheduled Board of Regents meeting.
- “Policies favorably acted upon will be included in the policy manual when they become effective.”

The concern is that none of these statements accurately reflect the actual policies or procedures at this university, they privilege the University President above everyone else, even the Board of Regents, and do not speak at all towards any sort of shared governance.

Additionally, at the time of the Faculty Senate meeting, the only university policy that was posted on the website was the one pertaining to sabbatical

Author’s note: as of writing this, the website has now been updated to include more, but not all, of the university policies. The language at the top of the page remains the same.

Faculty Senate then discussed these issues and are generally bothered by all of it. Provost Norman promised to see what happened and get the policies reposted. He does not promise to take down or change the problematic language at the top of the page (which, beyond just being a series of problematic statements, are also incorrect citations and quotes. Should teachers not model that which we are teaching their students?). In the discussion of Pac-27, Provost Norman focuses mainly on the language about the Provost and President “consider[ing] the overall needs of the University while adjudicating tenure applicants” saying that sometimes a line may not be able to be continued for “whatever reason.” Regent Adams observed that there is already a policy that does this, and we don’t need additional language on it. Senator J. Hare points out the timing of these changes to Pac-27 is very “suspicious” in light of the other events occurring on campus.

Senator White has suggested that we have three things we need to do: contact prior administrators to get their opinions, actually talk to the Faculty Senate’s constituents (*Faculty senate has been accused of not being a representative body, so talk to your Senators, folks!*), and find out the opinions of students on this issue. In general, this is decided to be an excellent idea.

At some point in this discussion, Senator Taylor observed that the need for a communications officer and report is even more important than ever before. Thus, a lowly senator – Senator Brock - finally agreed to step up to the plate and create these works for the betterment of the university (but only under the express agreement that she get cookies out of it. She likes basic forms of cookies: snickerdoodles, chocolate chip, shortbread, etc.). So here we are.

Thus ends this communications report. Stay tuned for updates in the future, from your friendly neighborhood communications officer!

The End