

The Communications Report

9/05/2024

President Lenex called the meeting to order at 3:45pm.

Minutes

The minutes from the August 22 meeting closing out the 2023-2024 Faculty Senate session were approved without revision. The minutes from the August 22 meeting opening the 2024-2025 Faculty Senate session were also approved without revision.

Announcements

President Lenex opened the floor to discussion about an event at Craft Tower. The consensus was that there was a rededication ceremony for the newly renovated building, and that this event was not well publicized.

Committee Reports

Governance committee: Senator Michael Kessinger announced that Senator Shannon's term on the faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee would be changed from 2022-2024 to 2023-2025 to account for overlapping committee assignments. This was met with unanimous support by the FS.

Special Topics

Executive Council: President Elect Adams (on behalf of the EC) took over meeting leadership so President Lennex could attend to a personal matter. She then gave a presentation updating the FS on proposed changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution that were put forth by Provost Parikh and shared with Senate leadership. These proposals were not well received. The full presentation slides can be found on the Faculty Senate Blackboard shell. A brief summary of the key points follows:

1. The proposed changes are **not** being made in accordance with the established policy for constitutional revision, as detailed in Article 8 of the Faculty Senate constitution.
2. The proposed changes remove faculty representation. The proposed changes remove all references to librarians as members of Faculty Senate.
3. The proposed changes result in more unremunerated work for Instructors. The proposal redefines Senate eligibility from tenure line faculty to full-time faculty with at least one year of employment. As the administration has indicated it does not consider serving on Faculty Senate to be service, any instructor elected to FS would be giving their time and energy to an effort that would not count towards their new 15% service requirement.

4. The proposed changes silence faculty voices. The proposal removes Senate leadership from the Provost's Council and potential Dean meetings, as well as removing the Senate's designated duty to describe and define committees with faculty representation.

The presentation concluded with a question: without any clear indication as to how these changes would benefit faculty governance, much less the university as a whole, why are they being proposed and whom do they serve? Upon the completion of the presentation, Senator Adams opened the floor to questions and comments.

Senator Kmetz (Chair of the Faculty Welfare and Concerns Committee) indicated that a number of faculty members had spoken with him regarding their own grievances with Provost Parikh. Based on these conversations, the issues with the above proposal, and the fact that 5 faculty members have directly addressed the senate about how the actions of the Provost led directly to their departure from the University, he recommended the FS send a survey of all faculty members to gather information regarding sentiment towards the Provost.

There followed a conversation among senators that covered many topics. Of note, the particulars of the recommended survey, its content, scope, timing and intent. There was also discussion of the intentions of the Executive Council for the Senators themselves. The question was raised by Senator Mock as to what should be done between now and the next meeting of the FS. Senator Adams expressed the desire of the EC for Senators to share and discuss the presentation with their constituents; the goal being increased awareness of the issue among the faculty. If the faculty don't know what's going on, their Senators cannot accurately provide representation.

Regent Stubbs confirmed the rumor that the chief of police was resigning, leaving only 4 campus police officers (not enough to have more than one officer on duty for any shift). Regent Stubbs also relayed a story reported to her by the mother of an MSU student. The student allegedly encountered a strange man in the laundry room of her dorm, the man followed her back to her room where she contacted the police. There was no evidence that any action had been taken.

The meeting adjourned at 4:53pm.