

April 10, 2023

Faculty Senate Meeting with President Oldham

Via TEAMS

In attendance: Secretary Killman, President Maxwell, President-elect Allen, Past-president Luna, Senators Meadows, SSmith, Craven, Park, Comer, Langford, Rand, Loftis, Isbell, Fornehed, Reames, Swartling, Spears, Mills, TSmith, Turner, Smith-Andrews, Hajdik, Rajabali, Alley, Upole, Hutson, Null, Weathers, Hasan, Crockett, Howard, Liu, Canfield, O'Connor, Mullen, Ojo, Duncan, Brachey, Hermann-Turner, Pickering, Witcher, Adams, Alcott, Winkle, Manginelli, Lee, Burch.

Guests: President Oldham, Lee Wray

Absent: Senators Fennewald, Shipley, Turner, Frye, Ding

Call to Order: 3:35pm by President Maxwell

Questions were given to everyone ahead of time but some may want to ask questions if time allows.

Question:

Please share with us about the Governor's budget.

Answer:

In the Governor's proposed budget at the start of the session, there was funding for salary increases. A 5% pool. \$6M for capital maintenance. A million recurring dollars for cyber security. There are no new capital outlay projects for universities for this budget year. New academic classroom building would be a high priority. It was #3 on the list. We plan to resubmit that to be funded next year. Most notable funding will be for Rural Reimagined.

Question:

Is there any new information on post tenure review expansion?

Answer:

This is a recurring area of interest with the general assembly. But there is not any new information.

Question:

Why were there technology updates during the middle the semester?

Will there be better info provided to faculty about the specific details of these technology updates?

Answer:

It could have been handled better. Laptop utilization plan is in process of being revised. This decision was made last year.

Question:

Who was involved in this discussion?

Answer:

The Dean's had input in the plans originally. There may have not been enough faculty involvement in the early stages in terms of selection on the equipment. That has been identified and hopefully corrected.

Question:

Can we have ITS look into why there is poor internet connect throughout campus? If we can't get through a meeting like this without losing connection, how do we expect our students to do their work?

Answer:

We will get them to take a look at it.

Question:

Will there be more department moves without a faculty vote? In reference to the direction of theater.

Answer:

Not aware of any of moves. The Provost met with the Deans and department chairs. Not sure that voting is appropriate for situations like this.

Question:

There was discussion that the theater program would be moved to College of Fine Arts. Why didn't Fine Art have any input into this move?

Answer:

That is not the way it should happen. I do not disagree.

Comment:

When the College of Fine Arts was formed, the faculty and staff of music and art were just told at a college of education meeting that this was happening without anyone consulting them.

Music dept was not consulted. There is a culture where the faculty are not informed when things are happening. Adding theater to the College of Fine Arts will add a lot of things that we would like to do in the planning stages rather than play catch up.

Changes like this need to be thought out. Perhaps there should be a best practices document for these types of decisions.

Question:

All of this is happening quickly. What else is happening that we are not being told?

Answer:

Nothing that I am aware of. I wasn't involved in it directly. I don't know where all the info came from. Anytime we are considering making changes like this, it is a sensitive issue and there a lot of things to consider. Just because things are being considered doesn't mean it is going to happen. I do know that it has been on the Provost's radar for quite a while. There is nothing else going on that I am aware of.

Comment:

It seems like overall with all the topics we have discussed, there is just a lot of dysfunction and lack of communication.

Policy 207 seems to address this. In section BB- before the transfer, the provost should consult the tenured faculty members and the peers in the receiving unit.

Basic common sense says to consult people when decisions are being made.
What happens if the administration violates a policy?

Answer:

I don't know if a policy was violated here. There have been meetings that have taken place with leadership. Was that sufficient? I can talk to the Provost.

Question:

BB says approval of the majority of the peers and the faculty member is required. And that is essentially what has happened here, hasn't it? There was a move from one unit to another?

Answer:

We'll follow up.

You are referring to the transfer of tenure to another unit, is that correct?

The tenure is not changed with the theater program. The faculty member's tenure will not be changing. Your point is well taken, but the tenure resides within the program.

Answer:

Provost informed a faculty member that their tenure would not change.

Question:

When we are tenured, we are not tenured at the university. Is that right?

Answer:

That is correct.

Tenure is granted in a certain area.

Question:

What exactly is transferring?

Answer:

That is a conversation for the Provost.

The Provost and the Dean of College of Fine Arts need to discuss how this will work.

Question:

What is our process for making these decisions?

It doesn't make sense that there is only one faculty member for an entire concentration.

Answer:

I anticipate that the Provost will be able to answer all of these questions. Clearly, I'm not capable. I will follow up with her to make sure she is communicating with everyone.

Question:

There are P.I.s on campus that are leaving money on the table from grants.

Do you know how much money on average goes back to the agencies?

Answer:

Really good question, I don't have an answer. It's been a significant amount at times. When I inquired about this, I have never gotten good answers. A lot of times it is inexperience on the part of the P.I. and lack of accounting support. As you know, most funding agents will allow no cost extension if requested which would provide more time. It does matter what type of grant it is, as well. It required the P.I. to know what their contract states. I would typically overspend in order to ensure to not send money back to the agency. On the positive side, we have a lot of progress in the research office. We are taking a look at how we account for research expenditures which I think we have undercounted.

Response:

Once the support comes, it is sent to the business office, grant management. Burn rates and monthly reports are something I do not receive. We need to improve grant management.

Comment:

There are functions that the research office is probably best positioned to provide because they know the funding source. However, the accounting close out of a grant is best done out of a business office. The communication between the two are very important. We will get back to this topic.

Policy 572 - That policy strictly states that the PI is in charge.

Response:

I can't reimburse my own receipts. I got an email that the grant ended but told that I still had money. I take responsibility but it goes both ways.

Comment:

I'm not saying that you are solely responsible. I'm just saying it's that policy. It is under planning and finance. That policy needs to be looked at. You are doing the research and you need help.

Next meeting will be on the 17th and final meeting with the President on the 24th.

Secretary Killman has requested someone step in and take over the secretary position.

Thank you to the President.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:50pm

Respectfully submitted by Christy Killman