

Faculty Senate Business Meeting

October 18, 2021

Submitted by K. Craven

Members Present:

Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Steve Canfield, Melissa Comer, April Crocket, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Garner, Scott Hagarty, David Hajdik, Syed Rafay Hasan, Katherine Hermann-Turner, Samantha Hutson, Janet Isbell, Christy Killman, Matt Langford, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Chad Luke, Jeanette Luna, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Kristin Pickering, Elizabeth Ramsey, Richard Rand, Lee Ann Shipley, Drew Sisk, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Dan Swartling, Robert Wilbanks, Kimberly Winkle, Laith Zuraikat

Members Absent:

Stephanie Adams, Yun Ding, Tammy Howard, Christopher Reames, Lenly Weathers, Russ Witcher

Special Guests: Gerald Gannod, Barbara Jared, Tom Timmerman

Call to Order

Senate President Jeanette Luna called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Agenda: Motion by Senator Forenhed, second by Senator Smith-Andrews. Senator O'Connor asked to add an item about the new Calendar to the Agenda. There was a brief discussion of the proper point in the meeting and it was agreed to add it just before And Other Such Matters. Senator Allen asked to present an item during Other Such Matters. These were included as friendly amendments. The motion was carried.

Approval of Minutes and Notes

1. September 27, 2021 Faculty Senate Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Smith-Andrews moved to have the Minutes from the Senate Business Meeting of September 27 approved. Senator Mills seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2. October 4, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting with the President Notes

Senator Smith moved to approve the Notes from the Meeting with President Oldham on October 4. Senator Duncan seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Faculty Evaluation Process (80 – 90 minutes)

Guest: Gerald Gannod

1. Presentation of draft proposal for faculty evaluation process changes

2. Time for questions, comments, and feedback

Dr. Gannod went through a PowerPoint presentation to present the Senate with information regarding the work being done by the working group on the Faculty Evaluation Process and the modification to the tools being developed for this process. There have been concerns about the uniformity of the process being used in units throughout the university. There are further concerns about the consistency of the tools and the adequacy of these tools to inform the evaluations. Dr. Gannod stated that his purpose in addressing the Senate is to begin a discussion and get feedback from the Senators before continuing with the work and implementation of the resulting process and tools.

The working group is proposing three tools: a Goals Document, an Activity Report, and an Evaluation Summary. The Goals Document will be used to identify goals for each faculty member for the coming academic year and to show alignment with the missions of the unit, the college, and the university. This will include both unit identified and individual goals for each faculty member. The Activity Report is expected to be viewed as a living dossier, similar to the cover sheet discussed previously, to highlight the work done during the year in fulfillment of the goals identified on the previous tool. There will be an opportunity for faculty member self-evaluation and a narrative response that will be used to measure the attainment of the goals. The Evaluation Summary will be similar to the current form with expanded details and more clear expectations for completion.

Dr. Gannod said that their intention is to refine the tools through engagement with stakeholders in the Spring of 2022 and hopefully make a formal recommendation to the Provost in August of 2022. He also presented the list of members on the working group representing each college and encouraged Senators to discuss the tools with their representative. At this point the floor was opened for questions.

Question: There has been a concern that the previous forms represented a contract. That to get rewarded the faculty members must meet the exact condition of the form. At this time, things are very unstable and meeting those expectations has not been easy, and in some cases just not realistic. But simply changing the form does not change the instability of these times. Is this something that the working group is considering?

Answer: Dr. Gannod agreed that the AOR did read like a contract. He is recommending that the goals document be viewed as a living document that can be changed during the academic year to adjust for unforeseen instability.

Question: I like to consider both standard goals and stretch goals. Would stretch goals work in this new document?

Answer: The intention is to measure what matters. It is up to the management leader to work this out with each faculty member. Think of your stretch goal as an objective and the measure is the key result that is accomplished to that end.

Question: To become a faculty member in Music is very competitive. Therefore, all of the faculty are considered at the top of their field. There has been an edict that a chair cannot evaluate all faculty in the department as outstanding. Will this continue?

Answer: This was seen in the comments on the earlier survey. Evaluators felt handcuffed by the levels in the evaluation. The work group has not worked out this issue yet. If everyone in the department is hitting it out of the park, then why not give them all outstanding. What is needed is an objective measure. We are open to recommendations. The proposed new Evaluation form has fine-grained the ranking levels providing more differentiation with a different point scale. However, this may not be sufficient and we realize that this is one of the challenges that we face.

Question: In the past we wanted the chairs to make the final decision. Then the deans compare the department to others and colleges to other colleges. Will this continue?

Answer: This has changed. The deans are asked to provide a calibration and look across departments. They must consider what is equal. There is also the question of where does the money for the compensation come from and how should it be distributed.

Question: How extensively have you discussed the percentage of workload and how it impacts the overall evaluation. If the Research category is only 5% and they get outstanding in every other category but get average on Research, will they get an average overall rating?

Answer: We have not yet discussed this extensively, but it is on the docket as we have heard this from the faculty.

Question: There is interest to see the higher differentiation. The old form was just 1 through 5. This needs to be re-evaluated. In the past there was a suggestion that there be nothing higher than a 4 given. Could the new scale go up to 10?

Answer: I agree that the scale needs to give the ability to differentiate between different faculty members but still measure quality. I suggest that you go to the Provost Office hours and ask about the scale. She has graphs, for both faculty and staff members, that she will show. This is an issue of culture building. There needs to be a general shift in culture and we are implementing training to help with the mind shift. The goal is to understanding what the faculty members are achieving. It's not just about compensation. The Provost has seen the initial recommendation of the new forms and she likes the direction that it is heading.

Question: There is concern for the timing and the training for the new process. Completing the process, and specifically filling out all of the forms for a large department, takes a long time. By the time the evaluation is completed, sometimes the outcomes that were set are no longer appropriate. Training would be very helpful and this needs careful attention.

Answer: I absolutely agree. This is a very valid point. The idea is that the goals document is driving the conversation throughout the entire year. There should be frequent conversations between the chair and each faculty member. This will make the evaluation process quicker. Again, we haven't cracked that nut yet. It needs more sussing out so that it is not so much of a burden at one time. The work group has some promising ideas. The dashboard idea should help. This is on our radar.

Ad Hoc Committee to Review Policies 205 – Faculty Tenure, Policy 206 – Faculty Promotion, & Policy 207 – Tenured Faculty

1. The purpose of this committee will be to move forward with suggestions from the joint meeting with President Oldham and Provost Bruce on Oct 4th.
2. Members?

At the last meeting with President Oldham and Provost Bruce good progress was made. The Senate will be forming an Ad Hoc Committee to look at these policies focusing on aligning them to each other. Senators Forehned and Null have already volunteered for the committee. There is at least one more volunteer needed. Senator Langford volunteered. Senator Smith-Andrews offered to consult as the Chair of the Faculty Affairs committee. It was decided that it would be appropriate for her to be an official member of the committee and she agreed. Senator Null agreed to serve as the chair of this committee.

Senate President Luna expressed a desire for these policies (205, 206, and 207) to be in place for the next academic year meaning that the work would need to be completed soon so that they can make their way through the approval process before the end of the spring semester. It was agreed that they would be placed on the agenda for the first Senate meeting of the spring term, January 24, 2022. It was noted that the final meeting for the Administrative Council is April 6, the Academic Council is April 13, and the University Assembly is April 20.

Other Comments:

- Mainly need to focus the Promotion Policy to align with the changes made previously to the Tenure Policy.
- Dissemination to the Department Chairs is critical.

Ad Hoc Committee to Review Policy 600

1. The purpose of this committee will be to move forward with suggestions from the joint meeting with President Oldham and Associate VP Vedder on Oct 4th.
2. Members?

Associate VP Vedder is in favor of reviewing this policy. There are a number of issues with vague language that need to be addressed. Senators Shipley, Smith, and Maxwell have volunteered for this Ad Hoc Committee. Senator Duncan was added. Senator President Elect Maxwell volunteered to serve as chair. The desired timeline is the same as previously defined for the other policies.

Ad Hoc Committee reviewing policies to support TTU Parents

1. Progress report (Luna)
2. Comments from ad hoc committee members (Hermann-Turner, Allcott, Sisk, Shipley, Howard)

Senate President Luna updated the Senators on the progress. The Ad Hoc committee has already met with Associate VP Vedder and University Counsel Perdue. They are working on updating Policy 613 – Bereavement Leave to include parents suffering a pregnancy loss, this would include both parents. The interactions so far have been very positive. Now they will move on to other policy updates.

Proposal for new Calendar/Course Schedule from Senator O'Connor

Senator O'Connor presented to the Senate his proposal to address the calendar issues while returning to a 14-week semester.

Comments:

- Provost wants classes to start on the hour and the half-hour. This proposal is worse than it was before.
- Already have a calendar committee, should we let them do the work before recommending something?
- This does address some of the desired aspects of a calendar, but it is totally different from our peers. Is that something that we want? Will that be better than the current solution?

Senator O'Connor made a motion to make this proposal a formal recommendation to the calendar committee with the full support of the Senate. Senator Null seconded the motion. Senate President Luna expressed concern that the Senators may not have had enough time to look at the proposal and that this will seem like we are dictating action to an existing committee and suggested that we table this motion. There were additional concerns about the plan having Monday and Wednesday classes beginning at 7:50 a.m. which would be seen as a problem for a number of faculty members. Senator Smith-Andrews made a motion to table the motion. Senate President Elect Maxwell seconded. There were 3 nay votes. The motion to table passed.

It was further concluded that this proposal for a new calendar will be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Senator O'Connor was asked to rework the plan to have classes starting no earlier than 8:00 a.m. on any week day and redistribute to the Senators for consideration.

Other Such Matters

Senator Allen had submitted a question about the need for departments to adjust the Spring schedule in Banner after the recent rollout. Senator Null said that the English Department had to

remove a requirement for a permit from every section of every class in the English department. Any other departments having issues, please let Senator Allen know.

Senator President Luna said because the cases of Covid-19 are dropping there is some discussion of eliminating the mask mandate on campus. She has reinforced that the Senate passed a resolution in support of following the CSC guidelines and that the university should not be the first to make this decision.

Adjournment

Senator Rand moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Fornehed seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Approved: November 15, 2021