**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**February 23, 2022**

**4-6 p.m.**

**Attending senators:** Taylor Acee, Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Stacey Bender, Dale Blasingame, Rachel Davenport, Peter Dedek, Jennifer Jensen, Lynn Ledbetter, Ben Martin, Stan McClellan, Danette Myers, Andrew Ojede, Michael Supancic, Nicole Wesley

**Attending guests:** Lisa Ancelet, Sarah Angulo (Senate Fellow), Brianna Benitez (University Star), JD Jamieson, Karen Sigler, Marc Turner (Institutional Research)

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

Minutes from the February 16 meeting were approved.

**Dean Summative Review Process – Senators Dedek and McClellan**

The role of a senator who serves as chair of the summative review committee needs to be more specifically spelled out in a senate procedure document. AAPPS 04.04.13 defines the makeup of the committee – but not the process.

Senator Dedek recently took part as chair in a review and said the procedure was not clearly defined. Senator McClellan said the goals of the process are clearly defined, but the mechanisms to reach completion of those goals are lacking. Right now, five surveys are required (students, faculty, staff, alumni and administrators), which are then reviewed by the chair for a report – however, that survey process is not detailed anywhere in the policy. He said this process also gets complicated and duplicated with annual surveys on administrators done by Institutional Research. McClellan suggested the process should be handled by IR and overseen by the Senate. The AVP of Institutional Research, Marc Turner, is joining the Senate next to discuss this.

A senator said the provost provided the charge with no template to follow as chair of one of these review committees. She said she would have been lost while carrying out this charge if not for the Senate’s administrative assistant, Senator McClellan and a member of the review committee who had been through the process before. She searched through old summative reviews for hints of how to handle the process. Senator McClellan said since there are only eight deans at the university, this process is incredibly important and should be clearly defined.

A senator agreed and suggested the Senate work with IR to standardize the surveys to the different stakeholders as part of this process. Senator McClellan said another issue is the data that comes back from the surveys needs to be regularized. He suggested the Provost’s Office should clarify what type of data they want back from the surveys to manage them effectively. Questions between the departments are very different, and he said there needs to be consistency here.

Senators who have chaired a review committee were asked if they had to send out the surveys to stakeholders. Two said yes to some of the surveys, and a third said subcommittee members sent out surveys when he chaired a committee. One said the process was incredibly hodge-podge. Considering this information is confidential, she feels like the process should be centralized.

Senators are also tasked with helping in the review of chairs and directors, and a senator suggested that process also needs clarification.

A senator who has chaired a dean review committee said he noticed vast differences in the amount of survey respondents. Some surveys had very few respondents, and he felt uncomfortable making a report based on limited data. He believes standardizing the process with accepted HR standards will lead to more reliable data. The senator said this wasn’t an intense amount of work, but it was stressful because he felt like he didn’t know what he was doing, particularly at the beginning.

A senator suggested that, while the official process is adjusted and formalized, the Senate come up with templates for future senators who will chair these dean review committees and assist in the chair/director reviews. Another senator who is currently helping with a chair review said he had to ask three senators for guidance on his responsibilities.

A senator said this standardization and consistency is important if dean reviews are ever compared one against the other. Another senator said, right now, it appears any comparison would be apples and oranges because committees are coming up with their own questions based on a lack of guidance. Another senator said there’s no standardization of how to disseminate this information. She believes the Senate needs a template for how the report to the provost should be organized.

**Review of Surveys – Marc Turner, Institutional Research**

Turner shared that, about 20 years ago, the Senate asked IR to conduct an annual survey about perceptions of academic deans, the provost and president. So those surveys that come out of IR each year are done on behalf of the Senate. Turner said the process hasn’t been reviewed over the years, and that’s why he asked to join the Senate today.

Those surveys were originally written in Perl code because IR had a programmer at the time, but that person left 12 years ago. This creates an issue because minor changes can be made to the surveys, but larger changes – such as specific questions for specific deans or sending out a specific survey for a specific year – would be difficult because of the existing system. Perl was used because of the needs of the surveys, checking to see if the list of eligible faculty voters took part in each survey. The system also includes access restrictions for data. These are finer details than are currently available in Qualtrics, which is typically used for university surveys. With regards to tweaking the system to make the dean summative review part of it every five years, IR can’t remove or replace the dean survey without disconnecting the provost and president surveys. Turner said he gets the feeling this was started 20 years ago and continues today, but nobody has evaluated the process.

A senator asked if other senators are using this survey data. If not, is it time to scratch the system and start a new process? Another senator said the perception surveys are necessary because they give every voting faculty member an opportunity to evaluate the administration. The survey results are available on the Senate website.

A senator said it doesn’t sound like we need the system to be as fancy as it currently is, so he asked if we could transfer this process to Qualtrics where we can modify the surveys more easily. Turner said transitioning to Qualtrics would provide greater flexibility in other ways, including an opportunity to incorporate summative questions into a survey.

A senator asked why the current system links a respondent’s answers to the dean, provost and president surveys. Turner said this is a verification that the faculty member only filled out one evaluation for each. The senator asked if IR could create this same verification system in Qualtrics. Turner said yes.

A senator asked if IR is willing to convert these surveys to Qualtrics. Turner said he’s eager to make that transition. He said changing to Qualtrics will also provide additional ways to present and visualize the results. Turner said he is hopeful they will be able to bring in some of the archival information into the new system used for reporting. Either way, the old system will remain for archival purposes.

A senator asked if IR would be willing to work with dean summative review committees to define the survey questions and be the entity that distributes the surveys. Turner said yes, and it would involve a conditional survey that asks additional questions of faculty from a specific college if their dean is up for review. From a visual perspective, it would appear to be just one, seamless survey to those faculty.

A senator asked if IR would work with the Senate to develop questions for the additional stakeholders (alumni, students, staff and administrators) who are surveyed as part of the dean review process. Turner said yes. It would be a separate survey that would go out to non-faculty stakeholders. He said the challenge with a group like alumni is tracking whether they have or haven’t responded to send out reminder emails. He said an open link for people to go in and respond may be sufficient.

A senator said the Senate needs to get together with the Provost’s Office to develop a template for how this process plays out. She asked if IR would be willing to work to develop those guidelines. Turner said yes.

**Review of Committees**

To eliminate redundancy, the Senate is looking at committee charges and whether they are still working or needed.

For instance, there is the Environment and Sustainability Committee, which is a Senate-appointed committee; the Environmental Service Committee, which distributes funds from the Environmental Service Fee to environmentally related projects on campus; and the Office of Sustainability. This has led to confusion. The only current charge of the Environment and Sustainability Committee is the Green Cat Challenge, but most of the work for this year’s challenge was handled by a staff member in the Office of Sustainability, including finding funds for the awards. Senator Bell-Metereau is going to talk with the chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee and report back to the Senate next week.

The Academic Standards Committee rarely meets, and its charge is typically carried out in other ways. A senator said this committee may have been a task force needed at some point, but it doesn’t appear to be needed right now. He suggested disbanding the committee until a new charge is needed.

Finally, since the Faculty Handbook is now handled electronically and updates are made through Faculty and Academic Resources, the Senate voted to put the Faculty Handbook committee on hiatus.

**Executive Session**

The Senate went into Executive Session to discuss two topics:

* A potential change to rules regarding committee attendance and potential to remove non-contributing members
* A Senate response to Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick’s recent comments regarding tenure and academic freedom

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.