

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Tuesday January 24, 2017

PRESENT: Abbas, Agud, Allnutt, Anderson, Bairaktarova, Baker, Barney, Billingsly, Brewster, Bush, Corl, Dalloul, Ferris, Gaskill, Geyer, Gilmore, Hicok, Hopkins, Kaufman, Leon, Lyon, Mackey, Martin, McGrath, Noirot, Olson, Polanah, Richey, Rinehart, Shadle, Sirgy, Skaggs, Smith, Spotila, Sultan, Tegarden, Trogdon, Vogelaar, Watson, Wemhoener, Young.

ABSENT: Ahmadian, Al-Haik, Amacher, Ashley, Balci, Brown, Campbell, Ducker, Etzkorn, Gabbard, Gindlesberger, Good, Guynn, Hosig, Jordan, Luttrell, Matheson, Merola, Nappier, O'Keefe, O'Rourke, Patterson, Puckett, Reed, Robinson, Rosenzweig, Safaai-Jazi, Savla, Schenk (with notice), Seth, Stauffer, Stivachtis, Tavera, Tracy, Viehland, Zhang.

I. HOUSEKEEPING

The agenda was approved.

The minutes for the December 4, 2016 were approved.

II. RESTRICTIONS ON UNIVERSITY TRAVEL

Some clarification has been provided to President Abbas: Anything done as "University Business" is legitimate. Students on the other hand cannot be required to travel (e.g., present at a conference, etc.) for coursework or anything deemed "for the educational benefit of the student"; no travel costs can be covered in that case, because they would be considered scholarship money and therefore taxable (IRS compliance). More specifics, and examples about what cannot be funded anymore have been requested for the upcoming Controller Office Q&A.

III. COMMISSIONS UPDATES

1. CUSP: Joe Baker, currently on sabbatical, **needs a substitute** for this semester (SP17). Contact any Officer to volunteer.
2. University Council: Corinne Noirot, who now teaches Monday afternoons, **needs a substitute** for this semester (SP17). Contact any Officer to volunteer.
3. Two CUSP resolutions were presented to the Senate this month: New major in Cinema (FS review waived) and new Pathways requirement in "Critical Analysis of **Identity and Equity** in the United States" (Core Outcome; 3 cr.). The issue here is that "double counting" those three credit in conjunction with some other Core Outcome is unlikely in practice. So in effect, an extra 3-credit course would be required of most students. Comments on this resolution will be accepted all week.

4. It was requested that the meeting dates and times for all commissions be posted on Scholar so as to make any call for volunteers more effective.

IV. UPDATE ON UPCOMING PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1. Scholarship and Citations: The e-FAR system needs to be addressed. (See discussion below.)
2. Research and Funding: not clear who will accept our invitation.
3. Education and Outreach: waiting to hear.
4. P&T: promotion / new budget model: more updates once Hans is back.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION TO SET THE SPRING SEMESTER AGENDA

1. **E-FAR** - The new e-FAR is being met with strong opposition. The two main issues are that it is not a viable tool at this point, and it is unclear what all the data collected will be used for. Most Colleges forgo it altogether, as it stands.

→ **A Forum** has been opened on the FS Scholar site in order to collect feedback. Dozens of faculty members had already chimed in at the time those minutes were composed.

2. **Benchmarking** – Several questions connected to the new benchmarking requirement as part of both Faculty evaluation and the new budget model.
 - VT and national prestige:

Not many people in the National Academy of science, etc. This has to do with the highly “quantitative” way we are evaluated. Quality standards are lacking.

- Bob HICOK agreed to head a Benchmarking/**Quality-assessment** taskforce:

This taskforce could become a permanent Senate sub-committee – in order to question the gathering, use, and interpretation of metrics, analytics, etc., at this public University. “The squishy part of what we do” matters too, not just hard numbers; and even numbers need to have meaning and be used in transparent ways. Therefore we need a way to assess the raw numbers that will come out and be used in portentous ways. Faculty need to be involved in the quality-assessment of all metrics used and should have the right to monitor the “performance measurement” system created. And metrics need to be made clear and not constantly shift. Faculty cannot be judged on standards undisclosed to them. Questioning needs to be done. The system used to evaluate people and units should allow for peer evaluation and expert knowledge, not just communications between machines and data sets. The Secretary will try and find the right interlocutors to better inform Hicok (on Academic Analytics, etc.) and whoever joins the taskforce.

3. **Guests?** President Sands should be invited again.
4. **Destination Areas & Strategic Growth Areas:** The process remains unclear. More chances should be given to qualitative researchers to be involved. Again, a lack of transparency is sorely felt. Transparency and inequity, since sheer exclusion has been experienced by some in Architecture and the Humanities in particular, when offering to contribute. What if we had had a senator in each one of those DA stakeholder committees? Or asked that they hold open meetings and post

the schedule? President Abbas will talk to President Sands, since the latter said that inclusivity would be insured.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Spring schedule:

Please note that our meetings this semester are all going to be in **PAMPLIN 32**.

Meeting dates: **24-Jan, 7-Feb, 21-Feb, 7-Mar, 28-Mar, 11-Apr, 25-Apr, 9-May**. All meetings start at **5:15 p.m.**

2. A Quick Primer for New Senators (from President Abbas)

You are expected to show up to all FS meetings in person to represent your department. In case you are not available for any reason, you are expected to send an alternate. You are expected to act as a 2-way communication link between your department and the FS: you should bring any faculty-related outstanding issue to the FS, and update your department with any issue raised at the FS. You can do the latter by emails or during your departmental meetings.

The FS publishes minutes and agenda on the FS website. This includes attendance of senators and activities (as might be recorded in the minutes). Those who are serving on Commissions and University Council are expected to provide two-way reports to the FS and Commissions/Council. They are further expected to articulate the gist of the discussions both ways. Ultimately, they are expected to convey the FS collective position (and vote accordingly as representatives of the FS) on any raised issue to the Commission/Council they are serving on. This is why it is important to participate actively on the FS and to engage in discussions in any issue that might be of concern to you or your department. Once we leave the FS meeting, you are representing the FS.

The four Commissions that deal with issues closely related to faculty (Commission on Faculty Affairs, Commission on Research, Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies) are required to update the FS with resolutions on their first reading at the Commission. This is done by the Commission Chair (or designee) sending an email to the FS President. The FS representative on the Commission is expected to articulate the resolution at the FS meeting (since he/she would know more about the discussion or circumstances that accompanied the resolution). In some cases, the FS might invite the chair of the Commission to give a presentation at the FS if needed.

We (1) respond/discuss issues/resolutions that are sent our way, (2) actively solicit input and presentations about issues of concerns raised by/through Senators, and (3) proactively devise plans and strategic activities for the benefit of VT faculty and VT as a whole.

The FS has an important role in university governance and your role is therefore very important.

4. Provost Rikakis said he would give us \$10,000 to recognize one or several faculty members. Award criteria to be determined.