

Faculty Senate Minutes
December 4th, 2015, 3:00pm
Delta Center 201

In attendance: Greg Phillips, Shivan Haran, Claudia Benavides, Richard Segall, Philip Tew, John Beineke, Mitch Holifield, Ryan Kelly, Loretta McGregor, Claire Abernathy, Bill Rowe, Nikesha Nesbitt, Mary Donaghy, Warren Johnson, April Sheppard, Larz Roberts, Rejoice Addae, Donna Caldwell, Brinda McKinney, Larry Morton, Debbie Shelton, Bob Bennett, Jeff Jenness, Bruce Johnson, Fabricio Medina-Bolivar, Suzanne Melescue.

Proxies: Donna Caldwell for Amber Wooten.

Absent: Julie Isaacson, Pradeep Mishra, Sam Pae, Julie Grady, Kyle Chandler, Win Bridges, Hans Hacker, Cherisse Jones-Branch, Michael Fellure.

Meeting called to order by President Phillips at 3:00 pm.

President Phillips adds a new agenda item, an address regarding online harassment by Dr. Rebecca Barrett-Fox.

Approval of minutes of November 20th, 2015 upon changing Bruce Johnson as acting secretary and clarify Claudia Benavides was secretary.

Motion to approve as amended: Dr Jeff Jenness

Seconded by Fabricio Medina-Bolivar

23 in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

Old Business:

SGOC proposal 15 FA 08, Changes in Section IV Faculty Handbook

Ryan Kelly has specific concerns regarding section IV.D.2 on pages 9 and 10. He has concerns about how broadly defined the School structure is, and how ambiguously designed it seems to be as presented in the draft. In the interest of the structure of the university (restructure now and restructure to come), it would be good to give this language some serious consideration. Colleges and departments are well practiced and defined, but schools are not well defined. Can the school be composed of departments? Would there be a school chair or dean? Who would faculty report to? I am confused about the final line. Don't faculty members need a terminal degree? Finally, governing structure is a concern. For example, faculty would have questions about school PRT. Would this be applied to at the departmental level, or at the school level?

President Phillips: Last meeting Dean Pratte stated that the Dean's Council is working on a definition of what a school is and he recommended to wait until they reach a definition before we move forward with this.

John Beineke: I would support the idea of holding off on that. One of the points that was brought out by our constituents is the implication of being tenured in a department and then transferred to a school. Sometimes schools mean something very special, like the School of Medicine, etc.

Ryan Kelly: Language is really problematic. We need to know what a school is and what it means in the university. We have a selection process for the Dean for the College of Education. We would need to know before we hire whether this is a Dean for a College, or if it would be a Dean for a School. How would that be structured? We need this information to structure the future of the university.

President Phillips: Back to the degree issue, it is the terminal degree that typically gives us the qualifications to mentor and teach in a given discipline, not the undergraduate degree.

Shivan Haran: We are looking for specific types of faculty members when we are stating that the terminal degree should be in a specific field. In terms of the school issue, MIT has schools. It is up to us to decide what is best for our university, but I do agree that once we define it properly we should stick to it. For faculty hires, your department can state that the terminal degree is necessary. For example, a candidate's Bachelor's degree may be in aerospace engineering, but their PhD may be in mechanical engineering and that would be important for us.

Dr. Rowe: Imagine if in the medical field you were required to have a BS in science. Doctors come from many backgrounds and it is the terminal degree that matters.

Ryan Kelly moves to table this issue until we get feedback from the chairs and the deans to see what their vision is for such language. Seconded by Bob Bennett.

Mitch Holifield: By that motion are we saying we need the Chairs and Deans to vote on this or are we saying that we need more information about this? Because those are two different ways to travel.

Bob Bennett: We can table for more than one meeting.

Loretta McGregor: If we table it pending further review we do not have to provide a reason.

Fabricio Medina-Bolivar: Do we know when they will be voting on this?

President Phillips: I know they were in the same timeline that we were. I am assuming we can get a sense of what they are thinking before our next meeting.

Motion amended to table this pending further details from chairs, deans, etc.

Loretta McGregor: I personally do not like tying it to the Deans and Chairs because it seems like our actions will depend solely on what decision they make. We want more information, including information from deans and chairs, but not exclusively from them.

Motion is amended to table this until we receive further clarification, some of it will be from the chairs and deans, some may be from the Faculty Handbook Committee and others. Seconded by Bob Bennett.

Mitch Holifield: Will the concerns and questions be shared?

President Phillips: Yes. Unless I am asked not to.

Ryal Kelly: I sent you the questions by EMail with the intent for them to get shared.

Mary Donaghy: Why are we considering this? Were we asked by administration?

President Phillips: We will have to provide an explanation of why the Senate is not voting on this issue according to the original timeline.

Shivan Haran: I think this is a language issue, not a re-structuring issue. I don't think we should worry about what the administration will do with it. Right now we just seek clarification as far as language is concerned.

President Phillips: Well, it is language, but it is also conceptual.

With no further discussion, votes: 27 in favor. No objections or abstentions.

Online Harassment - Rebecca Barrett-Fox

Rebecca Barrett-Fox: Thank you for having me and being proactive and taking on this issue. I will be meeting with the members of the adhoc committee and administrators shortly. How many of you have Yik Yak on your smart phones? It is an application you can use on your mobile devices. Consumers are told it is anonymous. We have an A-State Yik Yak and there are some issues at the national level with harassment and bullying. My research area deals with hate groups and looking specifically at hate activity online. Yik Yak is a prime example of the primary concerns we have on campus. We have seen women professors being harassed online. Yik Yak moves very quickly, but you cannot see 24 hours back. Eastern Michigan had a class totally derailed by a student using Yik Yak within class session to sexually and racially harass them. Seattle Pacific, University of Chicago, the shooting in Oregon was announced in advance through one of these websites, part of the issues at University of Missouri has been linked to these websites, etc. We need to be proactive. The problems include PR problems, morale problems. We do not need to be beat up by our students. There are all types of harassment, but there is a bigger issue when it is used to harass vulnerable populations. In the women's studies group we will propose using FYI courses to get information to students to educate them on this. We could ask for ITTC training on how to manage these apps. When there are clear threats universities respond quickly and universities have been able to find the posters within 20 minutes by contacting Yik Yak. When universities are less proactive is when there is harassment without a threat. Determining what is an imminent threat and defining what is harassment is important. From the perspective of the women studies group we want to achieve: 1) expectation that investigators from University will request the information from posters directly from Yik Yak when appropriate; 2) we want punishment for students who violate the code of conduct; we want to make sure the students are treated fairly, but if the investigation shows they are harassing people online they need to be disciplined as well; 3) during the investigation time we expect to have reasonable accommodations made for the person being harassed. We are looking at what other universities are doing, what national organizations are asking of educational institutions, etc.

Bob Bennett: Is there any way I will know I'm being harassed? There is no way to monitor this.

Rebecca: Yik Yak is working on monitoring it. But often times students will report it.

Bob Bennett: So what we need to do is provide structure.

Rebecca: Jonesboro police already do it because drug deals get arranged on Yik Yak. We can create a campus policy of "see something, say something."

Warren Johnson: If we look at it, it will be stressful, but if we are not looking at it are we really being harassed?

Rebecca: It is about the culture of the organization. It changes the dynamic. I have students who are embarrassed, or students who want to say something but feel like they can't because they will be targeted. If there are racial or gender harassments it may affect other students to the point where they will not feel safe in class.

Shivan Haran: The moment students enter my classroom their cells have to be off. And if I catch them I drop them a letter grade. The culture of our department is no cellphones, tablets,

laptops, etc. Sometimes we cannot do it across campus, but we can institute this in our classrooms.

Loretta McGregor: 1) Some of my colleagues of a different generation may not understand that as a female faculty member you feel like a vulnerable population. When you are part of a vulnerable population, ideas of what to do are great, but reality takes over. When students are abrasive in the classroom, research has shown that in social media you lose social cues. I do not know that a student is joking in social media because I do not have social cues. If this happens in the classroom and the social cues indicate they are not kidding I can have the student removed. If it is anonymous campus police cannot kick the student out. I did not hear if the university is beefing up the policy regarding harassment. Not addressing it suggests we are not taking it seriously.

April Sheppard: We think things disappear, but there are ways to take screen shots. Do not think that it will not come back to you.

Bill Rowe: There is a social responsibility. If you see something suspicious you have to report it. In these days it applies to harassment, a bomb, if something is out of the ordinary it is your social responsibility to report it.

Fabricio Medina-Bolivar: Have you found anything that may be effective in your research of what other universities are doing?

Rebecca: Making it not available on campus has been done, but does not really work because students will continue to do it in other places. However, there are still a lot of questions to be answered before there is an effective solution.

President Phillips: When I brought out this issue the student representative pulled out his phone and found some comments about study groups in the library. Thank you, Rebecca! Please forward your comments to Rebecca and Loretta as they grapple with this issue in the ad hoc committee.

New Business:

SGOC proposals - We do not have any new ones.

Commencement reminder: December 12th, 2015 10:00am - Only 1 commencement this semester

Next meeting: January 15th, 2016 because of the way holidays fall. If something has to be dealt with in the interim we will communicate by Email.

Richard Segall: Is it possible to hold the next meeting on the 22nd?
The discussion that followed indicated too little time to interact with constituents before the 15th, the 22nd gives us more time to work with constituents and to receive feedback on 15FA08. Dr. Segall moves to postpone our first meeting of 2016 to January 22nd. Seconded by Donna Caldwell. Votes: 19 in favor, 2 opposed, 3 abstentions. Motion carries.

Other: There has been push back on Faculty180 training. From my understanding, the most critical time sensitive activity that will require administration to retrieve reports from Faculty180 will be in January to present to the state legislature. The legislature is requesting the university

to provide productivity reports. Last year we did it old school. The administration may be wanting to pull a productivity report from this Faculty180 system in January over this calendar year of 2015. So if you focus on entering your most recent activities from this calendar year, administration may be able to meet their reporting requirement. In the future there may be times administration may want to pull CVs from Faculty180 to see if as a university we are capable of carrying out a project because we have the expertise in our faculty to do so, but I do not see that happening before January 18, 2016.

Richard Segall: We were told that someone was going to import it.

President Phillips: Tiffany Keb is in charge of importing our resume or CV into Faculty180, but she may have a waiting list.

Richard Segall: Will her import delete what I manually entered?

President Phillips: No. It will have different dates. It should add to it, not override it.

Larz Roberts moved to adjourn at 4:09. Seconded by acclamation.

Minutes submitted by Claudia Benavides, Secretary of the Faculty Senate.