

Faculty Senate Special Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2018
Chancellor's Lounge

Attendance: Diane Wolfgram, Scott Risser, Ulana Holtz, Phil Curtiss, Miriam Young, Tony Patrick, Charie Faught, Stella Capoccia, Rita Spear, Tim Kober, Todd Tregidga, Matt Donnelly, Dan Autenrieth, Abishek Choudhury, Jeanne Larson (filling in for Katherine Zodrow), Jackie Timmer, Burt Todd, Courtney Young, Scott Coguill (filling in for Peter Lucon), Mary North-Abbott (filling in for George Williams), Kishor Shresta,

Special Meeting, so no agenda. Two items: final recommendations of the PPC and the resolution from a faculty member (tabled until this meeting, see 12/11/2018 meeting minutes).

Program Prioritization Committee-

Representative reported that final committee meeting discussed open forum meeting and comments made to the PPC via e-mail, with approximately 91 comments in the PPC e-mail box. Comments from PPC members included the appreciation for people speaking up on behalf of programs and for giving thoughts on steps on how to move forward, such as not drawing out the process. The comments in the e-mail box were from a variety of sources, such as faculty, students, graduates, and community members. The representative noted that the vote to endorse was thirteen votes for and three against, and that the votes were anonymous. Also of note is that the final version of the recommendations do not have a timeline for moving forward, nor responsible parties or an action plan. The PPC will no longer be meeting after the final vote (from the previous meeting).

Comment that the PPC did not address administration in the same manner as academic units, and that "we all have skin in the game, but administration does not". The decision was made by PPC that this should be addressed by the chancellor. However, people have been promoted with salary increases in administration. Potential cuts in pay may provide 1 or 2 faculty's worth of savings. Positions include a promotion of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/Provost back to Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research, Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School back to Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Chancellor for Advancement and University Relations and President of the Foundation back to President of the Foundation, and Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management back to Dean of Students. The Vice Chancellor for Advancement and University Relations was created by Chancellor Gilmore, with half state and half foundation money, but should be all foundation.

Comment that the Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management may not be an elevation, and that responsibilities may not have changed.

Comment from the chair that we can respond in numerous ways, including making comments, requests, or endorsements.

Comment that recommendations should be based on hard data, but some may be based on personal opinion without objectivity. For instance, the recommendation to moving civil and mechanical, etc. to the ELC to gain further exposure may not be valid. If it were true, then mining engineering should have more students based on their location. Some departments may have natural synergy, while others may not.

Comment that the recommendations do not include metrics on enrollment or how declines in enrollment should be addressed. High school graduation levels are down- are we going to wait or are we going to market our unique capabilities? Response from the representative that discussions and comments made to the PPC included two different groups on how to proceed. One thought is to recruit based on individual departments and unique programs, but the current method and presentation to the PPC is that we recruit for Tech and let students decide the program.

Comment that enrollment and current state of Tech is a double edged sword. As a specialty focus, 65% should be STEM focused. Comment from the chair that we do meet IPEDS designation for STEM (which includes the sciences, math, and computer science), but not Carnegie designation for engineering.

Question regarding level of recruiting for out of state and international students. Response from chair that out of state recruiting levels are up. In state recruiting is an issue, since we as a state school are using state dollars while at the same time competing against other state schools.

Comment regarding how will recommendations be measured, with the response that it was not discussed at the last meeting, but was discussed at a previous special faculty senate meeting. The intent is to measure and act much more quickly so that we do not get into the same situation.

Comment that very frustrated with the results. The department in question is not STEM but with good enrollment and with a reduction in faculty. However, after looking back at the process, the process was fair, objective, and used metrics. As such, the faculty member supported the process, which involved the stakeholders and was transparent. The outcomes may hurt, but questioning about potential decision to not endorse.

Question regarding if the chancellor is bound by the decisions, and if it would be better to have the incoming chancellor move forward with their choices.

Comment that a lame duck chancellor should not make such decisions.

Another comment with a similar concern, but part of the concern in delaying might impact the chancellor search (may not have the same candidates). Response from another senator that if a new chancellor is not willing to make decisions, then why?

Comment that with the quality of chancellor candidates apply given the current situation.

Comment that in part decisions are driven by the commissioner, and that a new chancellor will have direction from above.

Question regarding on if we do make changes, when will savings occur? Response from chair that it will be 1 ½ years from now, unless people decide to leave earlier.

Comment that it is highly significant of the commissioner's editorial released this weekend, as it is a clear indication of direction from above.

Comment that we are better off getting on board with the results, and that a ship is not directed by the rowboat.

Comment that this process is painful for all of us, but that we need to move on and make it better.

Question that who is to say that those impacted cannot be realigned?

Comment that it is no use in arguing, that this seems to be a done deal, and that we need to make arguments to the new person.

Comment that we should endorse and move on.

Comment that no faculty senate or body should weigh in on firing or removing a program or colleague, and that we should not actively endorse a plan that impacts people's employment. There is also no reason to not endorse. The recommendations leave open some big questions, such as who owns the process- the retiring chancellors, the provost, the deans? We need some clarity on who owns the process moving forward. Right now we do not have a timeline, who will execute, budgets, or teaching out. None of these answers are clear, but we can ask for those things to be made clear. Who owns, who is delegated tasks, and what is the timeline? Suggest putting forth that question.

Motion to request leadership team address to faculty senate the following:

1. Who is responsible and who owns the Program Prioritization Process?
2. What is the timeline for implementing version 3 of the recommendations?
3. What is the detailed plan on how decisions will be made and carried out?
4. What are the measurements and evaluations of the process moving forward?

Motion seconded. Motion passes.

Comment that chancellor may not be the acceptable party, since the chancellor is leaving. A counter response is that the chancellor may be the responsible party and is an acceptable answer.

Question on what if the chancellor search fails. A comment from the search team was that they will help with the next search, but that does not address what happens at Tech. Response from the chair that potentially the most likely course is that we have an interim chancellor designated by the commissioner.

Comment about costs savings, and if it is to keep faculty that are not in alignment, or if the plan is just to keep faculty then we should make cuts elsewhere. Overall should be about alignment, but also look at any bloated costs.

Comment that the process has always been about the budget, and that it has always been in the slides and talking points.

Comment that it started out as a talk regarding special focus.

Comment that most of the process fair and based on alignment, but that the current cuts may not be enough. We also may not get good candidates if we lower the budget, and we may have to go through the process again.

Comment that as soon as we start administration pay cuts, we may have certain ramifications.

Question- is it within the scope of the body to address compensation? Response from the chair that union contracting does have some purview on workload and pay. We can request review of administration, but we cannot change our own salaries. If we make a request, no one is obligated to do anything.

Comment that aligned departments are also losing faculty, and that the process is enrollment driven.

Motion to recommend that the chancellor consider changing administrative positions back to earlier positions (as illustrated earlier), with appropriate reductions in pay. Motion seconded.

Comment to ask why have such specificity to a request, with the response that administration recommendations not present in the final version.

Comment that we should consider reducing the administration budget without being specific, with the response that we have a low administration budget as compared to MUS standards and STEM peers.

Comment that it may be the sentiment that faculty do not view administration as being part of the solution moving forward.

Comment that part of the problem is attracting good candidates, and that making specific recommendations may be out of sorts.

Comment that sponsored research among others may need to have a sole person.

Comment that the sentiment of administration being involved and should be impacted is valid to express.

Motion Withdrawn.

Question on will we ever answer the question about reviewing administration?

Comment that PPC decision was that review of administration should be external to PPC, since most members were administrators. Clarification that referred back to chancellor, and not necessarily an external review.

Question on should administration go through the same review as the rest of program prioritization. Response from representative that each area was under review, but not administrators as a whole.

Question on if the administrative structure went through the same process, such as why it was decided that one position should only be half funded by the state.

Comment regarding an example of cost of the weekly seminars with lecturers from all over the country, which has a cost but not potentially the benefit. Response that some of the money is grant money, some with a limited budget, and some based on social relationships and lecturers with ties to the community.

Comment that it would be helpful to look at programs and the value to Tech- do they raid our exposure.

Motion to request administration to provide to campus a budget and evaluation of administrative structure based on special focus. Motion seconded and passes.

Comment that we should not vote to endorse or not endorse version 3 of the recommendations.

Comment that we can endorse the process, but do not recommend voting because of faculty firings.

Comment that we can stay in this process too long.

Comment that we are not required to weigh in, but that we do have a faculty senate representative.

Motion to adjourn seconded and passes.