

**Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting
July 9, 2024, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
MCOB 101
MINUTES**

Attending by Zoom: Christina Wassenaar (presiding), Bret Webb, Vicki Tate, Donna Streeter, Michael Black, Clay Davidson, Yvette Getch, Marie Migaud, Sinéad Ní Chadhain, Andrei Pavelescu, David Turnipseed, Laura Vrana, and Sean Walker

OLD BUSINESS

- **What should the Faculty Senate do if the University Administration continues to postpone the discussion about the internal policy of faculty equity & compression decisions.**
 - Donna suggested that we have a meeting with Charlie Guest to discuss the status of where the numbers are.
 - Andrei requested the current version of the Internal Faculty Compression/Inversion & Equity Analysis document be shared with everyone so we can see what it is.
 - Andrei has a question about the criteria for eligibility for the adjustment.
 - Donna explained that they did not want the adjustment to be based on evaluation scores, since evaluations are not done the same way throughout the university.
 - The committee wanted to increase the range so more people were eligible.
 - Andrei suggested that there should be a historical timeline for annual evaluation scores or an average over a specified period of time. Five years was suggested as the time period.
 - Andrei will make the change in the document with the addition of the 5-year time period and will resend the document to Charlie Guest to prompt him to come back to the policy. Then a meeting with Charlie can be set up.
 - The updated document will also be sent to everyone on ExComm.
- **Sinead brought up the issue about the problems with access to reports from past faculty senate terms that were on the Google drive.**
 - A shared drive with reports has disappeared.

- We need an up-to-date record of what we are doing, as well as what has been done in the past.
- Christina, Vicki and probably Donna, too, have plans to meet and organized what we have among the various shared drives so there will be easier access to the faculty senate materials.
- **Issue of how to apportion representations of colleges that differ from the current mention outlined in our bylaws.** (Pavelescu)
 - Current method in our bylaws says that every college gets a Senator-at-large.
 - Then another one is added up to colleges up to 22 faculty members.
 - An extra senator is added for every 15 faculty members thereafter.
 - This gives greater apportionment to colleges with low number of faculty members since every college will have a minimum of two senators.
 - Andrei proposes that, in the future, a different factor will determine the number of senators: 1-7 will receive 1 senator, 8-22 will have 2 senators, 23-37 will receive 3 senators, etc.
 - This would require a change in our bylaws, so this can not be done until the next election cycle.
 - A motion was made that this issue be tabled for now. Motion carried.
- **Faculty workload**
 - There is talk of a workload survey to be done by Matthew Reichert but it is unclear where that stands.
 - Bret said he would contact Matthew and include Marie since her committee should be involved with the topic.
 - But the possibility of coming up with a uniform faculty workload policy does not look feasible since academic units are unique in terms of their needs.
- **Discussion on access to statistical information** about the university, specifically the percentage of full-time faculty by rank, gender and Academic Divisions (Table 5.1 as given in the USA Fact Book/Statistical Profile) SEE: <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/institutionalresearch/factbook.html>
 - Marie was interested in the table as it related to gender, workload, and career progression.
 - Since it appeared that not everyone knows about the USA Fact Book, it was requested that a link to the web page for this resource be added to the Faculty Senate web page under Faculty Resources.
 - Vicki will work with Justin about getting this done.
- **W Course Caps Concern** (Vrana)

- The numbers of students allowed to enroll in courses designated as writing intensive have been going up in the past few years. This has been noticed in English courses, as well as in MCOB courses.
- There is currently a recommendation that W Intensive courses should not be allowed to exceed 25 students, but it is up to the individual colleges and departments to oversee this.
- Would it be worthwhile to determine how widespread the exceeding of the cap of the recommended number of students is happening in courses across the university?
- What would be the best way to gather this information and is this an issue about which other departments/colleges are complaining?
- Sinead suggested that the W courses should be considered by themselves since they are a special designation. Also, summer pay for teaching comes from courses being fully funded, which means a larger number of students may be necessary to cover the cost.
- Christina brought up an additional issue regarding summer courses. If there are multiple sections of the same course, then each section should have the same cap on the number of students. Yet different sections may have different caps. There should also be a discussion around this in regards to workload.
- A report on workload can be done through Banner that would give all of the sections, with their enrollment, which would not require a survey being done by faculty. It would show who are assigned to the courses/sections and what the caps are for each.
- Laura will take responsibility for getting the reports run through Banner for each of the colleges and look for inconsistencies in workload and cap concerns.
- An additional issue to consider is whether or not department/colleges have a formal policy on teaching assignments during the summer since each unit is supposed to develop their own policies. If they do have a policy, is it written down? Christina thought this would potentially be something the caucus leaders could discover and share with the Teaching Committee and the Salary Committee.
- **PhD Committee Compensation**
 - This topic was originally brought up by a former ExComm member, Zoya Khan.
 - Faculty in A&S were seeing increasing responsibility for being on MS & PhD committees but not getting any additional compensation (workload release, effort allocation on annual faculty reports, credit for teaching time, but not money compensation).

- Faculty were asked to do more, with no recognition or realignment of specific duties.
- This additional workload is not limited to PhD committees, but also doing directed studies, independent studies, having students in your lab doing research for credit, or supervising graduate students.
- Calling it PhD committee compensation is too limiting since it really includes a wide range of activities overseeing graduate students in various research related activities.
- There should be some acknowledgement and reallocation of workload associated with that instead of it just being an addition to the workload.
- This issue should be related to the workload study that Matthew Reichert is doing, but also related to the survey that David has proposed to investigate regarding workload equity.
- Sean explained that there is a problem in getting faculty from other subject-related departments to work on Engineering PhD committees since those departments do not give credit to said faculty members when serving on committees outside of their own departments.
- **Faculty Senate Caucus Leaders are an under-utilized resource**
(Christina)
 - Christina would like to re-establish caucus leaders as an important component of the Senate.
 - Would like to include them in an ExComm meeting and ways of collaborating with them on some projects.
 - Would like to plan on including in a meeting around the time of the plenary meeting when faculty are back on their contracts.
 - There is a description of the responsibilities of caucus leaders in the Faculty Senate Bylaws (Section 3.8).
 - One effort of including each unit caucus leaders in faculty senate activity was by asking them to submit the survey request for SB 129 to their faculty members within their units.
 - This was an effort to encourage the caucus leaders in communicating with their colleagues as an active disseminator of information.
 - Utilizing this resource would make the Senate a more consistent communicator of information from the University administration.
 - A role of the caucus leader is to be a liaison from the Senate to the faculty and from the faculty to the Deans.
 - As a liaison, the caucus leaders should also be involved within the leadership group of each college.
 - Christina will write up a proposal, based on the current bylaws with some additional items, that would enhance the responsibilities of

caucus leaders as liaisons between faculty and deans, and between faculty and university administration.

- Proposal will also include input from the caucus leaders themselves.
- **“Chicago Statement of Freedom of Expression” / Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)**
 - After short discussion and a motion to table the topic, it was decided to move it indefinitely to a later time.
- **AI Statement status** (Vrana)
 - The issue was whether or not we wanted a university-wide AI policy versus having individual colleges policies.
 - Laura would like to get on the proposed university-wide committee to be part of the discussions. Donna will try to make sure she is included within the committee membership.
 - Due to the lack of new information necessary for discussion, it was decided to table the topic to a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Lab Course Fees**
 - Due to lack of additional information on the subject, it was tabled until more information is received.
- **New Revisions in the Exemption for Executive, Administrative, Professional, Computer & Outside Sales Employees Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** – what it means for university faculty
 - The salary threshold for a position to be classified as exempt was raised to \$43,000 on July 1st. It will be raised to over \$58,000 on Jan. 1st. This may affect faculty who make less than the threshold by changing their employment status from exempt to non-exempt.
 - This will affect those that are in the “Professional” classification, such as faculty, and for those that are “Administrative” such as some administrators within departments.

OTHER: QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Allied Health College needs two more senators** (Tate): Need one to fill a new position due to the increase number of faculty members in the college, and another position that is unfilled due to a resignation of a former member
 - Vicki will contact the caucus leader for AHP (Casey Brock) about filling both positions before the August plenary session.

- **Suggestion to create an additional web page on the FS web site that keeps track of the USA Faculty Handbook proposals sent to CAD (Tate):**
 - The web page would include the text of the proposed changes to the university handbook and a timeline of its status through the process.
 - Sinead and Vicki will work with Justin on creating the web page.
- **The use of the Watermark software in creating annual reports (Miguad)**
 - Donna remarked that the Watermark software is not used currently for all colleges for their annual evaluations.
 - While the Deans assumed that all colleges use it for annual evaluations, the reality is that most only use it for promotion &/or tenure purposes.
 - The software is not constructed to meet the needs of conveying job responsibilities in a meaningful manner, though it works better for professional development and service information.
 - The College of Medicine, while they have not used it before now, is expecting all faculty to use this software for inputting all of their information for all of their years of employment, which has become a burdensome endeavor.
 - Long discussion on how different colleges use or not use Watermark

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Minutes compiled by Vicki Tate, Faculty Senate Secretary