Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Sept. 20, 2018 12:30 pm

Walker 1-109

President Will Rogers

Meeting called to order – 12:32 PM

1. Welcome to Senate

A. Vote on summer-appointment of senators

Roll taken – 27 total faculty senators

Bob Eisenstadt recommended faculty academic center for future meetings due to limited space in Walker Hall

Motion made (Bob Eisenstadt) and seconded (Paul Wiedemeier) to approve faculty member appointments

Motion accepted

2. Brief Presentation from Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR)

Brett Bennett has served as FAR since 2011

NCAA mandates FAR position for universities and duties vary from school to school

FAR part of the academia, not athletics

Roles of the FAR include:

* Serving as advisor to Dr. Bruno on the best way to solve issues between athletic and academia
* Representing student athletes to academia and vice versa
* Promote and ensure student athlete welfare – Title IX, Compliance, investigations, etc.
* Collaborate with University Athletics Academics Advisory Council (UAAAC)
  + Examples: improving Athletic Performance Rate (APR) and adoption of Admission’s Admit by Exception process

Senators are welcome to talk with Brett informally regarding issues related to athletics without going to athletics department.

Questions – If faculty have issues with student athlete, should that faculty member talk with FAR or academic advisor first?

Not necessarily; it depends on what the specific issues entail. Academic advisors are a separate group outside of athletics, so it’s appropriate to talk with advisors as well.

3. Committee recommendations and assignments

Will Rogers informed the committee members present that he was asked to make recommendations for University committee assignments and faculty senate subcommittees. Senators were assigned as subcommittee members based on past assignments/past service as senator. He is open to waiting on elections for secretary-elect and president-elect until next meeting.

4. Executive Committee Report

President, Past President, President elect, Secretary and Secretary elect attend – group meets on Tuesday before Thursday’s senate meeting to discuss the agenda/present issues/etc. with Deans, University Vice President, and University President.

From last Exec Committee Meeting:

* Current issues/responsibilities include the finalization of the University Faculty Handbook, which includes legal rights of faculty members, and Policies (ex. Violence Free workplace) that are needed as outside policies beyond those currently found in the faculty handbook.

* Dr. Pani asked for suggestions on the failure of communication and ways to increase communication across campus. Will states that in previous meetings and conversations, Dr. Pani conceded that information is not disseminated appropriately. Will feels there could be better processes to improve communication efforts from administration to faculty members, and ongoing efforts are being made to enhance communication campus wide. Will plans to send executive summary to all faculty and refer faculty to senators for any questions they may have.
* Will asked about the med school, program implementation, and integration between schools. More information will be coming soon.
* Will mentioned sick leave policy which appears unclear and not enforceable; bereavement policy is out of date (formulaic relationship lists and 2 days leave is an issue for a national university, such as ULM, when employees need to travel). This should not be a human resources policy set up as board policy only. We can go beyond board policy as this is a quality of life issue.
* Bob Eisenstadt mentioned paternity leave; the university’s current policy does not address adoption. Some comments added to the conversation of the current leave policy. Mr. Eisenstadt added to the conversation that the faculty workload and teaching schedule is fairly flexible; there are many strictures creating stress implemented by HR. As Faculty Senate moves forward, it would be most constructive to determine how best to work with the human resources department and our leadership to satisfy state level requirements and meet personal goals/etc.
* Will to give updates from senate’s suggestions/commentary today but not likely to have “new” news at next Senate meeting

Commencement and Final Exam Schedule (presented by Paul Wiedemeier)

If 900 or more students are scheduled to graduate in Spring Commencement, two ceremonies will be held - one for graduate programs and one for undergraduate programs.

Fall 2019 – there will be a change to academic calendar that is most likely becoming permanent after Fall 2019; Thanksgiving late and close to if not at end of classes. Grades will be due for graduating seniors on Tuesday after senior finals week, and final grades for all others will be due on Wednesday. Commencement will occur on Saturday 12/14/19, which is later than previous fall commencement dates.

Some questions were asked by senators regarding additional time given for grade due dates and extended contracts for 9 month employees. Paul and Will replied that the 2019 Academic Calendar is not yet set and all options for revisions have been and are being discussed before any final decisions are made. We will know more about Spring 2019 commencement (1 or 2 ceremonies) at some point during this semester.

5. Elections

Will stated the Committee needs to elect President elect and Secretary elect. Those serving in these roles will go to executive committee meetings and ask for feedback. Currently, the faculty handbook lists these 2 positions for service on the faculty handbook committee. The President elect has been Handbook committee chair historically, as more direct ties to faculty senate will result in progress toward the faculty handbook and policies every year.

Paul Wiedemeier moved to table elections until the next Senate meeting; Bob Eisenstadt seconded

Motion passed to table nominee elections

Final question made regarding the current status of search for replacement of Dr. Pani’s position.

Will stated he is on the search committee, which is comprised of ~15 members, and he confirmed that there was a large applicant pool after national search and skype interviews will begin within the next month. Campus interviews are set to start no later than November, and Dr. Bruno would like to hire permanent position rather than interim position. John Pratt is chair of search committee.

Josh Stockley provided more information regarding his experience as Faculty Senate President; he was willing to answer questions and shared that the overall experience was very rewarding. He learned a great deal about administration and policy during his time as President and reported that the current Senate has had positive experience and relationship with current Administration.

Bob Eisenstadt motioned to adjourn meeting; Stacy Starks seconded

Meeting adjourned – 1:34 PM