

Faculty Handbook Revisions Committee
February 25, 2015

Members Present: David Sollars, Matt Arterburn, Pat Munzer, Laura Stephenson, Cynthia Waskowiak, Marc Fried

Discussion: The Committee first discussed some housekeeping matters and a few topics that should be discussed at later meetings. We agreed that an agenda would be helpful so that Committee members can prepare.

Next, we discussed the functions of General Faculty. It is tradition to have programs, etc. changed by Gen Faculty. We are not sure of the current prevailing opinion, but it used to be a fairly held belief that everyone should get a chance to say and vote. One member wondered about the effectiveness of General Faculty, given the lack of quorum at a recent meeting and the large number of items considered. A quorum is one-third of eligible faculty, which is about 300 individuals.

Some schools are frustrated by General Faculty as the process can slow down program changes. Amendments can occur during that meeting, we try to do it an hour, questions come from those unprepared, and there is concern that an amendment can change something that was vetted by the unit, Faculty Senate, and finances already worked out. There is the possibility for shenanigans at General Faculty, especially since the President and WUBoR are the ultimate deciders anyway.

Other schools like General Faculty because they can bring an item there for consideration even if Faculty Senate votes it down (as long as they have 10% vote in Faculty Senate). Smaller schools are concerned about having proportionately fewer Senate representatives and other schools voting down their curriculum changes, so it helps to have General Faculty as the last say. Most things get rubber stamped at General Faculty, but it is also a chance for another set of eyes on an item to catch some errors.

One member asked if Faculty Senate was not being fully utilized if all items required approval by General Faculty. Someone asked if people would take Faculty Senate more seriously if that was the end point? Senate composition has changed from tenured faculty with institutional knowledge to new faculty with little experience in faculty governance and who some faculty feel aren't giving the items the proper attention. There is also the issue of more lecturers and non-tenured faculty who are afraid to give their opinion or do not understand the impact of decisions. As there are few tenured faculty in some departments, it is difficult to get more experienced representatives. Additionally, Faculty Senate has two committees so reps have a bigger time commitment in going to two meetings and most reps don't get release time.

The committee discussed whether it is possible to make some modifications to the process. It might work to use electronic voting, but the problem with it is that running the electronic vote

is a huge work load and faculty are not given release time for it. As for Faculty Senate, most departments do not give it gravitas, and others do not have the time or tenured faculty to assign to it. Another point is that Faculty Senate could be more efficient if they were not sent so many items. Someone opined that they should only address major changes that impact the University outside the school, like policy changes and new programs.

Decisions:

- No changes to Faculty Senate or General Faculty will be suggested at this time, other than a proposed name change.
- Maybe later we will discuss clarification of topics addressed by those governing bodies.
- At the next meeting, we will discuss some primary legal concerns with the handbook.

Next Meeting: March 25, Noon in Shawnee Room