

LIII No. 7
Faculty Senate Minutes
October 31, 2018

The Faculty Senate of Southeast Missouri State University met on Wednesday, October 31, 2018, in the UC. Redhawks Room. The following Senators were present: Jingjing Tong, Tamara Zellars Buck, Laura Hatcher, Carl Hess, Rubén Gerding, Dena Hale, Michael Aide, Carl Kinnison, Kathie Miller, Patricia Farrish, Susan Fulton, Debbie Lee-DiStefano, R. Larry Bohannon, Eric Clements, Erin Fluegge, Bev Evans, Dustin Siegel, Joni Hand, Ziping Liu, Roberta Humphrey, Jon Hayes, Willie Redmond, Nicholas Kenney (for Liz McFarland), Jim McGill, Desma Reno

Also present were Tammy Randolph, Interim Provost, and Renee Owens, Student Government Representative.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for October 17, 2018 (53.6) were approved with amendments. Senator Tong pointed out that she was absent October 17, but her alternate was present in her place. Interim Provost Randolph clarified that she did not withhold 10% rollover from each department across the board; instead she presented the Deans with the need to set aside \$250,000 and left it to them to apportion the reserved amount.

New Business

Chair Powell presented the final report of the Faculty Department Poll that had been distributed to Senators by email October 24. He requested feedback from Senators and the departments they represent regarding possible positive steps forward to facilitate improved communication, shared governance, and faculty morale. Some suggestions were:

- a. increase efforts to get input from all stakeholders before making decisions, taking concerns seriously and acting on them;
- b. (administration) be transparent about decision-making based on financial considerations, rather than presenting them as equitability issues, sharing hard numerical data and presenting alternative plans for consideration;
- c. (administration) tailor communications more closely to audience needs and strengths, rather than canned presentations with pre-programmed answers to questions;
- d. clear up uncertainties about course release and overload;
- e. consult more systematically with all faculty on major faculty issues such as workload, overload, and course classification, with emphasis on department needs and experience in decision-making;
- f. Take-Away Friday on Nov. 30 will present a forum to offer broad-based constructive discussion, justification, rationale, needs, etc., regarding faculty workload (contact: Jim McGill);
- g. budget discussion with Compensation Committee: Dr. Kathy Mangels will present November 7; Committee Chair Reno extended an open invitation to Senators; and
- h. investigate possibility of workload credit for advisement and service load.

There was discussion of the feasibility of changing the published Senate schedule to accommodate a visit by President Vargas on November 7, so he could present his ideas regarding how to improve communication, shared governance and faculty morale, which would also move scheduled committee meetings to November 14. The proposal was voted down due to conflicts with committee plans and concern that the President would not have sufficient time to plan. A second proposal to convene a called meeting at 3:30 on November 28 passed unanimously. Committee meetings regularly scheduled for November 28 will be moved to December 5.

Reports

Chair Powell reported that none of the administrative committees for which he is Faculty Senate liaison met since the previous Senate meeting. However, the Executive Committee has been involved in multiple meetings with administration to address the challenges posed by the Trump rally on November 6. Chair Powell also referred to his role in analyzing data and preparing the report of the Faculty Department Poll.

Interim Provost Randolph also mentioned the large commitment of time associated with the Trump rally. Progress has been made in the hiring cycle in response to faculty feedback, with refinements to the budgeting process related to department and program needs. She related that the issue of reassignment and overload was being closely analyzed to protect faculty with reassignments from having those reassignments negated by additional workload on overload.

Ms. Owens reported several discussions and initiatives from Student Government. They discussed the three primary options for the Academic Calendar and ranked a two-day early start first, the status quo second, and a split break (two days in October and three at Thanksgiving) last. Their preference for response boxes for student evaluations was to omit drop downs with each question and reserve open responses for the end of the questionnaire. November 12-16, they will reprise the “Ask a _____ (Muslim, Black person, etc.)” diversity and inclusion activity. Several sustainability initiatives are in the process of adoption to limit packaging waste with food services and replace old and damaged recycling bins.

Academic Affairs

Senator Evans reported that the committee met with Floyd Lockhart to get input regarding changes to the format of open responses on student evaluations. She reported on negative feedback from University support units regarding the proposal to start the Academic Calendar two days early. This generated discussion from the Senators present in support of keeping the two-day early start, but since the Calendar was inadvertently left off the agenda, voting was postponed until November 14.

Compensation – No report

Documents

Senator Humphrey reported that the Handbook had been divided among the committee members into assigned sections for review, with a focus on identifying necessary changes in positions of responsibility (e.g., there is no longer a Dean of Graduate Studies), adopting conventions of pronoun use, and consistent use of terminology such as “chair” versus “chairperson.”

Governance

Senator Hess reported on plans for a discussion of issues with the Interim Provost and generation of ideas for Take-Away Fridays in the spring semester.

Professional Affairs

Senator McGill reported that Professional Affairs did not meet, but reminded Senators of the upcoming Take-Away Friday session for November 2. The topic will be faculty involvement in the political process. Speakers will be Chris Martin (Assistant to President Vargas), Jonathan Kessler (Cape Democratic Party Chairman) and Jim McGill.

Membership – No report

Department Reports and Concerns

Concern was expressed regarding the future of study abroad programs, regarding compensation and future directions. (It was not noted which Senator brought this forward).

Adjournment

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 14, 2018, in the UC Redhawks Room from 3-5 p.m.