

Report to the Faculty
Sara Freeman, Faculty Senate Chair
August 29, 2018

Goals and Retreat

Meeting with President Crawford and Board of Trustees President Robert Pohlad in early August, I outlined my three primary goals for Faculty Senate and our faculty governance processes this year:

1. Facilitate the shared governance interface with strategic plan initiatives
2. Create and charge the task force on bias and Student Evaluations of Teaching, as outlined and voted on at in the April 25, 2018 full faculty meeting.
This committee has been appointed and at the August 27, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting its charge were approved. See below for the text of the charge.
3. Follow through on faculty initiatives begun in the last few years, namely:
 - equalizing the semester calendars
 - evaluating the effects of the common hour on scheduling for classes
 - possibly amending the Faculty Code language around criteria for promotion to full professor, including whether we can create phased implementations of changes

Similarly, during the Faculty Senate retreat, the senators engaged in an intention setting exercise (after I made them do a theatre exercise called a “shake out”.....it was great) that identified these areas of focus:

- Helping faculty navigate the Strategic Plan
- Rethinking faculty workload
- Progress on SET changes/creation of equitable teaching evaluations
- Communication and solidarity with staff
- Supporting faculty role in campus climate re: diversity and inclusion
- Creating more communication from Board of Trustees faculty reps to the faculty
- Finish work on semester calendar
- Evaluation of common hour
- Forming a system-wide picture of the situation of faculty on continuing contingent contracts
- Balancing faculty service expectations

We have our work cut out for us and we are plunging in directly.

Service Assignments and Committee Charges

Over the summer, the Faculty Senate executive committee (Freeman as chair, Gwynne Brown as vice chair, and Kristin Johnson as secretary) worked with the Provost and Associate Deans Office to complete the faculty service assignments for AY 18-19. This is a serious process, where many needs and concerns are taken into account, especially junior faculty and their need for time and space to build tenure files, balance of personal and disciplinary identities and

backgrounds in a committee's composition, the need for senior leadership and institutional memory, different faculty members' senses of being stakeholders in certain processes and programs, and a committee's continuing work or the need for rebuilding. The standing committees of the faculty senate each require a certain number of members as outlined in the faculty bylaws. Many faculty members also serve on ad hoc or appointed committees and advisory bodies, some by choice and some by request. It is a complex picture and we have many people on sabbaticals and fallow years, so there is no surplus of people to take on roles.

Now that service assignments are made, committees are getting to work. Each committee has standing charges outlined in the faculty bylaws. The main business of the faculty senate in the first weeks of the semester are to finalize additional charges to each committee. The IEC and CC charges were approved in the August 27 senate meeting. The rest of the committees will be addressed in the coming weeks.

Curriculum Workshop

In relation to interfacing with the strategic plan, the work is underway. A large and activated group of faculty took part in a workshop on Thursday, August 23.

At the workshop, faculty dug in to curricular ideas developed by the goal teams in the strategic planning process last year and began navigating the vision forming in the draft strategic plan. To my observation this was a lively workshop, marked by a striking degree of honesty and authenticity about our hopes and fears for our students and our work, the relationship of our graduate and undergraduate programs, our sense of possibility, and the absolute need for more conversation.

The Author Your Future (working title!) vision of an undergraduate curriculum encompassing a major, pathway, mentor, and experience inspired many nascent models for curriculum restructuring to be begin to be imagined. Key questions arose concerning the purpose of each part of our curriculum, the problems are we trying to solve, and what we want to provide for our students during their studies here, or ensure that every student does. The promptings of the Legacies Project asked us to think deeply about our emplacement and our history and how our curriculum should reflect nuanced reflections on power and identity at every level.

What the workshop indicated most of all to me is that faculty need and want more conversation about the ideas proposed in the draft strategic plan. We also need to approach process for potential changes very reflectively.

Other Concerns and Developments

Faculty queries about the seemingly high proportion of first year students who are marked in their advisors' files as having a high probability of academic probation led me into conversation with Landon Wade, Director of Academic Advising, and Laura Martin-Fedich, VP for Enrollment. Landon discovered that the HS GPA data never loaded into PeopleSoft. He updated first year advisors that PeopleSoft treats null and zero as zero, so the probation probability indexes that were generated are

incorrect as they used 0.00 as each student's HS GPA. Landon is working to resolve this with tech services.

I am looking forward to the Race and Pedagogy Conference at the end of this month, and to seeing our work develop this year.

Sincerely,

Sara

Charges to the SET Committee:

- * to identify what the faculty values and learns from student feedback about courses**
- * to recommend an approach to student feedback about courses that minimizes bias, corresponds to what we value, and that supports faculty advancement**

Timeline:

Interim report to Faculty Senate by December 2018 with a preliminary recommendation about timelines for achieving committee objectives (with the understanding that the committee will not have completed this work, but will have been able to assess the workload and make recommendations about how long they expect the work to take).