

Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 15, 2020

In Attendance: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Keir Moorhead (Vice Chair), Sarah Senk (Secretary), Christine Isakson, Elizabeth McNie, Wil Tsai, Cynthia Trevisan, Sue Opp (Provost) Mike Mahoney (Interim Provost), Sianna Brito (Academic Support Coordinator)

Absent: Steve Browne, Cynthia Trevisan

1. Confirm Agenda for General Meeting
2. Senate Executive Retreat Announcement
  - a. Chair and Secretary report that in January the President proposed a Senate Executive Committee retreat. Brig conveyed the President's request for a date when both the Senate Chair and Vice-Chair are away at a conference. Senate Chair will propose new dates to Brig to communicate to the President.
  - b. Committee requests in the future scheduling events like this one months out to facilitate faculty participation (as making same-semester changes to course calendars can be time-consuming work.)
3. Additional Agenda Items
  - a. McNie reports concerns from faculty colleagues regarding a lack of AV support for classes that take place before 0900 and after 1600. McNie asks if there is anything we can do as a faculty senate can do to ensure that some student AV tech folks are available at those times.
  - b. Moorhead recommends broadening this conversation to AV issues in general.
  - c. Provost Opp offers background (for the new Interim Provost, Mike Mahoney): the problem is that both of our former AV staff members left the university at around the same time (one retired, but then the second left unexpectedly), and the whole unit moved over to IT. Right now, the job advertisement is live, but not specified. So we are dealing with a personnel shortage.
  - d. Isakson notes that it's important for AV to be specialized in AV to provide the necessary support.
  - e. Tsai suggests locating the job advertisement and recommending edits to make sure the candidates can provide necessary support.
  - f. Provost recommends inviting Julianne Tolsom to an upcoming Senate Exec meeting and having a discussion with her.
  - g. Chair adds that this is a good idea because we need to understand why we are *still* waiting for Qualtrics. Provost approved funding (approximately \$9,000 in summer 2019) and we are still waiting for the software.
  - h. **Actions: Chair will invite CIO Tolsom to an upcoming Senate Executive Committee Meeting.**

4. Updates on Provost Search Committee
  - a. Sue: No updates. Senate Chair will follow up with President to confirm timeline and how search committee will be constituted.
  - b. McNie requests that the campus visits take place *before* Cruise to make sure cruise-faculty are included.
  
5. Gary Reichard Meets with Senate Exec to Discuss Chair Recommendations
  - a. G.R requests advice from Senate Exec about how to return recommendations:
    - G.R. notes that last year was a different kind of assignment; it was clearly a dual request from the Administration and Senate Leadership. This year the advice seems like it should be geared more toward the Senate since the Senate will be crafting the policy.
    - G.R. reports that he met with all department chairs over the past two days to seek out information that would inform recommendations about a policy.
    - G.R. observes that many of the issues on campus stem from lack of clarity about the roles of Chairs and Deans. “It’s not so much a climate issue; it’s a need-to-delineate issue, so that everybody can know clearly what’s expected of them.” G.R. notes another problem: people discuss but defer coming to conclusions; as a result, difficult decisions don’t happen. G.R. notes: “My feeling is that this represents an opportunity to you to force the difficult discussions about these issues.” Obviously, the policy will discuss roles and responsibilities of the Chairs, and we don’t currently have a document that does that. We may decide to record into that policy something about the roles and responsibilities of Deans. But the policy development process should force a discussion about what represents Chair responsibilities.
      - i. Examples: use phrasing like “in conjunction with” and “with the approval of.” Even if we don’t explicitly talk about the roles of the Deans, but by what you say about the Chair’s roles, you can make clear what are the Dean’s roles. That discussion needs to happen. It needed to happen a year ago, and it can happen in a responsible discussion by a responsible committee.
      - ii. Additionally, Chair-appointment selection procedure. Right now it’s unclear where the votes go. They just get to the president somehow. One issue I’ve asked each chair about (to diverse responses) is “should the Dean receive the vote total when the department receives it?” Should the Dean have a recommending role in the chain? If the Dean disagrees, what kind of accountability does the Dean have? Is the Dean’s rec independent? Should he/she be required to write an explanation about why he/she went against the Department? We need a policy about negative outcomes because even though they’re rare, things fall apart if you *don’t* have a policy and it *does* happen.

- iii. G.R. recommends we “think deeply about what you can accomplish in terms of drafting a policy in terms of forcing necessary discussions on this campus.”
- iv. G.R. notes additional problem: based on reports from interviews he conducted, Dean and Chair’s meetings have not been productive in terms of coming to conclusions: “they very seldom come to any closure on any significant issue.” Then people make decisions and there’s a feeling that “they’re” telling us what to do, but people don’t understand because “there was a discussion.” G.R. emphasizes the importance of coming to conclusions and recording them.
- v. Exec Members note that at Cal Maritime a problem is that Chairs don’t have budget.
- vi. McNie asks what happens when departmental decisions are overturned? G.R. replies: “Unusual for President to deny department’s recommendation on Chairs but usually these things result from a contentious department with a closely split vote. When a department is contentious, you need to [investigate and appoint neutral acting chair.]”
- vii. G.R. adds: One key thing to think about is what role you want the dean to play, and be explicit: if you mean shared, say “shared.” If you say, “with final approval of, etc.” Similar with evaluation which is currently “all over the place.” It’s nice that the Senate runs it, but the evaluations just go back to the Chair. So what? What Faculty member that has objections to the way things are going is going to write that and put it in the Chair’s mailbox? Those comments should come directly to the Senate. It might help to have some Likert Scale questions on it. And you need to figure out if there is some merit to sharing those evaluations with the Dean. And then creating a formative (not punitive) discussion between the Dean and the Chairs. Comparison is course evaluations: conversations aren’t punitive, they’re formative, thinking about why things went badly in a particular class and what we need to think about. And *that’s* a really useful discussion. You can do the same thing in a Chair discussion if you have the Dean playing a role. It’s important to have the Dean participate precisely because some Chairs may eventually become Deans; this is part of supporting the whole institution and training people and helping them improve. And for those who don’t like being Chair, those discussions help clarify things for them too. The evaluation process is how you cause those discussions to happen.
- viii. G.R. adds: You might decide how Chairs relate to the service component to RTP. Since Chairs get course releases to Chair, it may not be fair to count as something additional. Policy could state (and you have to get union rep’s agreement so there’s not contentiousness) but you could explicitly state that service as Chair constitutes “service at large.” As for the purpose of the evaluations, if you fear punitiveness, you’d want to build in some protections. You can state that it’s to be formative.

- ix. Term limits? G.R. advises that we say something like “Normally a chair will not serve more than two consecutive terms.” “Normally is a really good word for policy. Normally is the expectation. And then you say, “in circumstances where...” to specify exceptions.”
- x. Pinisetty notes: CBA overrides senate documents. CBA says that Chairs serve the President, President appoints. How does the CBA sync with what we’ll have in this policy? G.R says, “you have to be consistent. It would be smart to have a discussion with the Chapter President along the way if you think there’s a point in the policy that could be conceived as violating the CBA. The policy *could* have a section on the removal of a department chair. In the event that a president is considering removal of a department chair, there will be a discussion...”
- xi. G.R. advises on the drafting process: there’s every right for the Senate to develop a policy that will require a consultation in the event of a failure of the president to follow a recommendation.
- xii. Pinisetty suggests that we want to start by seeing what other CSUs are doing. G.R notes “There are other CSUs with excellent policies.”
- xiii. Pinisetty says “When we have a policy in place we want to make sure it is valuable for a long period of time. We don’t want to tailor a policy in which we focus on issues we’re facing *right now*. We need to plan for long term.”
- xiv. G.R adds: another issue worth thinking about is workload. We have a WTU distribution policy that suggests there maybe could be variation in course load. Right now it’s uniform but possibly not equitable given discrepancies in workload between department chairs. May want to put a workload provision into the policy. (You would want to run this by union chapter president to see that we’re according with the CBA.)
- xv. Pinisetty notes one problem is that our Dean job descriptions overlapped significantly with Dean roles. G.R. says that Policy overrides job ads. Ultimately the policy prevails, and if a particular Dean feels “this isn’t what I signed on for,” maybe there’s a parting of ways. It’s the institution trying to mature and “get it right.” The better way is to have a conversation unfold and keep the Deans as part of the conversation.
- xvi. Senate Exec asks G.R. for additional suggestions? He says, “keep it generic / keep language consistent / full intent is to be a larger more robust maritime university, so keep it future-oriented / include provision that describes on what basis there’s variability. You need a line like “pending available budget” / and implementation has to be thoughtfully timed

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.