

Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 22, 2020, 12 PM

In Attendance: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Elizabeth McNie (Vice Chair), Sarah Senk (Secretary), Christine Isakson, Cynthia Trevisan, Frank Yip, Lori Schroeder (Provost)

Absent: Matt Fairbanks

I. MT Curricular Revisions and S&M Letter

- Chair reports his role as a Senate Chair is not to take sides of any one department; it's to make sure we uphold the policies in the ByLaws. Primacy concern in S&M letter was clarity about the vote and concern that some members of Curriculum Committee were not clear about the motion and whether their vote was recorded accurately.
- Chair reports that he and Senk met with Amy Parsons, who reported that she reached out individually to each member of Curriculum Committee to confirm the results of the original vote and asking 1) whether they understood what they were voting on, and 2) whether their vote would stay the same. Parsons informed that there was one member who reported being confused about the process but that their vote would not change, and one member whose vote was incorrectly recorded. But the majority of the members understood the motion and confirmed their votes had been recorded accurately.
- Moving forward, Pinisetty is proposing that we have a conversation between the MT Department and S&M, identifying places where S&M can help them with the new curriculum. Chair suggests that he will take the responsibility of talking to Dan and Don; Bets will be responsible for talking with the curriculum revision team in MT; Sarah will be responsible for corresponding with the S&M Department.
- Isakson has a process question: Curriculum Committee was very explicit last spring when they said that they requested that the MT Department respond to the S&M concerns, and MT department seemed to ignore that request. Currently, as I understand it, there are no repercussions for not doing that. Going forward, how do we support a culture where departments honor a committee's request?
- Yip notes he appreciates that comment because it's at the heart of this matter. Part of the information that S&M wants the CC to have now are all examples of bad faith.
- Senk adds that moving forward we need to correct the shortcomings of the existing policy. Parsons recognizes there is an immediate need to correct the existing bylaws to *require* a *written* response to departmental concerns, and to require a standardized set of questions that must be asked at every meeting. (One of the problems that emerged is that people were expecting members of the curriculum to ask certain questions that they have asked historically, but those members were recently replaced with new members who didn't ask those questions. Now that's a problem, but it's a structural problem that we never codified those questions. We can't just rely on Tom and Kate to ask the rigorous questions they always ask because that's relying on informal institutional culture, and committees have turnover. If there are questions that are so urgent they must be asked at every meeting, then we need to create a list of questions that *must* be asked at every meeting.) Senk has begun drafting a resolution regarding the new curriculum approval process, suggesting that we formally adopt the forms Senk drafted in the spring, that we formalize a process by which Curriculum Committee reports to the *Senate*, who then reports to the Provost (rather than

reporting directly to the Provost), and that we mandate confirmation that constituents actually read departmental responses and understand the consequences, etc.

- Trevisan and Yip add that it's good that we're fixing it for the future, but this is an irreversible decision that doesn't appear to have majority support even in the department that initiated it. Senk adds that if this is indeed true that there was not majority support, we need to confirm that and revisit the issue, but that all paper evidence suggests that there *was* majority support. Senk notes that it became clear from conversations with Parsons that there *was* majority support in the Curriculum Committee, even if people anecdotally expressed concern that committee members had not read or understood the S&M impact statement; the reality appears to be that they did not believe that devastating impact on the S&M department was enough to demand further consideration of the curriculum revision proposal.
- Schroeder adds that in her in experience, where curriculum committee worked most successfully there was a representative from the Provost's office, and that administrator was tasked with enforcing meetings between departments, etc. That person doesn't get involved in the decision-making but acts as a facilitator. Isakson adds that we need to be explicit about the role clarifying what such a facilitator does.
- **Action items: McNie will correspond with MT Curriculum Working Group and report back to Senk and Pinisetty, who will then correspond with the Curriculum Committee chair about next steps.**

II. Planning for Upcoming Senate General Meeting Protocols

- Senk will introduce resolutions with some notes about procedure and explain how senators will raise hands to ask questions, and we will use polls to vote on motions. McNie and Pinisetty note that as co-hosts they do not have the ability to vote in polls or raise their hands; Senk will account for this using the private chat function in Zoom.
- Rather than take roll call, to save time we will ask Senators to "raise hand" and Senk will observe the chat determine if there is a quorum and record who is present and absent.

III. Murals Committee

- McNie shares screen with draft memo to Captain Pecota noting that the Mural Committee presented a draft policy last Spring.
- **Action items: McNie will send memo to Captain Pecota.**

Meeting adjourned.