Academic Senate Executive Committee Minutes
Monday, November 26, 2007
(Approved)

Call to Order
Senate Chairperson Dan Holland called the meeting to order.

Approval of Executive Committee Minutes of October 29, 2007
Motion XXXIX-23: By Senator Fazel, seconded by Senator Mason, to approve the Executive Committee Minutes of October 29, 2007. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Distributed Communications:
11.01.07.01   From University Review Committee: ASPT Calendar Proposed Revisions (On Faculty Caucus Agenda of 12/5/07)
Senator Holland: There will be some minor changes on the ASPT calendar pertaining to dates to inform the relevant committee that you will be filing an appeal. What they are trying to avoid is having someone wait until the last day to say that they are going to appeal because that adversely affects the rest of the calendar.

Senator Kalter: That seems to be a totally reasonable thing to tell someone, but we are basically cutting the candidate's deadline in half. On this year's calendar, it would mean moving the deadline to file materials as far back as October 15.

Senator Borg: That is not the implication at all. The deadline for submitting the application is November 1. It says now that the SFSC or the DFSC must inform them within ten days of their intention. By November 15, they make their decision and then they have to have these ten days to inform them of the decision. At that point, there are five days to indicate an appeal, which does not have to be done until 10 days after November 15. It is not backing up the other way; it is moving it forward.

Provost Presley: It does not change the timeframe in which to prepare the materials.

Senator Borg: We probably should discuss this at the Faculty Caucus, because we are not going to solve it here, unless we decide not to give this to the Faculty Caucus.

Provost Presley: The URC was trying to fix what, up until now, has been a theoretical problem. I am not aware of there having been problems with this, so I am not exactly sure why they are choosing to do this. But the net effect of this is just to say that you should not wait until the last moment to make the request. It does nothing to the major deadlines.

11.02.07.01   From Provost Presley: Distinguished Professor Recommendations (On Faculty Caucus Agenda of 12/5/07)
Senator Holland: This communication is about the selection of Distinguished Professors.

President Bowman: John reminded me this afternoon that this is really a Faculty Caucus item rather than a Senate item.

Provost Presley: Given the fact that in the past, the presentation of the credentials and the discussion of the candidates occurred in the Faculty Caucus.

Senator Borg: Ten years ago, it was the entire Senate. This was part of the changes that included conducting faculty

elections in the Faculty Caucus.

11.13.07.01   From Rules Committee: Disestablishment of Academic Units Policy – Revised
Senator Alferink: This was referred to the Rules Committee because there was a discrepancy between the policy as it exists on the web and the policy approved by the Senate the last time that this document was reviewed. Rather than try to sort out how that happened, we decided to revisit it and establish the policy that the Senate had originally approved. The difference was that the policy as approved by the Senate included "program" as an academic unit. The policy on the web does not, so this revision clarifies that. It also addresses a couple of other things, one of which is that we have added the words "affected academic unit". We have removed the phrase that allows any individual to initiate the proposal for the disestablishment of an academic unit because that initiates a whole lot of work on a whole lot of people's parts and that it should not be done on the spur of the moment or someone getting this idea or being unhappy, etc. So, we mandated that it should be a governance body of some sort and the governance bodies that are responsible for that would do it. Essentially, we are taking the process that establishes the curriculum and essentially reversing that process so that it is parallel in both directions.

Senator Kalter: I sent Larry some suggestions in an e-mail. One of them was that there are two different wordings about the Graduate Council and the Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council. I suggest making that uniform somehow.

Senator Alferink: The Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council consists of four members plus an ex-officio member of the Graduate School and that is not a very large body to make such a determination. So, I don't know why that was originally put in place. The Graduate Council is a far larger body and probably size provides for greater representation and it is probably prudent. GCC comes into play only when it is also combined with the University Curriculum Committee. So, the GCC and the UCC meet jointly and then you still have a significant group of individuals.

Senator Kalter: I was going to suggest that we should X out Curriculum Committee of the Graduate Council wherever it occurs so that we are always saying Grad Council.

Senator Alferink: Except that the Graduate Curriculum Committee only comes into play where it is a joint program that has both undergraduate and graduate components. In which case, if you put the whole Graduate Council in with the University Curriculum Committee, then you do have a very sizable group to try to schedule a meeting for.

Senator Borg: In this case, it is not a policy decision; it is simply one of selecting members of an ad hoc committee. It has only that authority there and it is a way of selecting people rather than restricting them.

Senator Kalter: One of the other things that I asked about was when the joint committee is named, 'Is it all of the members of those two groups?' and you answered 'yes'. Then I had a question about the wording that said something about 'to establish the unit's viability', page 3, letter E, under "Further Investigation", that they will request that it be 'monitored by the appropriate administrative officer to establish the unit's viability'. I wondered what that meant. The only other question I had about that was, is there a timeframe for that to be determined by?

Senator Alferink: I assume that that would be a dean or the Provost and they would establish the timeframe.

Provost Presley: In the context of deleting, "any member or members of the University community", do you think the committee has made it clear how an academic unit would express itself? When you take out any member or members, you are, essentially, I fear, asking for a majority vote and it is very unlikely to ever to happen. Who speaks for the unit? Can the chair or dean say, 'we need to delete this'? Can four very thoughtful members of the History Department say that and not just get shut down by the majority? It is a very serious question, because in the absence of a really specific answer to that question, this is almost meaningless.

Senator Alferink: The committee did assume that basically any individual in a department could initiate the discussion that would lead to a PDAU, but if the department were to vote against it, how can a PDAU progress forward if there is only one person in the department that supports it?

Provost Presley: Why shouldn't it if the unit should be deleted? You are not going to often get these kinds of things supported by the majority, based on enrollment, for example.

Senator Holland: From that perspective then, the Academic Planning Committee could step in.

Senator Alferink: Or the college could step in.

Provost Presley: How many times have they done that with this policy in effect? I have seen them give repeated warnings to units about their enrollments, repeated warnings about the fact their curricula are virtually irrelevant to the state of the field being studied. They don't say to people, we are going to recommend that you delete this program; it has not happened. I fear that you are just asking for a majority vote, for say a minor, and I don't think it is going to happen.

Senator Alferink: It has happened, Special Education.

Provost Presley: Right, but if it is just enrollment, when you have three faculty whose careers depend on doing this rather than something else and they have nine majors and no minors—in the face of that kind of evidence, we have had departments say, 'no, we don't want to delete it; we want to support it'. You might answer my questions by making it more specific about how a unit expresses itself, but this takes the dean, the chair and the Provost completely out of it. That may be the intention of it. If so, we are going to wind up with certain curriculum running until the faculty member retires.

Senator Alferink: The intent was not necessarily to take the dean, chair or Provost, or for that matter, the President, completely out of it because the assumption is that those individuals would have ways of initiating that discussion. As chair, we eliminated a program and we did eliminate a minor in Psychology. The chair or some faculty member brings it to the faculty committee and the faculty committee says, 'yes, this really serves no purpose anymore; things have changed and it does not make any sense for us to continue this.' and it gets deleted. Certainly, the chair, dean, Provost and President can express leadership through the various governance bodies, but if the governance body isn't willing to support it, I guess I am lost as to…

Provost Presley: If the governance body isn't willing to support—finish that sentence.

Senator Alferink: A department chair is not going to have the authority to delete a program just on their own, or they?

Provost Presley: I am asking you to consider that. We have had the example of the Academic Planning Committee saying to a department over and over, 'you don't have enough enrollment.' This would just continue that process and, in fact, pull out the department chair and dean who recently tried to do something about it. You do understand that the majority can be wrong.

Senator Alferink: Yes, but what was the chair going to do if they did not have support through some sort of governance body.

Provost Presley: They went to governance bodies to get that support. They did not support them because this thing is badly written. Those governance bodies said no and waited for this to be fixed. I don't consider this a fix. I think that this means that any entrenched majority or scared majority can just keep voting yes and we can keep throwing money at empty classrooms.

Senator Stewart: In a recent case, I have had a lot of questions about the German Major. I think three faculty members have 18 majoring students. Yet, they service General Education. A lot of students have to have a foreign language for their degrees. They are dealing with a lot General Education faculty and so they are earning their credit. So to tell them, 'yes, you can stay here at the university and service all of the other programs, but you can't have any majors, I find that …

Provost Presley: I am not arguing that case.

Senator Stewart: But that is an example of…

Provost Presley: You are making this a majority vote, period. I think that that will saddle us with some bad decisions.

Senator Borg: I think that that sort of discussion needs to be considered very carefully. The fact that people need to have a major in a specific discipline is not a valid argument. Are we going to continue this discussion in the Senate or are we going to send it back to the Rules Committee?

Provost Presley: I would hope that you would send it back to the Rules Committee.

Motion XXXIX-24: By Senator Borg, seconded by Senator Stewart, to return the Disestablishment of Academic Units Policy to the Rules Committee for further consideration.

Senator Holland: I am not sure that you want to leave it as "any" member of the university community because…

Provost Presley: Well, I am arguing that pulling that out disenfranchises administrators.

Senator Borg: Perhaps we can recommend that they look at a specific set of individuals and insert that.

Senator Alferink: I think the Rules Committee has discussed that and I think that they would not necessarily have a problem with the administrators from those units being included. I am not sure that we felt that it was necessary, but if your argument is that it is, then…

Provost Presley: Well, it seemed necessary this summer.

Point of Order by Senator Kalter: A motion was made and I think seconded. Where are we now?

Senator Borg: We are in the discussion phase of the motion.

Senator Alferink: I am ok with sending it back, but if it goes back it would be helpful if we had guidance as to…

Provost Presley: I would be happy to talk to the committee.

The motion was approved by all members voting aye, with the exception of Senator Kalter, who voted nay.

11.14.07.01   From Rules Committee: Blue Book Addition – University Service Awards Committee (On Senate Agenda of 12/5/07)
Senator Alferink: This was a request that came to the Rules Committee to look at adding this to the *Blue Book (Academic Senate Committee Structure – Supplement to Senate Bylaws)*. The Service Award is a process that was initiated by the Rules Committee of the Senate several years ago. This is essentially the wording from that document and the language for the Service Award from the Provost's memo (former Provost Goldfarb), basically combining those two things. Since it was established by the Rules Committee of the Senate and their document describes how the committee is constituted, etc., it seemed that it would be appropriate to add it to the *Blue Book*.

Senator Borg: I suggest that before we forward this to the Senate that we correct each nomination "is" and the student appointment "is".

Senator Alferink: Yes, there are a couple of corrections to make.

Provost Presley: Do the other *Blue Book* committees have dollar amounts?

Senator Alferink: No, we can delete that.

Provost Presley: That might be an error, because inflation is faster than revision.

Senator Borg: We could leave out the last sentences in the second and third paragraphs.

11.16.07.01   From Steve Adams, VP of Student Affairs: Student Death Notice Information (On Senate Agenda of 12/5/07)
Senator Holland: We also have a distribution from Steve Adams concerning student death notification as to the exact process that we go through.

Senator Borg: Is there anything on the books that resembles this now or is this brand new?

Provost Presley: I don't think there is.

Senator Holland: Is this to go forward as a university policy that would go on the Policies and Procedures web page or this something that…

Provost Presley: This is something that they are doing and have been doing. I would consider it procedural.

Senator Borg: When this is presented, it needs to be made clear that this is something that we don't need to pass.

Senator Alferink: I hope that this would not become written in granite because a recent article showed grief counseling causes more harm than good in a significant number of cases.

Senator Kalter: I thought that what it showed was that there were more symptoms rather than more harm.

Senator Alferink: Well, they did not come out of the process well. The evidence does not support this as the uniform procedure for every single person.

President Bowman: The notification issue was a real problem at another university about a month ago. A student died in a residence hall and I believe the notification of his death came from the student newspaper. I think Student Affairs looked at our policy to ensure that that would never happen here.

Senator Alferink: But the way in which this is dealt with by the Student Counseling Center may change.

Senator Holland: It says 'grief counseling available upon request"

Provost Presley: Yes, I think that they are not interventionists in that regard. I have complimented the Dean of Students Office on this because I have worked on campuses where this gets "ad hocked" for every situation and it is good to have a procedure.

Proposed Agenda for Academic Senate on December 5, 2007:

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Academic Senate Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, December 5, 2007
7:00 P.M.
OLD MAIN ROOM, BONE STUDENT CENTER

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Call to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes of November 7, 2007

Presentation: Information Technology (Mark Walbert, Associate Vice President of Technology)

Chairperson's Remarks

Student Body President's Remarks

Administrators' Remarks
- *President Al Bowman*
- *Provost John Presley*
- *Vice President of Student Affairs Steve Adams*
- *Vice President of Finance and Planning Steve Bragg*

Committee Reports:
- *Academic Affairs Committee Chairperson: Senator Waterstraat*
- *Administrative Affairs and Budget Committee Chairperson: Senator Lonbom*
- *Faculty Affairs Committee Chairperson: Senator Preston*
- *Planning and Finance Committee Chairperson: Senator Fazel*
- *Rules Committee Chairperson: Senator Alferink*

Information Items:
11.13.07.01   Disestablishment of Academic Units Policy – Revised (Rules Committee)

11.14.07.01   Blue Book Addition – University Service Awards Committee (Rules Committee)

11.02.07.01   Distinguished Professor Recommendations (President Bowman)

Advisory Item:
11.16.07.01   Student Death Notice Information (Steve Adams, VP of Student Affairs)

Communications

Adjournment

Motion XXXIX-25: By Senator Borg, seconded by Senator Graham, to approve the proposed Senate Agenda of December 7, 2007. With the removal of the Disestablishment of Academic Units Policy and the placement of the Distinguished Professor Recommendations on the Faculty Caucus Agenda, rather than on the Senate Agenda, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Adjournment