REGULAR MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)
December 9, 2019, 3:30 p.m., Jacobson Faculty Hall 102

AGENDA

1. Approval of the Senate Journal for the regular session of November 11, 2019.

2. Announcements:
   a. The remaining regular meetings of the Faculty Senate for 2019-20 will be held at 3:30 p.m. in Jacobson Faculty Hall Room 102 on the following Mondays: January 13 (reception), February 10, March 9, April 13, and May 4. Meetings of the Senate are regularly open to attendance by all members of the University Community and representatives of the press.
   b. In lieu of the regular January meeting of the Faculty Senate, a reception for Senators and members of the Higher Administration will take place on January 13, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. in Jacobson Hall, Room 102.
   c. The Faculty Senate sent out the call for proposals for the Ed Cline Faculty Development Awards on October 8, 2019. Proposals are due to the Faculty Senate by December 16, 2019 and up to $2,500 may be awarded per proposal. Further information is available at http://facultysenate.ou.edu/facdev.html.
   d. The Faculty Senate is sad to report the death of retired faculty members Paul Tharp, Jr. (Political Science) on November 14, 2019 and Kenneth Starling (Chemical Engineering and Materials Science) on November 26, 2019.

3. Questions Regarding the Senate Chair's Report (attached).


5. Remarks by PAPBAC Co-Chair Sarah Ellis regarding the PAPBAC Update and the Strategic Framework.

6. For Discussion:
   a. Retired faculty email policy.
   b. Centers of Excellence.

7. New business (any matter not known about or that could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time the agenda was prepared).

The Executive Committee invites senators to submit discussion topics for future agendas. Please send your suggestions to the Executive Committee through the facsen@ou.edu email address, or you can reach out individually to Chair Joshua Nelson at joshuabnelson@ou.edu, Chair-elect Amy Bradshaw at bradshaw@ou.edu, or Secretary Amy Cerato at acerato@ou.edu.

Refreshments will be served at 3:15 p.m.
On November 11 at a meeting of chairs and directors, the co-chairs of President’s Academic Program and Budget Advisory Committee (PAPBAC), Provost Kyle Harper and Prof. Sarah Ellis, presented from their ongoing work on the strategic framework for the university. OU Global featured prominently in the presentation, although Provost Harper also emphasized the need to demonstrate the value of OU as a place-based, face-to-face university. PAPBAC continues to solicit and incorporate suggestions from various constituencies across campus. At the regular meeting of the Faculty Senate later that day, we heard from Graduate College Dean Randy Hewes about changes to the Graduate College and Graduate Faculty charters and from College of Education Dean Gregg Garn about the opportunities and challenges arising with OU Global. During new business, the Senate took up the topic of pathways to leadership for faculty on campus and discussed expectations around the advertisement and filling of various administrative posts for which faculty might be eligible (if at times unaware). The Senate voted to commit the topic for further discussion and review to the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC).

Vice Provost Mark Morvant and I met on November 12 and discussed a few matters faculty have expressed some concern about, including possible changes to degree hours requirements and student notification of degree-requirement satisfaction. VP Morvant relayed that while the administration is investigating various ways to improve graduation rates, such changes need clear benchmarking against best practices, would require significant software accommodations, and that no changes are imminent in either area.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) met with Interim President Joseph Harroz on November 14, when we revisited the topic of pathways to leadership and the frustration many faculty members have voiced to members of the FSEC when leadership postings appear as foregone conclusions. IP Harroz noted that such appointments must be subject to some degree of autonomous team-building by unit heads but that he would consult with his team about appropriate processes and opportunities. We continued our conversation around the strategic framework, learned about the plan for town hall meetings, the format of the framework document, and urged IP Harroz to incorporate shared governance strategies akin to PAPBAC for the next tactical steps coming out of the framework, being especially cognizant of the contributions of staff and administrative leaders in collaboration with faculty.

Throughout this month, members of the FSEC met with two candidates for the dean of the College of Engineering and three candidates for the College of International Studies. Our impressions have been or imminently will be communicated to the chairs of the search committees.

On November 19, FSEC officers met with officers from the Staff Senate, and we visited about possible matters where we might collaborate to broadly improve working conditions. The main points were around improved childcare options and expanding the scope of tuition and fee waivers; we also scratched the surface of xeriscaping or other more sustainable landscaping approaches. The officers will connect members of working committees from both Senates to explore paths forward.

On November 20, Senior Vice Provost Jill Irvine and I discussed the cap on renewable term faculty and the possibility of committing the question to an existing or ad hoc committee to investigate best practices vis-à-vis college allocation, pay increases, benchmarking with peer institutions, and general limits on contingent labor. That afternoon, I met with Associate Provost Susannah Livingood, VP Morvant, Prof. Nancy LaGreca, FS Chair-Elect Amy Bradshaw, and Immediate Past-FS Chair Megan.
Elwood Madden to discuss an intermediate Higher Learning Commission accreditation project, the exact shape of which is still being considered in light of the requirements. Potential broad options include matters relating to diversity, equity and inclusion, and surveying and implementing best practices for the evaluation of office function, administration, and faculty performance.

Provost Harper and I met on November 26, when I reiterated the need for widespread consultation among faculty, students, and staff on the actions we anticipate will follow from the strategic framework; and we touched on plans to institute a mentoring program, which SVP Irvine said she is studying.

I attended the Board of Regents meeting on December 2. Upon the regents’ return from executive session for its deliberative committee meetings, which the Board has recently opened to the public, I took advantage of an invitation from Chair Leslie Rainbolt-Forbes to offer some comments on behalf of the Faculty Senate, which included nods to Prof. Misha Klein for her recent Oklahoma Universal Human Rights award, to Prof.’s Jennifer Cline Davis and Sandi Holguin for bringing the Journal of Women’s History to the History department, and FS Chair-Elect Amy Bradshaw for her Leadership and Citizenship award, along with the professional society recognitions she recently received for best journal article and best book chapter. I remembered the faculty to the Board in this, the season of invisible labor, when recommendation letter writing and search-committee service contend with paper and exam grading for time on the calendar. The resolute service on the strategic framework rendered by the faculty members of PAPBAC, especially Co-Chair Prof. Sarah Ellis, particularly merit recognition (I said). I also commended the Board, IP Harroz, and Provost Harper for their efforts to solicit faculty and other constituents’ perspectives on this guiding document and encouraged them to replicate this approach in extrapolating a strategic plan and attendant tactics from it, in the belief that by democratizing the stage on which initiative is demonstrated, we set that stage for a revelatory vision of the institution.

Having exhausted my grandiloquence, I left early for the FSEC meeting that afternoon, secure in the knowledge that IPC Elwood Madden was monitoring the remainder of the Regents meeting, which she reported mainly handled routine matters. At the FSEC meeting, FWC Chair Keri Kornelson provided an update from the Teaching Evaluation Working Group, about which we will hear more at the regular Senate meeting. IT Council Chair Andy Fagg clarified the policy on email and library access for retired faculty, which has been at times clouded by misinformation and un-updated personnel records, which are being seen to. Emeriti faculty will retain their email accounts and library access for their lifetimes; other retired faculty may petition their departments to sponsor ongoing email and library access. These accounts need to be kept active on a yearly basis to continue.

Later in the meeting, Marcy Fleming and Colin Fonda from Human Resources, in a very preliminary conversation, asked us to weigh in on possible ramifications of moving all faculty on nine-month contracts to a twelve-month pay schedule, beginning in the fall term of 2020. This change would affect around 800 hundred faculty members and is being considered at the cusp of a new system-wide reimplementation of PeopleSoft software in order to lessen the degree of labor-intensive, manual adjustments that HR must make for nine-month pay schedules that increase the chances for pay errors. With this PeopleSoft reimplementation, which will happen across campus in January 2021, HR was asked to review all related processes. The FSEC identified several concerns, including a significant decrease in monthly take-home pay on the order of around 25% that some faculty might have serious difficulty absorbing; possible increased withholding in summer months, which can be mitigated by adjustments through Self Service on the HR website that can be made at any time; ambiguity around external compensation vis-à-vis compensation caps and the revised Conflict of Interest policy; and the potential for decreased motivation to seek external grants in summer months. Ms. Fleming and Mr. Fonda
welcomed our comments, and they emphasized that this is very much an early look into the possibility and that they intend to talk further with the Senate’s Faculty Compensation Committee (FCC) and the full Senate before rolling anything out. They invite faculty to point out other potential problem areas with such a change. (Please forward comments to FCC Chair Susan Hahn at shahn@ou.edu).

Next, PAPBAC Co-Chair Sarah Ellis provided an update on the strategic framework, which has undergone several revisions and will likely see several more in the wake of anticipated feedback at town hall meetings with the colleges. She urged the FSEC to consider next steps once the framework is in place and argued that staff members will be integral participants on several pieces.

At the Deans Council on December 4, Dean Garn fielded questions about OU Global that resonated with several raised during the Faculty Senate meeting, particularly around the need for quality and rigor in the programs, clear and effective funding structures, and consideration of faculty’s teaching labor relative to our research mission. The ensuing discussion explored several non-exclusive options that might be included in OU’s structure to address the points raised. Provost Harper provided an update and took suggestions on the strategic framework. I echoed my hope that as the university looks into multidisciplinary centers of excellence, the faculty might be inclusively invited to participate in that conversation.

Vice President for Research and Partnerships Tomás Díaz de la Rubia met with the FSEC on December 4 to offer an update on what he’s learned in his time on campus. He noted some lack of systematic processes for administering and adjudicating commitments, which in conversation with college deans he is looking to develop and put in place on competitive, merit-based principles. FSEC members discussed our hope that in staffing internal faculty leadership positions and selecting candidates for limited-submission grants, his office will fill them, too, through transparent, competitive processes, and that the VPRP’s office might avail itself of the erstwhile faculty advisory committee. The processes he looks to implement also include financial structures that will allow for more judicious funding allocation, service-office evaluation, and disciplinary diversity. VPRP Díaz de la Rubia mentioned that he will soon be helping coordinate conversations about the multidisciplinary centers of excellence referenced in the strategic framework, and I again urged an open, democratic process that might for instance include coordination with chairs and directors, of which he was supportive, cognizant of university resources and initiatives for which OU can be competitive.