REGULAR MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)
November 11, 2019, 3:30 p.m., Jacobson Faculty Hall 102

AGENDA

1. Approval of the Senate Journal for the regular session of October 14, 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: December 9, 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. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee nominated three faculty members for the Honors College dean search committee. From the nominations, the administration selected one nominee to serve, Karlos Hill (African and African American Studies). Other faculty selected for the committee: Marie Dallam (Honors College), Daniel Mains (Honors College), Mary Lawhon (Geography and Environmental Sustainability), and Alison Fields (Visual Arts). The search committee will be chaired by Senior Vice Provost Jill Irvine.
   
   c. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee nominated three faculty members for the College of Professional and Continuing Studies dean search committee. From the nominations, the administration selected one nominee to serve, Lee Fithian (Architecture). Other faculty selected for the committee: Todd Hubbard (Aviation Studies), Todd Wuestewald (Criminal Justice Studies), Randa Shehab (Industrial and Systems Engineering), and Robert Con-Davis-Undiano (English). The search committee will be chaired by Special Assistant to the President Gregg Garn.
   
   d. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee nominated three faculty members for the University Libraries dean search committee. From the nominations, the administration selected one nominee to serve, Ulli Nollert (Chemical, Biological and Materials Engineering). Other faculty selected for the committee: Laurie Scrivener (University Libraries), Kerry Magruder (University Libraries), Darin Fox (Law), June Abbas (Library and Information Studies), and Richard Price (Accounting). The search committee will be chaired by Associate Dean Kelvin White from the College of Arts and Sciences.
   
   e. The annual joint meeting of Faculty Senate and Staff Senate officers will be November 19.
   
   f. You are invited to the annual Academic Technology Expo on January 9 & 10, 2020, a free two-day conference open to all University faculty, staff, and instructors. This conference promotes interdisciplinary collaboration as a means of increasing faculty impact. See http://academictech.ou.edu/.

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

4. For Discussion: Proposed Changes to the Graduate Council and Graduate Faculty charters.

5. Remarks by Gregg Garn regarding OU Global.

6. 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 facsen@ou.edu email address, or you can reach out directly 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 October 14, I attended the Provost’s Chairs and Directors meeting, where the topic of conversation was the Provost’s office work with chairs and directors to increase the diversity of search pools through providing resources related to ad drafting, advertising, and network development. Senior Vice Provost Jill Irvine reminded those present about the upcoming workshop with Chris Cullinan on evaluating cultural competence in the hiring process. Interim Vice President Jane Irungu offered an overview of the vision of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) to become the leading institutional voice in inclusive excellence, with the mission of embracing and celebrating diversity by establishing a framework that will weave equity and inclusion into the fabric of our university community—in our practices, process, systems, teaching, learning, research, interactions, outreach, and service. She emphasized that departmental strategic plans should have a diversity, equity, and inclusion component that includes, for instance, a statement of values, goals, timelines for implementation and assigned personnel. She offered a reminder of the November 13 town hall to solicit more input on OU’s “We Are” campaign. Brainstorming sessions sought strategies on the goals to: 1) cultivate an inclusive campus climate; 2) improve recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty and staff from historically underrepresented groups in support of the Affirmative Action Plan to a) foster a university culture that promotes processes for recruitment, hiring, and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff and b) build capacity with the knowledge, tools, and skills to support tenure, promotion, hiring, evaluation, and other practices for diversity, inclusion, and belonging within the teaching, research, and service framework; 3) improve recruitment and retention of undergraduate and graduate students from historically underrepresented groups; 4) create an enhanced learning environment based on diversity and inclusion; and 5) strengthen institutional shared infrastructure to achieve diversity goals. IVP Irungu urged connecting diversity candidates with her office as part of campus visits. The ODI website offers several relevant resources at http://www.ou.edu/diversityandinclusion.

At our October 16 meeting with Interim President Joseph Harroz, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) heard updates on administrative searches, which he reports are continuing deliberatively where they are open, and opening quickly where they are not. For all positions that have been announced, the FSEC in collaboration with the Committee on Committees has nominated candidates to serve on search committees (cf. the announcements in the agenda). We artfully segued to a discussion of best practices for search committees’ procedures to, for instance, ensure widespread participation, avoid unconscious bias, maintain consistent and fair treatment of candidates, clarify criteria, rank preferences, and communicate recommendations. We reiterated our concern that the university has been without an ombudsperson for a good time. Associate Provost Stewart Berkinshaw joined us to discuss possible mechanisms by which vacant staff positions might be filled in a timelier manner, particularly when there is broad consensus that the positions are crucial to academic functions. IP Harroz said he would gather more input from HR and finance angles and see what might be done.

On October 21, the Large FSEC met to hear reports from several university-wide council representatives. The Academic Programs Council is in discussion with the Provost’s office regarding its role vis-à-vis the Graduate Council regarding graduate program matters. A proposal restructuring program approval is underway; the FSEC intends to visit at greater length with those involved. The Athletics Council provided an overview of subcommittee structure and issues under review. The Budget Council has had difficulty finding opportunity to meet in quorum-reaching numbers, so its activity has been somewhat curtailed. The FSEC asked for more information on the members’ standing and will look into ways to help the Council continue its work. The Faculty Awards and Honors Council recounted its work with SVP
Irvine to retool and clearly communicate awards criteria to help with diversity considerations and facilitate the nomination process. The Information Technology Council reported on the concerns related to IT security and costs, which also touch on email accounts for retired faculty and staff. (The Senate office fielded some inquiries from emeriti faculty, who despite reports to the contrary, are able to keep their ou.edu addresses. Some colleges may need to update the PeopleSoft profiles of those faculty.) The Research Council recalled its complete expenditure of funds from last year and its concerns that the feedback mechanism formerly managed by CRPDE has yet to be replaced, and that demands for different types of required seed-funding may require restructuring some monies to address differing disciplinary needs in, for instance, the humanities.

I attended several Board of Regents committee meetings on October 22, where IP Harroz offered a positive account of PAPBAC’s progress on the strategic framework, and the healthy response to the survey that went out. Vice President of Operations Eric Conrad discussed plans to reduce energy consumption 30% over the next 11 years, which will require some technology upgrade investment (LED lights, HVAC tech, e.g.) and addressing some behavioral issues. He fielded questions from the regents over the benefits of partnering with another company that would share risk and profit from realized savings. Asked for updates on dean’s searches, Provost Kyle Harper recapped ongoing searches’ progress and signaled those upcoming for the deans of University Libraries, the Honors College, and the College of Professional and Continuing Studies; and the directors of the Sam Noble Museum and the OU Press. Regent Eric Stevenson asked about the diversity of the candidate pool, and Regent Frank Keating pointed out that two leading female candidates for the president’s position pointed out the lack of diversity on campus. He sees this as a problem that needs urgent attention. In his financial report, Ken Rowe urged that as regulatory risk increases, so does the need for greater cash on hand. The Composite Financial Index (CFI) score is no longer a negative for OU (as it was in 2017), as we are not seeing net losses in the last 2 years and cash balances are going up, we’re at around a 1.5 and are shooting for something in the ballpark of 5. Getting there will take 4-5 years, and we will be able to move the index positively more swiftly by growing income than reducing debt. Dean Gregg Garn provided an update on OU Global. The university will issue an RFP to gauge how people see what we’re trying to do to help guide marketing issues. He is conducting a series of meetings and discussions with various faculty constituencies for input on proposed programs. Key challenges will be to clarify the financial model, and to gauge if OU Global can meet goals: 1) to connect with distance learners, 2) to help with diversity goals, and 3) to increase enrollment to aid with research and other goals through increased revenue. At the regular Board of Regents meeting on October 23, the return of the mums was heralded. IP Harroz announced the hire of Belinda Higgs Hyppolite as permanent VP for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and he thanked IVP Irungu for her effective work and the progress she has made over the past several months, and he expressed his hope that her leadership will continue on campus. He announced the introduction of an Aerospace MBA (which is connected with interest among the state legislature). From General Counsel Anil Gollahalli, the Regents heard about further modifications to the Conflict of Interest policy recommended by Vice President for Research Tomás Díaz de la Rubia to differentiate its role in relation to OU-owned intellectual property, following concerns expressed by faculty. The regents and IP Harroz applauded Joy Douglas, an undergraduate student expressing support for IVP Irungu, for her advocacy and participation.

October 25, I met with Staff Senate Chair Sarah Connelly, and we discussed possible agenda items for an upcoming meeting among the Faculty and Staff Senate officers. These included childcare options, and tuition and fee waivers. She also provided an update on Staff Senate initiatives including the upcoming presidential address to staff, parental leave, and a staff climate survey.
October 28, Dean Gregg Garn met with Chair-Elect Bradshaw, Secretary Cerato, and me to discuss issues surrounding OU Global. High on our agenda were questions around staffing (i.e., teaching over-load obligations in relation to increased research mandate), market demand assessment, the financial return model, shared governance oversight structures (of, say, program rigor, diverse engagement, students’ financial situations), intellectual property, and how OU envisions its success in the wake of other institutions’ lack thereof. Many of these were replicated in materials Dean Garn prepared, and he reiterated his commentary and addressed other questions in the November 4 meeting with the FSEC ahead of his visit to the full Senate meeting.

I met with Student Congress Chair Emma DeAngeli, where we echoed our hopes from our earlier meeting that the Congress and the Senate might collaborate on issues such as xeriscaping on campus grounds and childcare options. I updated her on the progress the Provost’s office made on a disabilities resource statement for syllabi and directed her toward the Faculty Welfare Committee for more information on student teaching evaluation evaluation. We are optimistic that deliberate repetition of these issues at an upcoming meeting with the newly elected SGA leaders will prove fruitful.

I attended a meeting of Oklahoma tribal nation leaders on October 30 at Boyd House, where IP Harroz and several campus leaders working in areas that intersect with Native American areas of focus introduced initiatives and office functions. My remarks emphasized the Faculty Senate’s work on recruiting and retaining under-represented minority faculty.

On October 31, seated next to Dr. Strange, I attended the workshop led by Cris Cullinan on assessing cultural competence in hiring that was sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which likely can make materials available to search committees and other interested parties.

I met with the Provost on November 1, and we discussed changes to graduate program modification workflow in relation to the Graduate Council and the APC. In thinking through how to provide faculty input and oversight of new online programs, he suggested that the Continuing Education Council might be well suited. He applauded PAPBAC’s ongoing efforts and agreed to offer an update at the December Senate meeting, ahead of the planned unveiling at the Regent’s January meeting.

At the FSEC Meeting on November 4, we heard from Graduate College Dean Randy Hewes about upcoming changes to the graduate faculty policies and changes to the charter, which to respond to accreditation requirements and general procedural maintenance include educational qualification requirements, tested experience assessment, inclusion of RRT faculty in the regular faculty category, expansion of “M” categories, and development of a rescission policy. We will ask Dean Hewes to attend an upcoming meeting of the full Senate to review these proposed changes. Having heard from senators concerned with some other changes in graduate policy, the FSEC discussed the reduction of required committee members to four and how to handle tied votes on dissertation approvals, and how dissenting votes are or are not reflected on electronically submitted dissertations. On the former matter, Dean Hewes clarified the process by which the College informed faculty and solicited input, and to the question of adjudicating ties, he pointed to “Section 8.7.6 of the Bulletin (Result of the Dissertation Defense) which provides:

“· If one committee member dissents, the dissent is recognized as a minority report.
· If two members dissent, the dean of the Graduate College will investigate and make a final decision.
· If more than two members dissent, the defense will be judged unsatisfactory.”
The language on the electronic signatory page struck some members of the FSEC as ambiguous in the case of dissenting members, and we asked that the Graduate Council consider how it might be clarified. We also discussed the proposed changes to the APC and the Graduate Council when dealing with changes to graduate programs. The FSEC is concerned that the structure of the Graduate Council may not lend itself to participatory shared governance to the same degree as the APC and in its staffing does not have the advantage of input from the Committee on Committees and the FSEC. We look to follow up with Dean Hewes, the APC, and the Provost’s office to ensure that any proposed changes have fully accounted for the functions that the APC performs. Dean Garn joined us for a conversation around OU Global, referenced earlier and preliminary to his visit to the full Senate meeting.