

University Senate Governance Council

Wednesday, September 5, 2018

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

UNH 306

Zina Lawrence, Senate Vice Chair

MINUTES

Present: Virginia Yonkers; Oleg Lunin; Wyatt Erchak; Abebe Rorissa; David Wagner; Ilka Kressner; Zina Lawrence; Elizabeth Gray

Absent: Chris Poehlmann

(NOTE: Six (6) members did not receive the Call-to-Meeting: Yuchi Young, Christine Vassallo-Oby, Mitch Abolafia, Sammy Axley, Carolyn Malloch, Carol Jewell)

Approval of GOV Minutes of April 25, 2018.

There is no need to approve the minutes, just to disseminate.

A brief overview of GOV

Overview of GOV charge on the Senate website and attached.

The main function of GOV is to ensure that there is a communicative relationship between the faculty and University Administration. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- faculty survey;
- committees about how well we are engaging with shared governance;
- liaison and elections and getting people who are interested in serving on a committee;
- getting the word out about the valuing of and appreciation of shared governance;
- mediation between other councils and committees in the best interest of the Senate as a whole (this happens infrequently and needs not be a priority unless it comes up).

Committees

Committee on Assessment of Governance & Consultation

- will have a meeting on the calendar, hopefully, by the end of this week and can meet at least once in the Campus Center and then the rest will be handled online. Meeting will be sent to Elizabeth Gray/Christian Poehlman

Committee on Liaison & Elections

- Oleg Lunin will join the elections committee

Committee on Council Nominations
Committee on Mediation

Chair's Report – Zina Lawrence

New Business

Updating and disseminating the Faculty Handbook

- It is a priority to make faculty aware that they have a role in faculty governance, this is a powerful Senate, the Charter is a strong charge, and having and utilizing that voice is even more important. We need to do the best that we can to let people know that they have a voice. One of the tools we have for this is the faculty handbook.
- The faculty handbook was last updated in 2013 – it is not very out of date, but it is a good time for it to be updated, and it can be used as a “marketing campaign” for shared governance, to let faculty and staff know what is available to them, where to find out information, how to get their voice heard, etc.
- The timing should be after the survey so that we do not lose attention on the survey; this should be a November project to deliver the updated version either before faculty leave for winter break or right when they return.
- This will fall into the liaisons and elections group.
- Want to distribute according to more creative, multi-media communications (including texts, etc.), beyond posting to the website and sending to the faculty by email.
- David Wagner and Zina Lawrence agreed to lead this initiative.

Old Business

Faculty Survey

History:

- It is part of the Senate charter that we have a survey about faculty governance; the last one was 2016. There is a faculty survey and a student survey.
- The faculty survey typically would have been conducted last year but for a number of reasons, including resources to host the survey and get feedback, getting a slot for putting out the survey, and a desire include information about the strategic plan in the survey, it was put on hold.

Plans moving forward:

- Institutional Research has guaranteed a slot this fall. Currently it is scheduled for November but a request has gone to Jack Mahoney who agreed to move it up: hopefully for end of September or early November.
- Right after full faculty meeting and aligned with the union meeting would be good timing.

Survey questions:

- The questions have been changed and updated, significantly reduced (they have also reduced in previous years). The open-ended questions will be reduced, and there will be fewer questions. There will also be threaded questions which started in 2016. Any questions that were asked in both 2014 and 2016 will be maintained for longitudinal data, mostly questions about the Senate and impression of the senate. There will be implementation plans for the Strategic Plan for September, and so we would like to include questions about participation and the final plan.
- Working with Jack Mahoney to make sure that they test out the questions. Ready to go on the faculty, but will test the questions for the students. Once they have been tested the survey will be distributed.

Committee membership:

- This committee lost a member, but is aiming to recruit another former senator as a member (you don't have to be a senator to be on the committee). The candidate is a tenured faculty member, which rounds out the part-time and professional staff who are currently on the committee. Co-chair Virginia Yonkers will follow up with this person and report back.
- Given that there is a lot of up front work, processing of data, disseminating information, etc. – would definitely need more help to carry this through.
- Ilka Kressner volunteered to join the committee.

Questions:

Does it go to a sample of the faculty or all faculty?

In the past it seems it went out to all faculty.

What demographic/affiliation information will be collected?

Demographic information will be collected but it be optional because it can make a response not anonymous. At the beginning of the survey there is a classification questions (part time, full time, permanent, non-permanent, tenured and non-tenured, professional, librarian, researcher etc.). This information can be used to look for trends in data.

Does it need to go through the IRB? Will responses be confidential?

Since it is going through IR the IRB approvals are set, and this has already been discussed and the model already exists.

How far in advance should it be advertised?

In the past it was advertised a month before, a second email was sent a week before, it was open for ten days, and another reminder was sent mid-way through.

Note: Will be reporting to SEC on the 12th, timelines for the survey and update on the other priorities.

Working group on communication and its role in shared governance

- The communication tools are not adequate to support shared governance. Communication has been an issue in the past and can be made better moving forward.
- Committee will explore and document existing and potential communication methods to identify and implement ideal communication strategies for the Senate.
- When looking at communications it is worth looking at departmental and college/school levels to figure out the best approach to get information out, which may be different for different units.
- Texts, phone calls, announcements at departmental meetings, etc.
- Now is a good time, especially with leadership transitions, many new deans and opportunity for a culture shift.
- Suggestion that Wyatt Erchak can be involved given his connection to newer communication models, with others in supporting roles.

Working group for Contingency Faculty Concerns:

- This was proposed last year, given the fact that contingent faculty do not have a clear place that they can go to raise concerns. It is an important issue, and it needs to go in a committee, because there is not a committee where contingent faculty can go when they want to raise an issue. Questions like scheduling, size of classes, etc. they have no clear place to voice those concerns, especially if they are not active in their department.
- To have an independent council they would have to change the charter, and so instead they decided on a working group and would think about where to put it. At the time this was raised in front SEC and it was suggested that it would be in GOV or in UPPC.
- This conversation started at the end of last year – want to be sure it has not been dropped.
- Zina Lawrence will bring this to SEC, and suggest that the best fit is UPPC. Since GOV is in charge of all committees it is relevant for GOV to bring this to SEC, ask where we are in the process, and see what it has been decided to do.
- UPPC has more visibility so it would be a better place, on the other hand GOV oversees all committees and so it could make sense there.