

University Senate Governance Council  
Wednesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
3:00pm – 4:30pm  
UNH 306

Zina Lawrence, Senate Vice Chair

### **MINUTES**

Meeting began at 3:00

Approval of minutes: 6 in favor, 3 abstentions

#### **Chair's Report:**

Zina Lawrence shared that communication with the Senate is a priority. Website updates are coming and will be finalized shortly. There are items that we need to prioritize in cleaning up the Senate pages. There are some outdated materials and these need to be specified. The meeting minutes for '18/'19 need to be updated. Membership list needs to be finalized. Legislative links need to be posted.

She announced the upcoming Senate Forum which will be coming up on XXX . She stated that she would like for the council to examine these forums and consider how we can best utilize it. In particular, she suggested that we may be able to utilize online learning as an alternative method to communicate with faculty. In advance of the forum she asked that the council present topics of discussion for the forum.

She finally announced that she has attended many presentations over recent weeks, some of which have significant impact on the way we think about this community and our activities on campus. She felt it was reassuring that the administration felt that it was important to share these things with governance, but indicated that she was disappointed that she did not feel that the administration wanted these decisions shared more widely. She stated that as Senators, and as GOV, it is important for members to share information back with their communities, and to urge the administration to share information more widely – perhaps as a resolution. Three examples are: commencement, academic calendar, and the workforce planning committee. On the latter there was a lack of transparency and a lack of engagement with the faculty and staff.

#### **Committee Reports:**

Committee on Assessment of Governance

Virginia Eubanks shared that the co-chairs met with Jack Mahoney to request that the survey be moved to (tentatively) October 15 (rather than November 15 when it is currently scheduled) so that it can be finished in 2018. A reminder would go out a week prior, it would be open for two weeks, a reminder would go out after week, remind members that the survey is confidential, thank those who have participated and remind those who have not. There was a suggestion that there not be a

comment section or open ended questions. There are some holdover questions from previous years, and some questions about the Strategic Plan, including questions about participation. There is a question asking temporary/contingent/tenure-track/tenured. Faculty, staff, and M/C are included; these questions can help identify which groups are answering.

Student survey – for undergraduates the focus will be on the Strategic Plan, and whether or not they know about the University Senate (~3 questions); the graduate student questions are more in depth because they are impacted by more direct policies like teaching requirements or graduate stipends (~7-8 questions).

She stated that they will remove the opportunity to provide written comments; Jim Mower will be listed as chair.

She stated the importance of

Discussion:

**How much time will they have to complete it?**

It will be open for 12 days, Monday to Friday. The first week it will be sent out; beginning of second week there will be a reminder.

**This may not be a good time for undergraduate students because of midterms, and also because October is a busy month for surveys?**

One possibility is sending out the student survey in November. If there is a reason to believe that we will get greater participation in November we should do that.

**How many questions for undergraduates?**

Are you familiar with the faculty Senate? Did you participate in the strategic plan? One other.

**Would it be better to integrate just three questions into another survey?**

Virginia will follow up with Jack to propose that idea. The graduate students will be more likely to participate, and there are more.

**Are there any other surveys that will be sent to all undergrads? Is it sent to all or to a sample?**

In the past it was sent to a sample send to about 5,000 students and about 15% responded. We would not want to send it to Freshman and transfers.

**Is there an advantage to sending to sample rather than everyone?**

Because of over-surveying it is best to reduce the number of surveys that any one student takes. It also allows for a target representative sample.

**What is the intent of asking whether the students know about the University Senate?**

The purpose of the survey is to find out how governance is working, and this is checking about how engaged students might be. There should be students on the University Senate as well as all of the councils. It is also an opportunity to reach out and engage students better in shared governance. It

also can help to understand whether students are not participating because they don't want to, or because they just don't know about it.

**If the goal is increasing awareness wouldn't it be better to send to everyone?**

Yes, but most surveys here are representative samples or particular sub-groups, which might be a limitation on the survey delivery and processing, but may be an option.

Zina suggested that how we tell people that something is coming can trigger whether they participate – for example, if we mention the strategic plan, or remind people that this is their chance to be heard, taking advantage of the current climate to encourage people to be more proactive, without being provocative. “We want feedback on governance including the strategic plan, faculty and student representation on campus, ...”.

Wyatt reminded the group of the important of the subject line of the email. Especially for graduate students there is a need to include something eye catching.

Zina: ideally we could text this out and have people answer on their phone, but we do not know if we can do that. It may be worth asking whether we can send the survey out as a text.

Senate elections were on MyUAlbany; survey is through Qualtrix. The suggestion was made that this could potentially come up as a reminder on MyUAlbany, or through email pointing to MyUAlbany.

Suggested edits can be shared with Virginia.

Question: What colors were used on the flyers sent out by GSO?

Answer: eye catching colored paper of all colors, with big text. The email was more colorful, using Purple and Gold.

The suggestion was made that red or green not be used because that can be discriminatory against people who are color blind.

**Governance Committee:**

CERS: Full

CAFFECOR: Two openings that need to be filled by teaching faculty, either full professor or full librarian; one opening for professional (optional).

GOV: Opening for professional (optional)

UPPC: Opening for professional (optional)

UAC: Full

GAC: Optional opening for teaching faculty, mandatory opening for professional

CoR: Full

CAA: Two mandatory positions from faculty or staff who are not students or voting faculty (part time, visiting assistant professor of less than one year)

CPCA: Full

LISC: Full

ULC: Opening (optional) teaching faculty

Chair Lawrence suggested the importance of filling the optional roles so that if members leave they can be replaced by the optional members. She implored the members to suggest names of professional staff in their departments. A “professional” is any staff member on a UUP line. She noted that the areas where councils are shy are the most challenging roles to fill. A previous chair of CAFFECOR indicated that the work is easy, important, and interesting. Zina Lawrence suggested that it may be an opportunity to reach out to full faculty who would like to play a role without taking on too much responsibility.

Council nominations: we are shortly going to be voting on current slate of non-approved (nominated) Senate members at the next Senate meeting; no responsibility from GOV.

Faculty handbook – Zina shared that she is still reviewing the document, making some notes and highlights, but plans to put it out after the survey so that it does not compete for people’s attention. The purpose is to make faculty aware of their role in shared governance, and make sure that departments are doing the right thing and understand the process and why, and to make sure that representation is fair. It is also important about how the message is shared (positively or apologetically).

Communication – Zina suggested that Senate explore existing communication methods that can make the Senate more engaged, and hope to have a report at the end of the year with strategies.

New Business:

Vice-Chair Lawrence reminded the group that every council member sits on a committee. She directed the members to a printout of the charter documents explaining the committee.

Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation

Zina Lawrence

Ilka Kressner

Carolyn Maloch

Virginia Yonkers (part-time non-voting faculty)

Yuchi Young

Dave Wagner

Mitch Abolafia

Christine Vassalo-Oby

Liaison and Elections

Ex-Officio Christian Poehlman

Carol Jewell

Priscilla Seamen (voting faculty)

Oleg Lunin

Abebe Rorissa

Sammy Axley  
Wyatt Erchak  
Need one more

David Wagner announced that he is serving on the University Policy committee, representing the University Senate. Since he is no longer a member of CERS he is not on the Senate. Should he be making an announcement. Vice-Chair Lawrence will check with Jim Mower, but thinks that it would be to SEC. Christian said that Wagner could be made a senator for a one year term.

Meeting adjourned at 4:37pm.