

**University at Albany, State University of New York  
Governance Council**

**Friday, September 24, 2010**

Susanna Fessler, Chair

**Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Tom Bessette, Nan Carroll, Liang Chu, Jane Domaracki, Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Susanna Fessler, Reed Hoyt, Candace Merbler, Tremayne Price, John Schmidt, Laura Schultz, Janet Sussman, Daniel White

**GUEST:** John Monfasani

The meeting convened at 4:02 pm.

Senate Secretary Bessette convened the meeting because Chair Fessler was delayed in another meeting and asked Professor John Monfasani to lead the discussion on the first item under New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion of Proposal from John Monfasani re: CPCA Membership:**

Professor Monfasani began by providing the justification for having a full professor as the chair of the Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments (CPCA). He informed GOV members that CPCA is the highest faculty body recommending individuals for promotion or to continue their appointments. The lack of a stipulation for a full professor to the chair the council as well as representation of more full professors appears to send the message that scholarly quality is not a high priority. GOV members discussed the membership on the council for professional faculty and student representation. The issue is a sensitive one but members agreed with Professor Monfasani.

Laura Schultz inquired as to why full professors are not stepping up to chair Senate councils. Professor Monfasani believes it is due workload and lack of reward. He indicated the need to develop a culture beyond mediocrity. Daniel White pointed out that the composition of the council as designated in the Charter calls for eight but not more than twelve teaching faculty, with no stipulation concerning rank. Professor Monfasani proposes that the composition be three-quarters full professors. A suggestion was made to survey full professors to find out the reasons for not serving before changes are made to the Charter. Professor Monfasani continued, indicating the need to incentivize service. Assistant and associate professors realize the incentive of serving is to build their record, obtain tenure and move up in the ranks. Secretary Bessette indicated there is little incentive for professional faculty to serve, yet many of those volunteering for service are from the professional ranks. GOV discussed the incentive such as reducing the course load for each semester as chair. Nan Carroll served on CPCA and

she did not believe the workload of the chair was much different than that of other members on the council. However, the work load does increase significantly during the spring semester.

The concept of having CPCA's full membership staffed by full professors was discussed. Concern was voiced about putting it in the charter if it's not a realistic achievement. Chair Fessler stated that since CPCA appears to be the most difficult to populate, it should be the first council populated when the Committee on Council Nominations meets before the pool of full professors is depleted. GOV members discussed how it may appear from the outside to have the council chaired by a non-full professor. Some members stated that since the expectation that outside reviewers would be a step above, we should have the same internal standard.

GOV members came to the consensus that a clearer historical picture of what has been done in the past should be obtained. A motion was made to table further discussion until more research could be done. The motion was seconded and the vote was in favor of continuing the discussion. A new motion was made to have the majority of CPCAs membership be full professors. The motion was seconded and the resulting vote favored continuing the discussion. As a result, GOV decided additional historical data on the council's composition was needed. Chair Fessler made a motion that we identify the history before the next meeting. The motion was seconded and approved. She will consult with William Hedberg in the Provost's Office.

A motion was made that a bill be introduced to the SEC from GOV proposing that the CPCA chair be a full professor. The motion was seconded and approved by a vote. Any changes in the Charter would not become effective until the next academic year.

### **Discussion of Proposal from John Monfasani re: SEC Membership:**

Professor Monfasani discussed the imbalance of CNSE representation on the Senate Executive Committee (SEC). CNSE is a relatively small unit currently chairing half of the Senate councils, giving it a proportionately large representation on SEC. He believes there should be a rule to prevent this from occurring in the future. CNSE has 3 allocated senators from a total of 44. If the membership on SEC were proportional, CNSE would have 7% of the SEC representation. By contrast, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has 22 allocated senators from a total of 44. If the membership on SEC were proportional, CAS would have 50% of the SEC representation.

GOV members discussed the process for forming council memberships which needs to be completed by September 1 according to the Charter (Section VIII 3.2). The Senate then approves the Council membership later in September. Chair Fessler suggested two possible Charter amendments:

1. that formation of councils occur at an earlier date and
2. that in addition to the Senate approving the council memberships, that it also approves the council chairs. Some GOV members agreed this could be a good solution.

In the ensuing discussion, Chair Fessler stated the importance of having diversity on the SEC. Daniel White said the Council chairs simply report the accomplishments of the Councils, which have diverse memberships, suggesting that there would not be a need for approval of Council Chairs. He also said that Chair Fessler's suggestion to have the Senate approve the council chairs would mean an amendment to the Bylaws, requiring approval of the full faculty.

A vote was taken on whether GOV wanted to propose a charter amendment as described above in point #2. The vote passed. Chair Fessler will write up the bill and distribute it to GOV members in addition to drafting the bill concerning CPCA. The bills will be reviewed and discussed before they go to SEC.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Review of Senate Handbook with aim of posting on Senate website:**

Chair Fessler thanked everyone who made changes on the handbook. She proposed that within the next seven days it be downloaded and posted on the Senate website. It's not a binding document and it serves no purpose by sitting on a non-public server, so she said she sees no harm in posting it. Anyone who has further changes should make them within the next week. Chair Fessler encouraged further, periodic revision after the handbook is posted.

#### **Formation of a Committee for Evaluation of Administrators and Administrative Units:**

Chair Fessler informed GOV that this order of business was simply committee formation at this stage, but that earnest work on this issue should begin soon because GOV was already behind the SEC timeline. Daniel White added that last year GOV voted to form a committee as a whole. The links that Mr. White sent were useful documents and contain information about the issues that the committee would deal with and provide an idea of what its work would be.

Chair Fessler made a motion that GOV form a committee as a whole to address the issue in the future. The motion was seconded and passed by a vote.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted by  
Gail Cameron, Recorder