

## **Governance Council**

**Thursday, February 10, 2011**

**10:30 PM**

**UNH 105**

Susanna Fessler, Chair

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Tom Bessette, Nan Carroll, Liang Chu, Nicholas Fahrenkopf, Susanna Fessler, Reed Hoyt, John Pipkin, John Schmidt, Laura Schultz, Joette Stefl-Mabry, Daniel White

The meeting convened at 10:29 am.

#### **CHAIR'S REPORT BY SUSANNA FESSLER**

Chair Fessler reported that President Philip responded to the membership recommendations GOV made for BAG 4, and noted that she forwarded his response to GOV members on 2/9/11. The first meeting of BAG 4 is scheduled for Friday, February 11. The Chair thanked GOV members for their assistance.

The Charter amendment regarding council chairs has been returned to GOV. At the last SEC meeting, GAC Chair Larry Kranich proposed a friendly amendment that specifies the procedure if the Senate does not approve the council chairs as stated above by Chair Fessler. The motion was approved by the Executive Committee. The amendment will be discussed under Old Business.

Chair Fessler said that the evaluation of administrators and administrative units is moving very slowly due to the lack of volunteers. She did receive a response from the CAS Dean who has shown interest in discussing the process further. The Chair said she believes it's time for GOV to delegate the matter and suggested that a process take place to identify the ad hoc committee to handle from this point forward. She suggested that this be on the agenda at the next GOV meeting.

Chair Fessler and Senate Secretary Bessette have been reviewing the distribution of Senate seats in preparation for upcoming elections. The data has been broken down by units and it appears that some changes will be made in order to maintain proportional representation in the Senate. (This is also addressed below under "New Business").

In terms of the elections, things are behind schedule. The Charter states that the nomination process for at-large senators begins in January and nominations should be solicited in February from the voting faculty. Chair Fessler would like to ensure that we try to keep things on schedule and one of the first steps is to form the Committee on Liaison and Elections. It appears

that in the past, GOV was the committee as a whole with no theoretical problems. Chair Fessler read the composition of the committee as stated in Charter Section X.1.4.1. A motion to form the committee of all GOV members—a committee of the whole--was made and seconded, and approved by a vote.

Senate Secretary Bessette informed GOV that he has already contacted those who are eligible to run again, and will be contacting the schools and colleges to make sure they have their election processes in motion. Chair Fessler said she would like to complete the formation of the councils during the school year, preferably before the penultimate Senate meeting on April 11, which would be in accordance with the Charter. This would allow the Senate to approve the councils before the first SEC meeting in the fall and thus solve the problem of the SEC conducting business in the fall before Council composition, and thus council chairs, have been approved. Since all schools do not have organized structures for conducting their elections, it will make it more difficult to obtain the names of their senators, thus making it more difficult to complete this task in a timely manner. Secretary Bessette will send out a call to all voting faculty for At-Large seats, and encourage those who are eligible to run again to do so. Chair Fessler suggested that a copy of the call letter be sent to the Senate officers and to Provost Phillips.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes of January 27 was made and seconded. The minutes were approved without further changes.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Annual Review of Senate Seat Distribution:**

Chair Fessler referred to the spreadsheets that were distributed with the agenda. The data on the first spreadsheet were received from Institutional Research and include total numbers of voting faculty from Fall 2010. Using this data, Chair Fessler made the second spreadsheet, which calculates the number of Senate seats for each school and the libraries. While CAS has 50% of the Senate seats, it has 47.6% of the faculty, which would result in CAS losing one Senate seat. GOV discussed which school might pick up the seat that will be lost from CAS. Rockefeller College and the College of Computing and Information (CCI) are underrepresented. Joette Stefl-Mabry informed GOV that CCI has two distinct departments with different missions. Chair Fessler pointed out that many schools have different centers and could make the same arguments for representation as CCI. GOV decided that the decision should be made mathematically, and that thus Rockefeller College with 8.6% of the voting faculty but only 6.8% of the Senate seats should be given another seat. [CCI has 3.3% of the teaching faculty and 2.3% of the Senate seats.] A motion was made to add a seat to Rockefeller College and take one from CAS. The motion was seconded and approved by a vote. Secretary Bessette will inform CAS Dean Wulfert of the change. It was suggested that Secretary Bessette contact the former Senate Secretary, Richard Collier, to inquire about the formula that has been used in the past for calculating representation. It was also suggested that this formula/method be formally recorded in some manner for posterity.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Charter Amendment re: Council Chairs:**

Chair Fessler said although GOV had sent the amendment to the SEC last fall, it became stalled due to the number of other issues before the SEC. The amendment was finally presented at the SEC meeting on January 31. At that meeting, GAC Chair Kranich expressed concern that the amendment lacked wording about what would happen if the chairs were not approved. Chair Fessler suggested that, in such a case, the councils would return for a second vote which would be binding. At the SEC meeting, Chair Fessler agreed to confirm this wording with GOV at its next meeting, in anticipation of the amendment being presented to the full Senate in six weeks. In essence, although the SEC did not formally send the amendment back to GOV, GOV did take it up as “Old Business” on 2/10/2011.

The Chair said at this point she was willing to concede that this Charter amendment would not make it to the full Senate this academic year or even in September. But she does not want to see the matter become brushed aside and welcomed suggestions on how to move forward. She referred to comments that were circulated from GAC Chair Kranich and CERS Chair Monfasani.

The ensuing conversation focused on the how to remedy disproportionate representation on the SEC, and also on the process of Council Formation in general:

- John Pipkin expressed concern about a scenario in which non-senators are proposed as chairs but denied by the Senate. He suggested that the names be presented to the SEC and Senate in a manner that would avoid public humiliation of a candidate if they do not get approved. Reed Hoyt said such a procedure might prove advantageous as it would require the SEC to look at the slate of chairs before advancing the names to the Senate. Professor Pipkin said he'd also want to avoid a situation where people are enthusiastic to join a council but are rebuffed. Laura Schultz said she was concerned about a procedure involving a revote which could exacerbate the existing problem. If over representation of one unit on the SEC is the problem, a revote could put some schools in a position of losing representation, making the SEC even less representative. If a slate of chairs is not approved and someone else is put forward, then it becomes political as people are being voted against. The process needs to be clearly laid out going forward.
- Secretary Bessette said what is not being addressed is the fact that CNSE gained broad representation on the SEC in 2010-2011 and this why the issue has come up. The idea is to keep it from happening again and to avoid any one entity from taking over the Senate. Secretary Bessette reminded GOV that the genesis of the amendment came from a small number of people and he cautioned against reacting to what a few perceive as a problem. He reiterated the need to get people enthusiastic about serving on councils.
- To do this, everyone needs to be proactive in getting colleagues representing all areas of the University to participate in governance. SUNY Senator White pointed out that there are 44 senate seats designated for the teaching faculty of the schools and colleges, but

only 4 seats designated for Professional Faculty, which means that 60% of the total voting faculty has a limited chance of obtaining seats or formal representation.<sup>1</sup>

- To allow for equal representation would require a significant number of seats added to the SEC. An e-mail suggestion made by Tremayne Price was referred to in which he pointed out that the Bylaws (Article II Section 4.1) allow the Senate to appoint additional *ex officio* representatives and they could come from the various units.
- GOV members also pointed out there is a substantial number of professional faculty who are representative of a broad range of university entities willing to participate but do not get placed on councils.
- Chair Fessler mentioned that at the meeting of the Committee on Council nominations last spring, a number of people were placed on multiple committees, placing the service load on a smaller number of people. She suggested that while we should not prohibit people from serving on multiple councils, people who are on a waiting list should be placed on a council before assigning double seats.
- Chair Fessler said her support for the amendment stems from the need to have as much diversity of experience as possible and to obtain different viewpoints when discussing bills. Without obtaining views from other units, information that's problematic can be overlooked.
- GOV members discussed ways to reach out to colleagues for participation. One suggestion was to have a one-on-one meeting with a council of a school or college and discuss service with governance, letting them know what they can contribute as well as discussing the important work that governance has accomplished in the past year. SUNY Senator White referred to Chancellor Zimpher's recognition of the resolutions the University Faculty Senate passed last fall as an example, and the impact of those on changing policy. Chair Fessler suggested that GOV members think about units they might be able to contact about serving.

Chair Fessler said she was not hearing any strong argument to move forward with the amendment. Laura Schultz said the representation this year by CNSE could be a fluke and would be curious to see how things work out next year. She found it unsettling to be putting out a mandate in reaction to one incident. Chair Fessler said she could take the report back to the SEC and inform them that GOV could not come up with a suitable solution. A motion was made and seconded to report back to the SEC and to have next year's chair revisit the discussion. The motion as approved by a vote.

### **Assessment of Administrators and Administrative Units**

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<sup>1</sup> According to the data from IR, there are 645 Teaching Faculty and Librarians, and there are 620 Professional and Management Faculty. Thus the ratio is 49% Professional/Management and 51% Teaching.

Chair Fessler asked GOV members to think about the composition of the ad hoc committee on assessment in preparation for the next GOV meeting. She suggested that Joette Stefl-Mabry submit ideas on how the committee should be populated. The Chair said this would be the ad hoc group for a trial run. Eventually this will be a permanent body but GOV should help establish what needs to be addressed in the first round (i.e., what the charge of the committee will be). Nan Carroll said that we may want a core group but should consider inviting members based on the unit being assessed. It doesn't seem practical to have teaching faculty assess units that are composed of non-teaching staff.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 am.

Respectfully submitted by  
Gail Cameron, Recorder