

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, November 25, 2008
11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
36 Gerberding Hall

Council Chair Jan Sjøvik called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Meeting synopsis:

1. Approve the agenda of this meeting; review and approve minutes of the last meeting
2. Announcements.
3. RCEP (concluding discussion).
4. Senate restructuring proposal.

1. Approval of agenda and review of minutes from the October 20, 2008, FCFA meeting.

The agenda was approved with the *proviso* that the order of agenda items would be switched to allow for the schedules of those participating in the discussions. The minutes of the October 20 meeting were approved as corrected.

2. Announcements.

Susan Folk introduced Kelly Baker, a new council support specialist, who will be taking over staff support of the Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs in the near future.

4. Senate restructuring proposal.

Gerry Philipsen, who was one of the primary proponents of the most recent proposal to restructure the Senate, had been invited to speak to the Council on the proposal's evolution to date. He reported that as a Chair of the Faculty Senate, and more recently as Secretary of the Faculty, he had been aware of unwieldy aspects of the Senate and had begun to consider, in consultation with other interested colleagues, possibilities for improvements in the structure. The primary impetus for the restructure was to reduce the number of Senators on the assumption that a smaller group would provide a better environment for meaningful discussion. Ideas for how to reduce the number of Senators are still under discussion. Who *should be* a part of the Senate was also considered. Part of that consideration included the recognition that faculty governance includes more than the Faculty Senate and Faculty Councils. It also includes the elected faculty councils of the Colleges, Schools and Campuses. Philipsen and his colleagues felt very strongly that the inclusion of the Chairs (or at least a representative) from each of these elected faculty councils would strengthen the Senate by bringing a broader perspective to discussions. Over the past few years, Senate leadership has started reaching out to the Chairs of these elected faculty councils – hosting lunch meetings twice a year to discuss issues of mutual concern. These meetings have been well attended and, in fact, a presentation of the Senate restructure proposal at the most recent meeting got a very favorable response. Another possibility would be to include past chairs of the Faculty Senate as Senators-for-life – bringing with them a wealth of history and context for issues that tend to arise periodically.

Ideas about how to reduce the overall size of the Senate include the possibility of appointing one senator per department – with a provision, if desired, for very small departments to join together to appoint a Senator – and for very large departments to have more than one representative.

The current system of assessment, yielding more Senators than the room currently used for meetings could hold (assuming all Senators attended the meetings) and elections is extraordinarily time consuming and laborious. Part of the restructure would be finding a way to simplify elections.

In response to issues raised by some faculty who have concerns about the proposal, Philipsen noted that the larger departments historically have had the lowest rates of attendance at Senate meetings. He recognizes that there are very legitimate reasons for this, but questions if the current apportionment ratio (1:15) should be so rigorously defended. Another concern is the mistaken assumption that the Senate enacts legislation and should therefore be as fully representational as is possible. Philipsen noted that it is the faculty, not the Senate, who

have the final say in both Class A and B legislation changing the *Faculty Code* and the *University Handbook* respectively. If each department were to have a representative advised by (and reporting to) his faculty colleagues, those colleagues would be better prepared to vote as informed citizens of the University community. Philipsen reiterated his experience that a group that comes together with a collective history and context of issues under consideration will be better able to discuss and propose solutions to those issues.

In response to a question about the size of the Senate, Philipsen reported that given the current number of faculty, the current ratio of one senator for every fifteen faculty members would result in a Senate of about 260 members. In fact the roster is closer to 215, and the average attendance is about 100.

Council member Kevin O'Brien then distributed a handout entitled "Senate Restructuring – based on the hypothesis: A smaller Senate would be more engaged." His handout proposed two solutions. The first (his proposed solution) would decrease the Senator:Faculty ratio from 1:15 to 1:30. The advantages of this proposal over Philipsen's would include:

- Decreases size of the Senate to less than 100 members
- Preserves the direct election of Senators
- Maintains proportionate representation
- Does not create two "classes" of Senators
- All Senators would be term-limited

O'Brien's second solution (Philipsen's proposal) would have the following disadvantages:

- Dramatically decreases the number of Senators directly elected by Faculty
- Violates the principle of proportionate representation
- Creates two "classes" of Senators:
 - Some directly elected, some appointed
 - Some term-limited, some not
 - As a result, the body would include a set of "super Senators"

Although acknowledging that he did not fully represent all alternative viewpoints to Philipsen's proposal, his primary question relates to the assumption that a smaller Senate would necessarily provide for a more engaged Senate. He suggested that altering the apportionment ratio a bit may be enough to bring the Senate to a more manageable size. He also questioned whether the faculty vote on Class A and B legislation was anything more than a *pro-forma* approval of Senate recommendations.

Philipsen responded that he would not object to changing the apportionment ratio from 1:15 to 1:30, but he challenged the assumption that the faculty vote on Class A and B legislation is *pro-forma*. He cited a number of examples where issues recommended by the Senate were either rejected, or very nearly rejected, by the Faculty.

Linda Fullerton, manager of elections, records and websites for the Faculty Senate Office, then addressed the Council on the current process for Senate elections and how that might be improved by the proposed restructure. Moving responsibility for elections from the Senate Office to the departments would significantly decrease the office workload, but details, including the process the department would use, how staggered terms would be managed, and the length of terms, would need to be defined. Other possibilities that might be included in the proposal are: a) electing Senators by rank; b) electing Senators from Schools or Colleges (as opposed to Faculty Groups); and c) moving the Senate meeting to a venue that is better suited to engaged conversation.

Chair Sjøvik thanked Ms. Fullerton for her input and deferred further discussion about the Senate restructure proposal to a future meeting.

3. RCEP (continuing discussion).

Discussion began with a review of the time required to complete an RCEP procedure. Although the Council had worked hard to reduce the amount of time required, they also worked hard to make this a comprehensive and transparent process that would function effectively. If time deadlines are extended to the maximum number of days allowed, the process would take 120 instructional days. This means that it could not be completed within two quarters, and if the intention is to complete the procedures within an academic year

(excluding summer), then procedures must be initiated in Fall quarter. On the other hand, if the various steps of the procedure are completed more promptly than the deadlines allow, Council member Rich Christie anticipates that a procedure might be accomplished within 10 days.

Vice Provost Cheryl Cameron asked the Council to consider an apparent oversight in the process – there has been no time limitation given for the appointing of the Review Committee.

Another proposed change was to reduce the number of days (from twenty to fifteen) that the President has to consider recommendations and any additional statements suggesting alternative actions before conferring with the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting. With the approval of the President's office (Cameron will consult with Carol Niccolls) this will be included in the revision.

Several questions were raised that need to be addressed in case multiple RCEPs are initiated at the same time. Is there sufficient staff in the office of the Secretary of the Faculty to support these procedures? When and how would it be acceptable to merge RCEPs? How would a merging of RCEPs affect the kinds of faculty recruited for the committees required? Are there other efficiencies that might be incorporated? Is there funding for these processes? How are procedures impacted by a declaration of financial emergency? Will it be possible to recruit sufficient faculty members required to serve on the RCEP faculty committees?

The Council agreed that a set of guidelines (outside the purview of the revision of Chapter 26) addressing these questions should be published when and if Chapter 26 revisions are approved.

As the time for adjournment approached, Chair Sjøvik asked Council members to make themselves available for a three hour meeting at the next and final meeting of Fall quarter – December 15, 9-12, -- in order to complete work on this revision and forward it to the SEC for first consideration of Class A legislation.

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The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Minutes by Susan Folk
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Present:

Regular: Christie, Kirtley, O'Brien, Philips, Scheuer, Sjøvik
President's Designee: Cameron
Ex Officio: Corbett, Nguyen, Killien, Balick
Guest: Philipsen

Absent:

Regular: Astley, Bryant-Bertail, Carline, DiStefano, Ricker, Wilcock
Ex Officio: Vallier