

University of Washington
Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, 9:00 a.m.
142 Gerberding Hall

Meeting synopsis:

1. Review of Minutes
2. Chair's Report
3. Senate Restructure Cleanup
4. Scientific Misconduct issues
5. Adjournment

Call to Order

Council Chair Rich Christie called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

1. Review of Minutes

The minutes of the April 19, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

2. Chair's report

Christie gave an update on the Class A legislation of code changes on lecturer and instructor issues: the legislation has passed the Faculty Senate once and the Senate Executive Committee for a second time. One issue that came up in SEC discussion was promotion standards for principal lecturers. Additionally, Miceal Vaughn, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Faculty Code and Regulations (Code Cops) has concerns about how the promotion of lecturers conforms with AAUP tenure policy, an issue that can be looked at next year. There was also concern with a statement in the justification, and Christie has agreed to change the rationale. Finally, the President's review found minor errors in section numbering and agreed to change the footnote in Section 24-57, which is actually an executive order, as a housekeeping change. Christie said he didn't foresee any problems in the upcoming Senate meeting and expects the legislation to go forward.

The council briefly discussed the issue of promotion standards for principal lecturers. The general consensus was to refer the issue to the Faculty Council on Teaching and Learning. It was noted that changes were made to the relevant section of the code, 24-34.B., by the FCFA in recent years. Christie said it was unclear whether there were any promotion standards beyond that section, but that FCTL could recommend model language to colleges, as opposed to a faculty code change.

3. Cleanup Issues Related to Senate Restructure

The council discussed issues related to the Senate restructure, and potential code changes needed. Christie noted that the new Senate had been operating for almost a year, and two complete election cycles were nearly completed. Referring to a handout produced at the April 5, 2011 meeting, the council looked at issues individually:

1. Alternate delegates for Senators: discussion has died down, and there could be issues with unelected people speaking and voting in the Senate. Council proposes no change.
2. SEC Faculty Council Chair elections: Council approves proposed change. Section 22-63C should be changed as follows:

Section 22-63 Election of the Executive Committee

C. At a regular Senate meeting prior to the end of the academic year, the Chair of the Senate, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall publish in the agenda for that meeting the name of at least one eligible nominee for each ~~at large~~ elected Executive Committee position. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. An electronic vote will follow within one week of that meeting. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes for a position is elected. In the event of a tie, any untied nominees are eliminated and electronic ballots shall be cast again.

3. Failure to nominate: Council proposes no change. The issue is addressed by modifying special elections (below).
4. Special elections: Council approves proposed change. Section 22-48 should be changed as follows:

Section 22-48 Vacancies in the Senate

If an elected ~~senator vacates a~~ Senate position ~~prior to the last regular Senate meeting of the term to which the senator was elected~~ becomes vacant, the elected faculty council of the position's school, college, or campus may conduct a special election to fill the remainder of the term for that position. The election shall conform to the principles in Section 22-47, Subsection C.

5. SEC nominations: Council proposes no change.

Marcia Killien, Secretary of the Faculty, added that she is conducting an analysis of the restructure, looking at attendance and a variety of other things. The anecdotal perception is that everything is going quite well, but data may show something that hasn't been perceived. One other step is receiving a formal report from the SEC nominating committee, which may have a recommendation that will result in some change. Also, the chairs of college councils may have recommendations to bring. Her sense is that no new revisions will be brought to the table, however.

Killien added that the reason for the restructure was not specifically related to the budget when the process was started, but was indeed timely and the implementation has been positive for the efficiency of the Senate office. A formal report will be issued, and the perception is that the restructure is not only going OK, but that functionality has actually improved. Although there are some concerns that the Senate does not have specific departmental representation, the issue now lies with schools and colleges, who are now in charge of elections.

4. Scientific Misconduct Issues

The council continued its review of scientific misconduct issues.

With regard to scope, Christie suggested that the council should be interested in research misconduct, not just scientific misconduct – anything that would put the university’s funding in jeopardy. Cameron added that Executive Order 61 addresses only allegations of research misconduct, which is defined as plagiarism, falsification, and fabrication.

The council then discussed reporting requirements, focusing on informal resolution versus formal reporting. Christie suggested rewriting the relevant sections, saying that it’s not clear that the informal process has value and that it runs the risk of violating federal regulations such as whistleblower protection and reporting requirements. Killien said that the difficulty is finding at what point you can identify what an allegation is. She said that once a formal process is started, it has the chance to harm a number of people, and she’d like to preserve an appropriate place for informal proceedings without stifling an appropriate move into formal processes. She’s uncomfortable saying there’s no informal role, because sometimes misunderstandings can occur.

Christie said that in some sense, the process turns on an assessment of credibility. An explicit step for the determination of credibility would be the place to look at whether a misunderstanding has occurred. Killien said that in such a case, credibility must be well defined. Christie said that the determination of credibility needs to be made by one person who is familiar with the area. It was suggested that the dean take this role, which raised immediate concerns since the Dean is also the eventual decider. Cameron added that a credibility determination that is too long or involved doesn’t allow for sequestration of research materials to occur in a timely manner.

Suggestions were made to discuss the matter with the Faculty Council on Research and with somebody from the University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office. The latter led to the question of whether the issue of the Dean’s ability to impose discipline without adjudication arose from a research misconduct issue, or had a separate motivation, to be investigated for the next meeting.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Minutes by Craig Bosman, Faculty Council Support Analyst. <cbosman@uw.edu>

Present:

Faculty: Christie (Chair), Wilcock, Ricker, Phillips, Vaughn
President’s Designee: Cameron

Absent:

Faculty: Huber, Bryant-Bertail, O’Brien
Ex Officio: Fauchald, Anderson, Drieling