

# Senate Council

Friday, May 13, 2022

The Senate Council met in special session at 9:00 am on Friday, May 13, 2022, at 21C Museum + Hotel in Lexington, KY. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise. Senate Council Chair Aaron Cramer (EN) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

The Chair informed SC members that the SC retreat would be mostly discussion oriented to consider broader issues that may not have finite answers.

## 1. Minutes from April 25 and April 28, 2022, and Announcements

The Chair reported that there were no edits received to the minutes from April 25 or April 28. There being **no objections**, the minutes from April 25 and April 28 were **approved as distributed by unanimous consent**.

The Chair announced that the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE) had made an inquiry about input from SC regarding *Administrative Regulation (AR) 1.4 ("The Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Cycle")*. The Chair noted he was asked for his opinion about issuing an interim regulation. The Chair recommended convening the University's Regulations Review Committee to see the proposed revisions, before posting an interim regulation or asking for SC feedback in early fall.

The Chair invited SC members to introduce themselves, noting the addition of two of the new student SC representatives. In addition to invited guests Sheila Brothers (SC office), Sophie DeCorte (student), and Katie Silver (SC office), the following SC members were present:

- Lauren Cagle (AS)
- Susan Cantrell (ED)
- Vice Chair and Chair-elect DeShana Collett (HS)
- Chair Aaron Cramer (EN)
- Marilyn Duncan (ME)
- Bob Grossman (AS)
- SGA President Andrew Laws (student)
- Shannon Oltmann (CI)
- Kiarah Raglin (student)
- Faculty Trustee Hollie Swanson (ME)
- Kaveh Tagavi (EN)
- Akiko Takenaka (AS)
- Vice Chair-elect Leslie Vincent (BE)

The Chair noted that clarification was needed in the *Senate Rules* for operationalizing the beginning and end of student terms. The Chair commented that functionally, student SC member terms began after commencement.

The Chair invited Cantrell, who had been asked to co-chair the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) committee, to provide an update about the QEP. The QEP is an important part of the University's reaccreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Cantrell provided a brief update to SC members, noting the following:

- The QEP was “Transdisciplinary Educational approaches to advance Kentucky” (TEK)
- The Acting Provost’s commitment to partner with SC on QEP efforts and asking Cantrell to co-chair the QEP committee
- The early stages of the QEP and brainstorming on how to advance student success and engage diverse groups across campus
- What student learning outcomes (SLO) could be achieved with transdisciplinary approaches
- Senior administrators pondered Initial strategies before engaging the QEP committee
- Ensuring Senate’s involvement
- Summer would be spent drafting the QEP with the QEP committee and receiving feedback from constituents and submitting in February of 2023

SC members asked a variety of questions about the QEP and discussed a variety of topics pertaining to the QEP, including the following:

- How the University’s current financial model will impact attempts to promote transdisciplinary activities
- The definition of transdisciplinary
- How QEP efforts would be incentivized
- Difficulty in expecting unit-level faculty to carry the weight of transdisciplinary collaborations
- Past QEP efforts
- Previous transdisciplinary efforts
- Frequency for QEP efforts
- What levels the QEP would involve

The Chair noted that a lively discussion among SC members via email would be appropriate to provide feedback for Cantrell.

The Chair informed SC members that the University Senate website would be redesigned over the summer. The Chair asked SC members to send comments to Katie Silver ([katie.silver@uky.edu](mailto:katie.silver@uky.edu)) in the SC office regarding thoughts on the website.

## 2. Old Business

- a. Proposed Extension of Badge Pilot through 2022-23 Academic Year (proposal awaiting SAPC review)

The Chair explained the proposed extension of the badge pilot through the 2022-23 academic year. The Chair informed SC members that the proposal for the badge program was awaiting review from the Senate Academic Programs Committee (SAPC). Grossman **moved** to extend the badge pilot through the end of the Spring 2023 semester. Collett **seconded**. A brief discussion took place, which included the following:

- Tagavi asked who was currently responsible as administrator for the badge pilot, and who would be responsible for the program if approved. Vincent explained that after the pilot, if the program was approved, the associate deans in the colleges where badges were housed would be responsible. Tagavi expressed concern about Senate not overseeing the awarding of the badge. The Chair noted this was a useful critique of the proposal but did not pertain to the discussion of the pilot.
- Duncan asked how many times the badge pilot should be extended. Grossman suggested to offer an amendment to propose that this be the last extension of the pilot. The Chair responded that he could not accept a motion that would limit the future actions of the SC.
- Oltmann noted concern for colleges being responsible for the badge program whose faculty and staff were already overworked. Oltmann commented that she found the badge program to be interesting but that it did not seem to be a useful tool.
- Vincent explained to SC members that the badge proposal had been developed with Senate oversight and involvement over the last two years. Vincent noted that colleges brought forward proposals for specific badges willingly, and that the badge program was not mandated. Vincent expressed the importance of Senate and SC taking faculty ownership of the badge program.
- Collett suggested a faculty body to have purview over the badge program due to the transdisciplinary approach to a program with credit-bearing courses. SC members suggested a possible Senate committee or utilizing an existing component of the Senate like Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council.

A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with two opposed and none abstained.

The Chair noted that the other items on the agenda were more discussion based. The Chair told SC members he would call on hands for discussion and would try to prioritize those who had not spoken yet.

### 3. Senate Committees and Councils – Standardizing Senate Rule Language

The Chair explained that the Senate had 16 different committees and three academic councils with related *Senate Rules (SR)* passages that had been written at different points in time. As a result, committee and council descriptions were not standardized. Some *SR* language indicated committees would have final authority, while others did not. Voting rights for ex-officio members were not always outlined and responsibility for appointment of ex-officio members was unclear.

Collett described some of the issues in detail pertaining to membership and composition of the Senate's academic councils- the Undergraduate Council (UC), the Graduate Council (GC), and Health Care Colleges Council (HCCC). Collett explained there was no uniformity among the policies for each council regarding membership or vacancies. Collett noted there were some discrepancies between policies for Senate academic councils and Senate committees.

#### a. Membership/Composition

The Chair invited SC members to discuss membership and composition of Senate committees and academic councils. An in-depth discussion took place, and SC members discussed the following:

- Grossman noted that while having a rule was important, consistency was less important and that it may be beneficial for different committees to have different policies. Grossman commented that the rules needed to be clearer about which ex officio members had voting rights and which did not.
- Vincent expressed favor for three-year terms as opposed to shorter terms and noted the steep learning curve associated with some committee work. Vincent commented that a three-year term allowed for expertise to be built over time and for foundational knowledge to be passed on.
- Tagavi commented on the wording used to describe compositions was not grammatically correct. He also objected to the ability of the Senate Rules and Elections Committee (SREC) to render interpretations that were never officially codified by the Senate. He also stated that responsibilities could not be delegated to committees unless the ability to delegate was expressly given to the Senate. The Chair opined that the Senate was free to delegate and commented on other delegated responsibilities throughout the University. Swanson commented that the Board of Trustees operated with subcommittees in a similar fashion.
- Cagle asked if there was aggregate data available on diversity of academic council and committee compositions. The Chair noted the Senate had expressed concerns about diversity within itself, too.
- Collett explained to SC members there were issues with how elections were conducted among the academic councils. Collett noted a recent issue she observed where the GC suggested nominees for GC service who were not actually eligible to serve. Other SC members reported similar experiences with previous GC elections. Collett described steps moving forward to prevent ineligible nominees from being suggested by the GC and despite pushback, the SC office and SREC will be assisting them with their next round of elections. The Chair noted that the UC and HCCC staff coordinators were part of the SC office, but the GC staff coordinator was not.

There was brief discussion about curricular reviews conducted by academic councils not being uniform in terms of quality.

#### b. Length of Council Service

The Chair explained the next item was length of council service and noted that SC had discussed some of this in the previous discussion about membership and composition. Both UC and GC required three years of council service, while HCCC required two years of council service. Collett commented on some of the concerns regarding length of council service.

#### c. Charge

The Chair asked if there were questions about committee charges. A discussion took place regarding the types of charges for committees and whether committees took advisory action, final action, or both. Collett recommended codifying charges of committees more clearly to indicate what type of action committees took. The Chair noted that most Senate committees did have authority to take final action, although he noted the few notable exceptions: Senate Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals Committee (SRWAC, on individual student cases), Senate UK Core Education Committee (SUKCEC, on individual requests from students), Second Reinstatement Committee (on individual student

requests), and the Senate Rules and Elections Committee (SREC, certifying an individual's election eligibility).

#### d. Functions

The Chair asked SC members to discuss committee functions. SC members discussed the topics below.

- The language used for the Senate UK Core Committee (SUKCEC) and other Senate committees was not clear regarding the committee's decision-making authority on whether the committee had final approval authority or was making recommendations before transmitting items to the Senate for further action
- The Chair noted that functionally, the actions from the majority of Senate committees were not a final action, but rather a recommendation made to Senate to take final action. Proposers in general are entitled to a final review by the Senate.
- The scope of the charge for the Senate Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (SACDI) is challenging, especially regarding diversity of senators. The committee may not be able to change how colleges elect senators, but it can discuss ways to ensure college elections include are inclusive and there are no barriers to Senate participation from minority faculty on campus, such as working with associate deans for diversity in the colleges.
- The need for aggregate data pertaining to diversity among honorary degree recipients and senators
- Senate retention and recognizing Senate service as a way to help build cohorts across colleges
- Revising the charges of committees one at a time, prioritizing committees that were not functioning well
- The Chair noted that some committees did not have regularly occurring work provided by SC or Senate, while others were regularly busy
- It is helpful to committee members when all work comes through a single source
- Maintaining committees with light workloads
- Create systematic orientation for Senate committee chairs
- Challenges when senior administrators engage in faculty-centric efforts over the summer
- Because the Institutional Finance and Resource Allocation (IFRA) Committee is now always chaired by a member of the Staff Senate, it would be acceptable to remove the committee from the Senate Rules, but recognize the need for two elected faculty senators to participate as voting members
- The Senate UK Core Education Committee (SUKCEC) and historical issues with those external to the Senate understanding it is a Senate committee
- Whether requests from the University Registrar regarding academic calendars would make more sense to go to a calendar committee
- The possibility of creating a nominating committee for nominations solicited from SC and Senate that could work with diversity and inclusivity efforts in mind as well
- The potential for creating an ad hoc pool from which members could be selected for administration-requested or Senate ad hoc committee nominations

- Setting the expectation that senators serving on committees without heavy workloads would be asked to also serve elsewhere
- Simplify web pages for Senate committees to decrease the number of clicks required to find out what a committee does
- Providing information on the Senate website about committees to help new senators identify what committees they are interested in and making latest reports from committees available to faculty
- Requiring committees to submit monthly reports that can be put on a consent agenda for Senate
- The benefit of having members from SC on or chairing committees with high activity
- Complexities regarding a committee chair who is expected to remain neutral while also recommending the SC or Senate approve the item
- Possibly splitting the responsibilities of the Senate Admissions and Academic Standards Committee (SAASC) among two separate committees

At this point, the Chair asked SC members if anyone was uncomfortable with asking SC office staff to start taking working on SC's suggestions and drafting SR edits and there were no objections. SC members continued their discussion, mentioning the items below.

- Modifying the content of SR Section 7 ("Code of Faculty Responsibilities") to remove the punitive and enforcement aspects but retain the expressions of faculty values
- Committee responsibilities related to the Senate's oversight of University admissions and shoring up the Senate responsibility and ability to establish admission policies
- Improving consistency in all academic council's use of the Senate's checklist
- The need to identify a new UC Chair
- The lack of a faculty employment committee contrasted with the Senate's charge to advise the President on personnel matters
  - There is variation among colleges regarding faculty evaluations, diversity and retention, and other related issues
  - Some staff employees have positions with major job responsibilities composed entirely of teaching

#### 4. Relationship Between Disability Resource Center (DRC) and Faculty and Accommodation Process

The Chair explained that he was hearing more and more faculty concerns regarding a perceived lack of engagement between the DRC and faculty regarding the accommodation process. The Chair informed SC members that Vice Chair and Chair-elect Collett had provided an example from Oregon State University's (Oregon State) website with information about their Disability Access Services. Collett explained that the example was detailed and clear regarding expectations. Collett informed SC members that when she met with David Beach (director of the DRC) to discuss how accommodations were determined by the DRC, she was told that students were asked by the DRC what accommodations they needed. Collett told SC members that she asked if there was mechanism to appeal a decision made by the DRC if an instructor felt that decision infringed upon pedagogy but did not receive a satisfactory

answer. Collett noted that procedures for students to inform instructors of accommodations granted by the DRC were not clear and there appeared to be policies on the DRC's website that were not necessarily followed.

SC discussed the relationship between the DRC and faculty and the accommodation process. The following topics were discussed:

- Sometimes the required accommodation for a single student affecting other students, too (change in classroom location, etc.)
- The need for a liaison from SC to the DRC who could report back to SC
- The importance of not treating disabled students as adversaries and recognizing the student as the expert on their disability
- The vast majority of UK's existing courses not complying with federally mandated accessibility rules
- Whether units were allowed to have policies on how to handle reasonable accommodations
- The need for senior administrators to provide sufficient resources to the DRC so it can serve students and faculty in the way students and faculty desire
- The lack of a defined process by which faculty can discuss alternatives with the DRC and identify a different but acceptable and pedagogically reasonable accommodation
- The lack of information available to students about what was offered with the DRC
- Some entire buildings on campus are inaccessible
- While advance notice is not required, it would be useful if students were encouraged to notify faculty about accommodations before the semester begins
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SC members and invited guests adjourned for lunch at 11:55 am.

SC members and invited guests reconvened at 1:08 pm.

## 5. University Senate Leadership and Culture

The Chair asked SC members to consider how the SC effectively used its voice and the difference between SC speaking as a group and SC members speaking individually. The Chair noted the importance of how SC members use those voices, and in what contexts.

### a. Meetings

The Chair asked SC members to discuss future Senate meetings, noting that modality had not yet been discussed for SC and Senate meetings beginning in the fall semester. SC members discussed the following:

- Tell senators how they should prepare for meetings, to support engagement in Senate meetings
- How to improve New Senator Orientation (NSO)
- How to improve NSO to help new senators
  - Communicating expectations for meeting preparation
  - How to use tools like Curriculumlog
  - training to help senators understand their responsibilities

- Scheduling NSO a week in advance of the first Senate meeting rather an hour in advance of the first Senate meeting
- Moving SC meetings to in-person only meetings to improve meeting cohesion, which promotes the sort of healthy debate that is difficult to replicate via Zoom
- Moving Senate meetings permanently to an online modality to better promote diversity and accommodate distance learning and extension campuses
- Increase engagement by displaying proposals during the meeting digitally and somehow clearly indicating what topic was being discussed, which documents were being referred to, and when the body moves to the next agenda item
- The perceived downsides for online Senate meetings and possible remedy of strengthening senators' participation in committees, to improve the ability for senators to make connections across campus
- Ensuring that spaces for meeting were inclusive of modality concerns and allowing the option for SC meetings to be attended remotely if needed
- Challenges for the Chair when leading meetings where the members are attending in different modalities
- Perspectives of senior administrators regarding meeting modality and comments made about how faculty were participating
- Establishing the expectation that SC meetings will be in person, although an exception could be made
- Whether a mask policy would continue
- Some issues could be used to drive a wedge between faculty and staff
- The requirement to establish a formal location due to Open Meetings Laws
- Technical limitations regarding audio equipment in the room SC uses for meetings
- Balancing all the possible improvements for Senate meetings and available resources
- Clearly communicating to Senate members that the expectation was to review proposals in agenda items prior to the meeting
- Sending calendar invitations for Senate meetings to senators

#### b. Committee Reports

SC members discussed committee reports provided to SC and Senate. Comments and discussion included the following:

- Concerns regarding speaking against proposals from committees at Senate meetings
- Encourage committee chairs (standing and ad hoc) to describe a committee's vote and, if not unanimous, offer allow a minority report to be submitted if there are a significant number in opposition

SC members adjourned for a break at 2:23 pm.

SC members reconvened at 2:32 pm.

The Chair asked SC members to discuss if it was reasonable to establish expectations for monthly activity reports from committees to be presented to Senate by way of a consent agenda. SC members discussed the following:



- If monthly activity reports were too frequent
  - Committee chairs can be given the option to report no activity
- Providing committees with a template or web form to provide such reports
- The pros and cons of reports provided committee chairs during Senate meetings

#### c. Communication, Engagement, and Awareness of Senate

The Chair asked SC members to discuss communication, engagement, and awareness of the Senate. SC members discussed the following:

- Senators in colleges with multiple senators may have a more difficult time planning ways to communicate with those they represent in the college
- A lack of standardized practices among colleges for senators to communicate with their respective constituents
- Senate members not having access to email addresses of faculty constituents in their respective colleges
- The need for the Senate Council office to maintain college listservs for senators to communicate with their constituents
- Creating a listserv for senators to communicate with each other, perhaps only during certain time frames, like immediately before a Senate meeting
- How such listservs would be operationalized and helping manage the email load if it becomes burdensome
- The need for two-way communication between Senate and administration

## 6. University Senate Priorities 2022-23

SC members discussed Senate priorities for the 2022-23 academic year. The following priorities and comments were mentioned:

- How SC uses its voice as a deliberative body
  - Preventing the misperception that one comment from a single SC member can be construed as SC's input
  - When the Senate speaks, it is the collective and representative voice of faculty.
  - The single voice of the Senate is represented by the Senate Council Chair, not any other individual or committee or committee chair.
  - If a senior administrator wants to meet with SC but not at a regular meeting, it is reasonable to expect that the topic will be shared in advance, so SC has an opportunity to first discuss the matter internally
  - If the SC's input is requested, the SC will provide that as a unified voice, not via interactions with individual SC members.
  - The SC listserv is a valuable tool for members.
- Communication and safety
  - SC members discussed safety related to COVID-19
  - Need to recognize the toll the pandemic has taken on everyone and balance safety with overall well-being and mental health
  - Improving Senate communications with the broader faculty.

- Lack of information among students about the University Senate or SC and historical challenges regarding student participation on Senate committees
- Focusing on culture surrounding Senate and increasing Senate relevance to faculty despite continued challenges with sharing governance
  - SC members also discussed Senate participation in committees across campus as well as the newsletter distributed monthly by the SC Chair
- Need to improve socialization of students who were part of cohorts that began during the pandemic and do not know how to navigate campus or being in the classroom
- Online education and maintaining faculty oversight and involvement in such activities
  - Vincent commented that online education should be a strategic priority for Senate

## 7. Items from the Floor

The Chair invited SC members to discuss items from the floor.

Swanson expressed concerns regarding the recent faculty trustee election, specifically regarding colleges with an oversized voice. Swanson noted that she and Blonder had previously mentioned concerns regarding campaigning. As Chair Cramer had recently been elected to serve as faculty trustee, he passed the gavel and responsibility for the discussion to Vice Chair and Chair-elect Collett for the duration of the discussion about the faculty trustee election. SC members discussed the following:

- Whether a rule could be established to limit the same college from being represented over and over
- That the Senate has the authority to establish a process to oversee the faculty trustee election, as well as modify it
- Conflicts of interest related to departmental-based campaigning for faculty trustee
- What the process for the staff trustee election was
- Whether it was appropriate for the matter regarding faculty trustee elections to go to SREC, the SREC Elections Subcommittee, or an ad-hoc committee

The Chair asked if there were any other items from the floor. SC members expressed gratitude for Chair Cramer's leadership and service. SC members also thanked former SC student member, Sophie DeCorte, for attending as an invited guest.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM with **no objections**.

Respectfully submitted by,  
DeShana Collett

SC Members Present: Cagle, Cantrell, Collett, Cramer, Duncan, Grossman, Laws, Oltmann, Raglin, Swanson, Tagavi, Takenaka, Vincent

Invited Guests Present: Sheila Brothers, Sophie DeCorte

Prepared by Katie Silver on Thursday, June 16, 2022