

Senate Council

Monday, August 21, 2023

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3:00 PM on Monday, August 21, 2023, in 103 Main Building, although a video conference link was also available for members. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken electronically unless otherwise specified. Specific voting information can be requested from the Office of the Senate Council (SC).

Senate Council Chair DeShana Collett (HS) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:00 pm. The Chair welcomed those present. She informed everyone that the session was being recorded for notetaking purposes and noted that it was an open meeting. She asked that all attendees, online and in person, state their name and affiliation prior to speaking, to ensure everyone knew who was speaking. The Chair asked SC members to be ready to vote via Poll Everywhere. The Chair reminded SC members that regarding the ability to speak, members must raise their hand to be called upon. The Chair also reminded everyone that SC members would have priority speaking, noting that others may be called upon as needed and given a chance to speak only if there were no additional comments from SC members.

1. Minutes from August 14, 2023 and Announcements

The Chair informed SC members that no edits were received to the August 14, 2023 minutes. There being **no objections**, the minutes from August 14, 2023 were **approved as distributed by unanimous consent**.

The Chair informed SC members that she continued to receive pushback about the UK Core Committee's course substitution policy. The Chair noted that her ability to keep SC members informed that her ability to communicate with SC was hampered by Legal Counsel, which prohibited her from discussing details with members due to attorney-client privileges. The Chair commented that it was important to keep SC members informed but the confidentiality imposed by attorney-client privilege made it difficult for her to update SC members. Doug Michael (LA) commented that he was astonished by the response the Chair had received from Legal Counsel, noting that the University as a whole was the client. Michael also noted that Legal Counsel's role should be to explain how the policy could be practiced, not simply say that it could not be implemented. SC Vice Chair Sandra Bastin (AG) commented that the issue was a discussion of opinions about the policy, rather than the compliance of the policy. The Senate Council directed the Chair that the next step in the process is for Legal Counsel to identify which clause(s) or word(s) within the currently approved Core's course substitution policy are problematic (providing citations) and offer suggested alternative wording that would make the clause or wording compliant. They urged her not to meet on the issue further until such information was provided.

The Chair explained that after the SC meeting last week, deep concerns were expressed by administrative leadership to ex officio members of Senate committees not having voting rights. In the Chair's opinion, the important aspect of shared governance is not the ability to vote, but rather in this case, the spirit of shared governance is the meaningful inclusion of administrators on Senate committees. Historically and continuing to today, a wide variety of administrators with expertise in a number of areas are invited to participate in Senate committee work every year. The Chair explained these individuals are invited to meetings, schedules are accommodated if they have other commitments, and are encouraged to participate equally in discussion. The Chair also explained that these individuals were expected to share meeting proceedings with those in their area who have responsibilities that involve Senate.

The Chair expressed gratitude for Katie Silver's service in the SC Office, but informed SC members that she had news to share. Silver informed SC members that her last day with the SC Office would be Friday, September 8,

2023. Silver explained she had been offered a role with the Markey Cancer Center and had chosen to accept the offer. SC members offered Silver a round of applause to congratulate her on her new position.

2. Old Business

a. SC Nominees to Participate in Board's Evaluation of the President

The Chair informed SC members that the Office of the President annually requested the names of three faculty members who would participate in the President's constituent survey. The Chair explained that SC chose which three would participate, but the Office of the President requested that SC not suggest someone who had already participated. Molly Blasing (AS) asked about what would be required of the three faculty members. Faculty Trustee Aaron Cramer (EN) explained that the constituent survey was a fairly short survey that included material for faculty members to review. He commented that it would take around an hour to complete. Faculty Trustee Hollie Swanson (ME) suggested that SC members consider faculty who had expertise in University-wide committees or similar experience.

SC members provided five names to the Chair. The Chair stated she would solicit willingness from the nominees and transmit three to the Office of the President. There were **no objections**.

3. Proposed Waiver of Senate Rules 5.5.2.3.3 ("Circumstances for Award of Honorary Degrees")

The Chair explained the proposed waiver of *Senate Rules 5.5.2.3.3 ("Circumstances for Award of Honorary Degrees")*. The Chair reminded SC members that the *Senate Rules* only permitted elected faculty members to vote on matters relating to honorary degrees.

Elizabeth Salt (NU) **moved** that SC exercise *SR 5.5.2.3.3* and recommend the Senate allow an individual who was already approved for an honorary degree (CP) to receive it outside of a regular commencement ceremony. Sandra Bastin (AG) **seconded**. The Chair opened the floor to members for questions of fact and debate. A brief discussion took place.

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

4. Nominee for Public Health Dean Search

The Chair explained that the Office of the Provost had reached out to request a nominee to serve on the upcoming search advisory committee for the College of Public Health Dean. The Chair explained that the representative needed to be someone without a primary appointment in the College of Public Health. She also clarified that the Provost's office will ensure the Senate Council has at least three weeks within which to identify nominees for any committee, so there is sufficient time for the Nominating Committee to propose nominees. SC members provided four names to the Chair for transmission to the Office of the Provost.

5. Senate Council Meeting Roundtable

The Chair invited SC members to participate in a SC meeting roundtable. SC members expressed the following sentiments:

- There was consensus that SC members had a responsibility to prepare for meetings in advance and it would be beneficial to help each other by sharing thoughts with each other prior to the meetings
- It was difficult for attendees on Zoom to hear in-person attendees, particularly if in-person attendees spoke over one another
- SC needed to be strategic about how it used its collective voice
- Thoughtful consideration of large topics required further deliberation to put forth fruitful conversation
- Difficulties experienced by Zoom attendees was a serious issue that needed to be addressed to continue to allow SC members to attend remotely when necessary

- It was difficult to have productive conversation for such a large range of topics
- Staying orderly would help improve the sound quality for Zoom attendees
- It would be beneficial for SC members to prompt discussion via the listserv prior to the meetings
- To better include members attending via video conference, SC members attending in person could turn on their cameras (not mics) to better indicate who is speaking
- Student members experienced some challenges entering as new members

Provost DiPaola offered to ask about the possibility of adding more mics to the room, given that senior administrators also use the room. Blasing noted that she was relatively new and encouraged the student members to reach out to her or anyone else on SC if anything about a SC meeting/agenda is unclear.

6. Objectives for 2023-24

The Chair reminded SC members that last year saw the beginning of the current implementation of the UK Core course substitution policies related to learning disabilities. The Chair commented that the Senate Committee on Disability Accommodation and Compliance (SCDAC) was also looking at ways to improve information about and collaboration with the Disability Resource Center (DRC).

The Chair noted that there were other issues raised and discussed last academic year that had not yet been acted on, including sabbaticals and faculty and staff safety.

The Chair explained there were concerns last year about the College of Arts and Sciences rejecting requests for sabbaticals, noting that she was told the college neglected to include funding in their budget for sabbaticals which was why the sabbaticals were cancelled. The Chair stated that it was important to remember that sabbaticals were a faculty employment benefit and denying such a benefit has a negative impact on faculty seeking tenure when they could not engage in their scholarship. The Chair informed SC members that she would ask the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee (SFAC) to investigate why colleges sometimes rejected sabbaticals.

The Chair described the issue of faculty and staff safety, regarding interactions with potentially dangerous students. The Chair noted that the Office of Student Success had mechanisms to support students facing challenges but commented that both Student Success and the Office of the Provost acknowledge faculty safety was not something that Student Success had authority over. The Chair explained that she would be meeting with the Office of Faculty Advancement and Student Success about these issues, and that collaboration was ongoing to provide guidance to faculty and staff.

The Chair informed SC members that she also had concerns about reciprocal respect and noted there was an imbalance between the Senate and University administration. The Chair explained Senate invites all individuals to participate and is open about what is being discussed. The Chair stated that Senate solicits input from and involves administrators in meetings, noting that Senate's work was very transparent. The Chair informed SC members that she believed it was reasonable to request that administration involve the Senate as much as Senate involves administration in Senate business, specifically related to invitations to meetings and being kept up to date about issues that impact one another.

The Chair asked SC members for their thoughts on objectives for 2023-24. SC members offered the following input:

- There was interest in hearing a report from the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration (EVPFA) regarding the financial health of the University in light of recent program closures at West Virginia University (WVU)
- It was important to remain vigilant and stay abreast of best practices for use of generative AI

- There needs to be more opportunities for graduate students to be more engaged in University activities and general campus living and develop a sense of belonging
- There was interest in learning why sabbaticals were funded at the college level as opposed to being funded by the Office of the Provost
- Lack of engagement was still concern and faculty engagement was crucial to shared governance activities
- Shared governance is spoken about, but active engagement in such activities could help smooth relationships
- It was important to think beyond the relationship between AI and academic integrity and consider how the University would pursue a paradigm shift and forward-thinking approach to offering a relevant education to prepare students to enter the workforce
- The Senate should continue to bring up the need for an employee ombud
- Senate should keep a close eye on DEI efforts, especially in light of the recent SCOTUS decision over the summer
- There was interest in SC being kept up to date on budgetary metrics of underrepresented minorities (URM), which could potentially be compromised based on the recent Supreme Court decision on race in admissions

Provost and Co-Executive Vice President for Health Affairs (EVPHA) Bob DiPaola responded to some of the input provided by SC members, which included some of the following sentiments:

- Safety was an important priority, and he appreciated Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement Lisa Tannock working together with Senate on the issue
- There were a number of collaborative opportunities being launched out of the Office of the Provost to promote collaboration and leverage innovation, such as the TEK program and IMPACT awards (Incentive for Mission Priorities to Accelerate Collaboration and Transformation)
- The UK ADVANCE (Advancing Data utilization for Value in Academia for National and Campuswide Excellence) Committee would continue to work closely with SC and the Senate GenAI Committee to provide regularly updated guidelines about generative AI

Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Katie Cardarelli noted that she and others from the Office of the Provost had been visiting colleges to discuss and answer questions about the University's financial allocation models. She commented that faculty had asked insightful and detailed questions. Elizabeth Salt (NU) commented that this had been very beneficial for understanding college viability and that faculty found this useful.

The Chair summarized that issues that the Senate needed to stay on top of.

- Sabbaticals
- Faculty and staff safety
- AI policies and preparing students for the future
- University's financial footing
- Feeling of belonging on campus for graduate students.
- Employee ombud
- Distribution of effort percentages for faculty providing college- and University-level service

She thanked SC members for their input about objectives for the 2023-24 academic year. The Provost provided information about the collaborative work he is involved. Bastin (AG) stated that the SC is always interested to

learn more about initiatives coming out of the Provost's office. There were additional comments by SC members.

7. Items from the Floor

The Chair stated that there was interest in hearing about the Provost's dual role and noted that she wanted to provide some comments regarding SC's interactions with administrative leadership. The Chair reminded SC members that when they were elected to serve on SC, the goal was to represent the views and opinions of those who elected them. As SC members, they were expected to facilitate the SC in speaking as a unified voice when confronted with challenging issues. The Chair clarified that when input was solicited from SC, SC members should remember the sum of their voices, and that SC's opinion should be solicited directly from SC and not an individual SC member.

The Chair noted that she was no longer invited to meetings between the Provost and deans, noting she was in discussion with the Provost about this matter.

The Chair invited Provost DiPaola to share information about his new dual role and changes to the Office of the Provost. The Provost began by clarifying that the Chair will be included as the restructuring in the Provost's office settles down.

The Provost provided information to SC members about his dual role as Provost and Co-EVPHA, including information about restructuring the office, the addition of a Vice Provost, and other enhancements to areas of the Office of the Provost.

The Chair asked if there were any questions for Provost DiPaola. Doug Michael (LA) asked if there would be a formal search for the Vice Provost position. The Provost clarified there would be, but an Acting Vice Provost would be identified to fill the period of time until there was a full national search. Kaveh Tagavi (EN) commented that he was glad to hear the Provost planned to actively involve the SC Chair in meetings. Elizabeth Salt (NU) asked about programmatic collaboration across colleges and what that would look like, particularly from a funding perspective. The Provost commented that a committee had been set up to look at different programmatic areas, particularly as they related to healthcare, in an effort to involve expertise from other non-healthcare colleges.

SC briefly revisited the issues surrounding UK Core and Legal Counsel that were discussed earlier in the meeting. SC members agreed that answers were needed with specific information before the Chair should participate in any other meetings. SC unanimously consented and directed the Chair to that the next necessary step in the process is for legal counsel to identify which clause or words within the currently approved UK Core policy are problematic (providing citations) and offer suggested alternative wording that would make the clause or wording compliant. SC members also agreed that given the inclusion of administrators on Senate committees, concerns about Senate activities and processes should be addressed at the committee level, before Senate approves policies, rather than after.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM with **no objections**.

Respectfully submitted by,
DeShana Collett

SC Members Present: Bastin, Blasing, Collett, Cramer, Davis, Duncan, Grossman, Hornung, Michael, Reynolds, Salt, Swanson, Tagavi, Takenaka, White

Invited Guests Present: Sheila Brothers, Robert DiPaola, Gregg Rentfrow