



Emergency General Faculty Senate Meeting

Time: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Minutes

12/3/2020

In attendance: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Elizabeth McNie (Vice-Chair), Sarah Senk (Secretary), Steve Browne, Tamara Burback, Colin Dewey, Matt Fairbanks, Margot Hanson, Mike Holden, Christine Isakson, Tony Lewis, Assis Malaquias, Keir Moorhead, Ali Moradmand, Julie Simons, Wil Tsai, Margaret Ward, Frank Yip

I. Call to Order

- McNie convenes meeting, explaining that Chair is unable to join at 11 due to a conflict but will join the meeting shortly and reviews agenda. McNie summarizes materials provided by Curriculum Committee Chair Parsons (in an email sent to Senators by Secretary on 11/25).
- Committee discusses whether or not to remove “motions” from the agenda and whether motions are appropriate at this time while Senators are still familiarizing themselves with the issues.
- Dewey: “I agree that I’m not clear that carrying the motion from the last meeting was appropriate. Part of the discussion is to consider whether a motion is even in order.”
- McNie clarifies: Senators will *not* be voting on anything in this meeting because they need to go back to departments to discuss.
- Agenda revised to remove motions.

II. MT Curriculum Change (Charge to Senate and Discussion)

- Parsons presents timeline of dates of the curriculum revision process. Parsons clarifies that she does not believe the CC was negligent and passed something that shouldn’t have been passed, but that there was perhaps a breakdown in how the committee conducted business. Majority of people on the committee felt that things were not conducted normally. “We were not able to ascertain whether the things that happened in terms of procedure were sufficient to say we need to revote.” Part of what we need help figuring out is whether the procedure/process happened was sufficient.
- Lewis: seems like there are two issues: what to do with the thing that passed and what policies be changed to make things go better in the future. Second one seems like too much to tackle in this meeting today.
- McNie: suggests slightly different wording - it’s to determine if the policies were followed or not as a first step, and as a second step, if the policies were not followed, were they not followed to such an extent that it warrants an entire review of the curriculum.
- Lewis: to me, we’re not saying that they need to change the decision. This seems to me to be not that drastic of a step. Does anyone dispute that the Senate has the authority to tell the Curriculum Committee to take another look at this?
- Yip concurs. Senate oversees the actions of the Senate Curriculum Committee.

- Browne asks Parsons to clarify the nature of the Curriculum Committee concerns. “It’s not clear to me exactly what the concern was.”
 - o Parsons says one concern was that the meeting was enormous, there were like 50 people there, all the Deans, some members of the committee felt it was a difficult situation and they couldn’t ask questions or feel comfortable raising points with all of the Deans there, etc.
 - o Moradmand: is that normal? I thought the purpose of a committee was to have an ensemble, not everyone.
 - o Parsons: it was very unusual in that way
 - o Moradmand: how long was the meeting?
 - o Parsons: approximately 90 minutes
 - o Burbach comments that she was in the meeting and invited people to ask questions. There was space. It was a long enough meeting and I believe there was adequate space for discussion or at least for comment for how the discussion should continue in a different format. I felt it was more than adequate.
 - o Yip: The characterization was that “the operational dynamics were unusual” and prevented people from commenting. But takes Burbach’s point that there *was* time. Concerned that due to some of the personalities in the room – particularly the deans – that there was pressure. Yip asks if Curriculum Committee determined that information was missing or assumed by the Committee members.
 - o Parsons says she doesn’t know if anyone who raised these issues would have changed their vote, but there was some sense that members thought that S&M and MT had met over the summer, and that was expressed that it *hadn’t* in the meeting. There was some misunderstanding of a few things. I would not be comfortable speaking for anyone on the committee and saying they didn’t understand the material they had read. In our previous committee I feel like someone suggested we voted on a thing we didn’t read, and that is not what happened.
 - o Lewis says he doesn’t believe it’s necessary to “shame” the committee for being unprepared. If majority of committee members feel that this process didn’t go as it should, that seems like enough for the Senate to take another look at it.
- Yip presents existing Curriculum Committee Policy (page 4 of 22). Begins with CCR form, and operationally the CC views the CCR from which all other things should originate as the “hub of the wheel.” Policy says that the CCR form and accompanied materials “shall be submitted to the Chairs of all departments affected by the change.” Yip states that from his time on the CC, he recalls the Registrar asking the CC to revote on previously approved CCRs when inconsistencies or errors are determined, as the CCR is the official document of record. The policy states that the Department Chair Questionnaire form should record the department vote. The form should then go from individual chairs along with originating CCR to academic deans, who has 2 weeks. It’s important to note that the policy doesn’t specify how long the Chair has with it. The things that one level of review sees should not be changed from one layer of review to the next.
- Parsons says “there is a single and slightly insane form” for all curriculum changes. The CCR in this case was not designed to cover a large curriculum change. One of the things I think happened is that one was necessary but there was no place on the CCR for the actual information on the change form, so all of the subsequent documents were meant to fill in that information.
- Parsons says that consulting with affected departments is part of the policy that she did not refer to in the consults over the summer. Policy is ambiguous enough so that MT can say “consultation happened” (because they did the departmental questionnaire).
- Senk asks: can we clarify the SPECIFIC nature of the concern about where the policy was violated? Is it that the S&M department had insufficient notice about the change and insufficient

time to respond on the DQ? I think it would be helpful if we state simply for people who are hearing about this for the first time what specific parts of the policy may have been violated.

- Yip says that's one of the concerns. Another concern is that the number of units changed from 144 units to 148. A new CCR form seemed to get substituted in the middle of the process.
- The new CCR (listing 148 units) is dated Sept 1, while the packet sent to L&S dean for commentary (sent on Aug 19) included the old CCR dated Feb 26 (indicating 144 units). The response letter from the MTLM dean in response to his packet specifically mentions 148 units. There is a question of the inconsistency of documents provided to different deans at this parallel stage of the process.
- What is clear is that the CCR that was presented to S&M (in February) and the L&S dean (in August) is materially different than the one voted on by the Curriculum Committee on Sept 8
- The packet of documents sent to the L&S dean also did not include any documentation about the opinion of GSMA as an affected department; it is required by Policy 572, and existed (though not as a Departmental Chair Questionnaire form)
- The Engineering Dean sent her letter of commentary on Sept 1; the ET Department indicated its position on a DQ form dated Sept 2, and in response to a different CCR (for ENG 210L), not on the Roadmap CCR. The order of the flow of documents is reversed from what Policy 572 states. The DQ form from ET (an affected department) is not in the packet presented to the CC for the Sept 8 vote.
- Browne says it sounds like the policy does need to be tightened up and clarified but that in the past we've relied on past practice and it seems like we (Curriculum Committee) have followed past practice in the decision. And it seems that the folks in the Curriculum Committee meeting had the information needed to make a reasonable, informed vote. The S&M questionnaire was very clear in the concerns. It sounds like there was opportunity in that meeting for the folks who had concern to express it before the committee. I don't know if they did that or not, but it sounds like past practice was followed and everyone had an opportunity for input.
- Hanson solicited suggestions from the Library for policy revisions. Curriculum Committee has procedures in place for revising courses more-so than program level. That's a future discussion we need to comprehensively revisit in the future.
- Fairbanks says that if the Curriculum Committee is coming to this body, already asking what to do, it seems like the consensus is they were not satisfied that their usual standards were met in this matter, and I don't know how relevant the procedural things are, but perhaps it's more relevant to have the debate on what we should do in response to the Curriculum Committee saying they did not perform to usual standards.

III. IBL Resolution

- Chair introduces Administrative response to IBL Resolution: President has appointed Steve Browne as IBL Chair. We congratulate Steve. But as a Senate we are here to discuss if we are satisfied with that response? How do we move forward?
- Lewis says that the department is excited about Steve Browne serving as Chair.
- Moradmamand says "I thought the concern was more about why the decision was made about not going with the overwhelming consensus of the department, and it doesn't seem that was addressed. It doesn't address the original disparity between the faculty will and the decision."
- Lewis: not only has that not been explained; the President has not shifted to a different explanation "in that there's something wrong with me." Lewis says: I want to document that the President first blamed Dr. Kamdar for the enrollment failures; he did this publicly in front of the

department and explained why he couldn't take the her recommendation for me as Chair and he pointed to enrollment and retention problems that were particularly troubling relative to the rest of the University. Dr. Kamdar took it on herself to refute that in a letter that was well supported, and effectively refuted the President's claims [about IBL having the worst enrollment figures on campus]. The President did not respond to any of those critiques in a material way and seems to have now shifted and slandered me on the Senate Floor by saying that there are two issues in my HR record that would preclude me from being Chair. I suspect that the president is hiding behind the fact that the HR record is private. I have received my HR record from HR, I reviewed it carefully and there is nothing in there that could possibly support what the President said. I propose, so that we can determine, has the president lied to the Senate and slandered a Senator in front of his colleagues, I propose to make my sterling HR record public."

- Hanson: "I don't have a follow up to that. Wow. What a move! I have a side-issue I'm going to address about the policy for department chairs, and I want to get some clarity about the policy." Hanson asks what the process will be for drafting policy, will the Senate get to provide feedback because at this point it's been just Chairs and Deans. Hanson has looked at examples from other campuses, which vary widely. But if there is not an agreement in approval process for what dept has decided it goes *back* to department, not to some administrator who has been appointed Chair in lieu of a faculty member. Can we get clarification about that policy revision?
- Pinisetty reports he drafted the policy and sent it to the Department Chairs, Provost, and Deans. Next step will be to email to Senators by Friday. Then he will provide a month before we meet as a Senate to get feedback and have a first reading in our January senate meeting and second reading in February.
- Simons: The letter from the President was a bit troubling in his characterization about how he subsequently asked the Dean to search. That's not what happened. He *appointed* the Chair. I think it's important to respond as a Senate because that is a re-writing of the history.
- Dewey: Expresses empathy for Lewis's situation and argues that central issue for the Senate is this as a pronounced example of the President's attitude lately towards the Faculty in general. Of course, the CBA says that he has the ultimate right, but is that really effective and enlightened leadership to exercise that authority in that way? Where the senate can intervene is to question the bigger picture of the relationship between the President and the faculty in more general terms and maybe not in the specific terms that Tony is talking about.
- Lewis: wants to push back against that because if the President is attacking individual faculty members it's not adequate to give a general response. I believe that Dr. Kamdar has been denied the solidarity appropriate to the way she's been treated by Admin, and I think we need to respond specifically. If we can show there's a baseless attack happening on the floor of the senate.
- Senk agrees with Simons that it's extremely important to get the historical record straight so that we don't repeat mistakes. Senk adds, "I also think we should have a discussion about the limits of Senate authority and what may be a CFA issue." Senk believes it's appropriate to issue a statement as a Senate about the *inappropriateness* of the President's claim on the senate floor [in the 9/24/20 meeting] but would like to clarify what exactly is within our purview as a Senate since we are a very different body than the CFA.
- Moorhead: what is the end goal here? A lot of this does seem like a union issue. If I was attacked publicly, I would absolutely ask the union for support.
- Lewis: "I agree and I am going the grievance route with the union, but it certainly is the business of the senate to ensure that the floor of the Senate is safe. If it is not safe for faculty to share information with the Senate, if even Senators themselves are targets for administrative ire, the Senate cannot do its business. The Senate has a responsibility to ensure the safety of its members, and more importantly, the safety of those invited to share information with the

Senate.” Lewis expresses concern that the denial was retaliatory for the budget report. The senate has a responsibility here because I was invited to present the budget report to the senate.

- McNie: I feel like it’s very important for our resolutions to be taken seriously. Would be in favor of a follow-up to his reply identifying the errors in it and our views. Empathizes with Lewis’s position, but is concerned about presenting his record to us. Might undercut the value of your record being confidential. The President violated confidentiality by making that declaration about your record; by you sharing it I think that diminishes the value of that confidentiality. I believe action should be taken but want to make sure you don’t undercut yourself in your grievance.
- Lewis: I insist on this opportunity to clear my name. The harm to me in being slandered this way by someone of such high authority; I really insist on the opportunity to clear my name.
- Simons: To address Keir’s question about what’s our end goal: part of this is having things *in writing*.
- Isakson: Seems there are two basic issues that are not being responded to in the letter: one is the issue of the chair’s responsibilities and the other is the issue of Tony being called out for HR violations. The first issue is the one I want to ask about: is it now the case that our chair for IBL has had his responsibilities shifted? Is IBL’s chair now responsible for recruitment and retention? Is that different from all other chairs? I think this is also a CFA thing but it’s a faculty thing as well. Are *all* chairs now responsible for recruitment and retention?
- Browne notes that during his discussions with the Provost regarding the IBL chair job, he was not told that retention or recruiting students would be part of his duties as chair, nor was he responsible for those things during his four years as MT department chair. Browne adds that “as far as [he] can recall, [he’s] never seen a job description for department chair.” [Browne adds in clarifying email after the meeting, “it would be inappropriate to hold chairs accountable for duties that no one told them they had.”]
- Tsai moves to work with Executive Committee to draft a follow-up response to the President’s letter.
- Action Item: Senk will create Shared Document and Exec can begin drafting next week.

IV. Good of the Order

- Committee members ask for clarity about what questions they should ask their constituents regarding the MT Curriculum change issues.
- Parsons says, “the main point I am bringing up is this: did the existing policies adequately allow us to review a change of this size?”
- Tsai: can we propose corrective actions? Whatever we do next needs to have a corrective action and we need to make sure those actions are part of the next step.
- Yip: we should *not* be asked to go back to our constituents and resolve whether the vote would change. We need to put that back to the curriculum committee.

V. Adjournment