

Faculty Senate Meeting 2/4/10

Dennis Wignall: I'll get started...some general announcements: 1: I'll be hosting the Utah Faculty Senate Leadership Council meeting – which is for all Senate leaders, current chairs & Presidents-Elect from higher education in Utah – on Feb. 12. The keynote speaker for the meeting will be Commissioner Sederburg. I'll report to faculty what comes from that meeting. One big issue that has arisen lately: a legislator from the Kanab area (Noel) has gone after some faculty at UVU because of things they've said about climate change in the public media; he's trying to get them fired, get their responsibilities changed, etc. 2: this morning's Spectrum has an article that discusses legislation (by Buttars) to remove 12th grade in Utah to save money & increase the state's funds. If we're not getting confident, incoming freshmen, then it'll make things much harder for us...I don't know how this will turn out, but I'll contact my reps and voice my opinion.

Munir Mahmud: Students finishing 11th grade go where...?

Dennis Wignall: I don't know; I also don't know how this would translate out of state (11th grade diploma?!?). It seems to me that they'd have no interim education before college – I don't want to inherit that student body. 3: The Faculty Senate web page (http://www.dixie.edu/faculty_senate) is now up and populated by Munir and it will continue to be updated; I appreciate Munir's efforts. 4: Academic Council met last week: we had some difficulty at the end of December with an extension of student evaluation & grades being posted. The official deadline for grades in was the 22nd (21st?), but students were still doing evaluations by the 28th! Obviously, faculty using Blackboard to post grades are creating a problem for themselves – beware of that!

Randy Jasmine: We discussed this in our department – was there any discussion of shortening the window for evaluations?

Dennis Wignall: No, Academic Council decided that the dates used in the December example were adequate.

Munir Mahmud: I posted grades the same day as my final exam because students want to know their grades!

Dennis Wignall: JD in the financial office, on the other hand, noted that about 600 students didn't have final grades posted by faculty in a timely fashion so they couldn't get funding for Spring.

Susan Ertel: That's a department chair issue.

Dennis Wignall: I'm just mentioning it & encouraging faculty to get their grades in on time!

Susan Ertel: Adjuncts are paid before grades are due, so there's no incentive there for them to get grades in in a timely fashion.

Dennis Wignall: Also, faculty conducting finals before finals week are just as problematic! We are contractually obligated to be here during finals week (except labs – Erin O'Brien).

Tim Eicher: This is an administrative issue, not faculty – it's part of our job description, so administration is responsible for dealing with it. Faculty don't police each other on this.

Dennis Wignall: That reminds me: Faculty Senate has to operate in reverse: Senators go back to their respective departments to discuss things. ...Now: Chair's meeting items (which are public info anyway): when it comes to on-line surveys, etc., the college is working on archiving their results. The suggestion was that the departments and faculty keep hard copies of on-line or digital files because they are key to RTP. Also, there was a proposal to create a new school by splitting Science & Allied Health – the new school suggests that there will be a new assoc dean & associated infrastructure, but the budget has to be dealt with...a dean & benefits, etc. would be ~ \$250K. (This is under discussion.)

Erin O'Brien: I think we were talking about a new dean & getting rid of associate deans under Victor – replace two people with one.

Dennis Wignall: Also, any new on-line courses need the approval of the dean, chair, & Becky Smith – there is some contention over course content. In Communication, we've run into instances where Dean Smith attempted to control course content, but that's the purview of the individual faculty. She has the right to train & certify faculty members, but she can't touch content – that's individual faculty responsibility. We're moving to more and more on-line courses because of the increase in enrollment while classroom space remains static.

Erin O'Brien: I was under the impression that workload comp is different for on-line courses...?

Dennis Wignall: You get paid for teaching, but also creating on-line courses, initially.

Erin O'Brien: Yes, but we're compensated for running them less time-wise – without that, there's no incentive for faculty to do this!

Tim Eicher: It's two credits to develop a course, but I don't know for the on-line teaching.

Ed Reber: Academic Council decided to change that awhile ago, but I don't know if it got implemented.

Dennis Wignall: Another issue here: intellectual property rights.

Susan Ertel: The college owns the course because they paid you to make it.

Dennis Wignall: At other schools, that's not the case.

Ed Reber: I thought we had an arrangement that faculty can take their courses with them even if the college owns them.

John Jones: What does it mean to "review/approve the content"? Why does that need to happen for on-line courses but not face-to-face ones?

Dennis Wignall: We go through Academic Council for any content.

Tim Eicher: The Curriculum Committee never reviews curricula – just compares them to other schools.

Dennis Wignall: The issue comes in on the delivery side – if a course is on-line, what's happening is that in an on-line environment, Dean Smith's office looks at it and tries to adjust it.

(many): There are copyright, etc. issues, too. It goes through chairs & deans because it becomes a staffing issue if someone moves majority of their workload to on-line – the dean & chair have to negotiate where the tipping point is between who's on-line & who's face-to-face...I think it's a logistics thing.

John Jones: The technological issues are different than content issues, though!

Addison Everett: In our meeting, we heard that Becky knows she can't do anything about content, just delivery – content stays within faculty purview.

Dennis Wignall: Good! I guess that faculty should look at the final form.

Susan Ertel: I would trust Becky's expertise about how things look on-line – that might enhance how we deliver. It may seem like her telling us how to teach, but she's just making suggestions.

Dennis Wignall: Obviously a hot issue! At the Chairs meeting, it was also mentioned that students might be added to some committees to review proposals, etc. It's unclear how they will be chosen. This will make a huge impact – will they have voting/decision-making rights?

Ed Reber: Students may not be good at showing up for meetings...!

Dennis Wignall: Dean Hinton is concerned about courses being taught by same people over and over – he wants more cross-pollination. Understand that there will be pressure about this! Digital measures: portfolios & accreditation will go digital after Fall 2010 – people applying in Fall 2010 will still use old fashioned paper binders. It will behoove the Executive Committee to concoct a training committee to teach faculty how to create an electronic portfolio.

Paul Abegg: It will have to be program specific.

Dennis Wignall: My notes say "Peer list for this institution send to Donna"...?

Susan Ertel: When a form goes to Curriculum Committee, they want to know who else teaches similar courses elsewhere – they want to know how appropriately our stuff fits our demographic.

Addison Everett: Part is for salary consideration - -compares our salaries to those at similar institutions elsewhere in the country.

Susan Ertel: CUPA data is only regional – this is what we use on campus for equity.

Dennis Wignall: There was also some discussion about formal commencements for December graduations, or just have department ceremonies – I have hunch that as we grow, we'll have formal ones eventually. (Summer, too.) If you teach in summer and have tenure, a Ph.D., etc., low summer pay is unacceptable.

Tim Eicher: This is an effort for the Executive Committee to take up!

Susan Ertel: Same with adjuncts.

Dennis Wignall: Lots of faculty are unwilling to teach in summer because of this, despite increased demand for summer classes from students.

Erin O'Brien: When Sarah Black came back from her maternity leave, she wanted her classes spread over three semesters and she took a hit in benefits as a result.

Tim Eicher: This is a policy issue. The President's response was why have a faculty member teaching large GE classes teach in summer?

Dennis Wignall: I will pursue this.

Paul Abegg: A trimester system is also being considered for financial aid purposes.

Dennis Wignall: Yes, Pell grants, etc. can be used in Summer, and that increases our enrollment. So if there are degree completion accelerated programs in a department (e.g., the ones in Communication, aviation), they cannot bridge semesters anymore by federal guidelines – they have to start and end *within* a semester This is gaining momentum. What else...? The new flat panel screens across campus: if faculty have advertisements for academic things they want posted on them (e.g., to announce faculty programs), see Randall Chase.

Susan Ertel: Is there a way to turn them off at night? That would save energy! They need to be on timers.

Dennis Wignall: OK, post-tenure review: what I want from you is comments about what should go into such a policy. For example, who does it? What items should be on the forms? At other schools, this is under the control of faculty and departments, but the problem there is that if a faculty member is not getting along well with other faculty in his/her department, or is doing a crappy job but everyone loves him/her, there needs to be a way to balance that. Donna wants this – not to do it (i.e., conduct the reviews), but she wants the data from having it done in order to have confidence in making decisions about faculty. I want to start moving toward developing a policy on this; if we show progress, administration will be happy.

Tim Eicher: Is this an “end of the road” policy giving them ammunition to fire people? I agree this has to have “teeth” in it.

Ed Reber: The Board of Regents policy mandates this every five years.

Tim Eicher: Who has a reasonable policy?

Ed Reber: I think a lot of them at other institutions assign this duty to groups within their own school's systems. That won't work well for us, we have too few and too small departments.

Dennis Wignall: I think post-tenure review would be valuable because it helps identify weak faculty and helps improve them. But another aspect is the ammunition → termination aspect.

Erin O'Brien: This raises a good issue that some faculty have *talked* about mentoring, but I don't see much of it. There's no formalized system – maybe beyond the first year workshops, faculty needs to create this. For example, is there somewhere we can send faculty over the summer for training, etc.?

Susan Ertel: Where I was before, within a month of being hired, I had a tenure committee and they met with me monthly 'til I had tenure.

Erin O'Brien: But we need something more formal.

Tim Eicher: We submitted a mentorship policy years ago!

Ed Reber: We did have that committee in earlier versions of policy proposals, but the gutted version that came out didn't have it.

Susan Ertel: It makes sense to have it in the beginning of a faculty member's appointment.

Tim Eicher: This is an administrative commitment, but it's never been there.

Erin O'Brien: As we talk about evaluations, we can tell people they need to work on _____, _____ is great, etc., but when telling someone they need to work on _____, but there's no support mechanism.

Dennis Wignall: I agree – any faculty going through RTP review, if declined, are given a year to come up to speed, but there's no criteria to address their problems and no mentoring in place to help them. Since we now have a six year RTP process, there's a 3rd year review – in the RTP committee, we've talked about having a committee at this point...but the fundamental problem is that if there's no official process, faculty can say they've been doing what they were told to improve without having to document anything.

Susan Ertel: Most research says that first year interventions are most crucial.

Dennis Wignall: This is good input! In terms of RTP: the college's committee received a number of applications for RTP that went through Donna, then the Board of Trustees voted on them, and they passed to President Nadauld, who then has asked for a special meeting for more information in order to support some applications. This is the first time that this has happened, as far as I know, at the President's level.

Munir Mahmud: Have these people been contacted yet?

Dennis Wignall: I don't know – administration has been closed-mouth about this. I don't want to scare anyone, but if you're anticipating RTP in coming years, the winds are changing. You need to work on your portfolio, connect with colleagues, improve teaching evaluations, etc.

Erin O'Brien: Part of the problem is that many faculty – people above them don't have problems with their evaluations, even if they are negative at face value. But many faculty teach lots of introductory level classes that students aren't qualified to assess the same way as upper level classes and make negative comments about the faculty simply because their grades weren't where they wanted them due to problems on the students' parts.

Dennis Wignall: One last observation on this: I was asked by HR to provide two faculty names to populate a committee for a decision on applicants to the permanent athletic director position. I submitted two names; arbitrarily these two people were rejected, a committee was formed, and it's made decisions.

Susan Ertel: No, we haven't – it's me & Randy, and we haven't met yet.

Dennis Wignall: But yours aren't names I submitted – so someone just negated that!

Randy Jasmine: But it wasn't just an arbitrary decision...I am on the intercollegiate committee – it's not a power grab as much as that my position has been informal. In the job description, it says that in the future, the Faculty Senate chooses F.A.R. We need to follow through with that. What we need to do is get that job description and I'll bring it to the Executive Committee.

Dennis Wignall: I'd prefer that whoever did make the appointments would have *told* me that my recommendations were not adequate – that takes the Senate into a non-voice situation.