

Minutes

The Faculty Senate met October 5, 2021, via Zoom, due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

Attendance/Quorum

President Christopher Syrnyk called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. All Senators or alternates were present except for Don McDonnell.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the June 8, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting were approved with no changes.

Reports of the Officers

Report of the President – Christopher Syrnyk

- Christopher has heard via the Provost that the list of Standing Committees will be released soon.
- He has suggested to the Provost that we move the CPC within the purview of Faculty Senate.
- As a result of many other committees having some duties that fall within Senate’s purview and some that don’t, Christopher suggested that the roles of these committees may need to be reevaluated going forward.
- Christopher raised the idea of a potential future charge for CCT: look into new/more effective ways of evaluating the faculty.
- He also reminded faculty to complete the Convocation survey sent out by the university.
- Questions?
 - There were no questions.
- End of report.

Report of the Vice President – Lindy Stewart

- Nominations for Senate closed last night. Lindy said she hopes to have the Qualtrics survey/ballot out to faculty by this Friday, so that the voting can be completed by next week.
- End of report.

Report of the ASOIT Delegate – Brie Landis

- Brie introduced herself as the new ASOIT President and Senate representative.
- She created a Qualtrics survey last week to gauge the university climate from the students’ perspective. She does not have a formal report on the resulting data at this time, but noted three major concerns students shared: tuition, parking, and faculty issues.
 - Brie went on to say that the students are still feeling the aftermath of the strike from last spring, and that in particular they are upset about a lack of budget transparency and a lack of class options and/or classes being cancelled.
 - She also said that student discontent is such that they are “yelling” in the Oregon Tech app.
 - She will be summarizing the biggest talking points from the survey in a letter to the Provost.
- Questions?
 - Addie Clark asked if Brie had any further information from the students’ perspective on the recent email sent out by Dr. Naganathan regarding testing requirements.
 - Brie was not familiar with the particular exchange Addie referenced, but said that students have expressed either extreme frustration with or extreme support for the testing requirements.

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- End of report.

Reports of the Standing Committees

Faculty Rank Promotion & Tenure (RPT)

- There is currently no chair for this committee, so there is no report for this meeting.

Faculty Welfare – Sarah Fitzpatrick

- Sarah is currently on leave, so there is no report.

Academic Standards

- There is currently no chair for this committee, so there is no report for this meeting.

Faculty Compensation (FCC) – Sean Sloan

- No report.

Reports of Special or Ad Hoc Committee

- Currently, there are no Special or Ad Hoc committees.

Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Christopher Syrnyk

- Christopher spoke to open discussion on Academic Standards' 2019-2020 report on the reorganization of Faculty Senate.
- With no immediate discussion forthcoming, he asked Addie Clark, former chair of Academic Standards, to speak on how the report was originally created.
 - This report came from an initial charge given to Academic Standards in AY 2019-2020 to look into the possibility of reorganizing Faculty Senate and its related committees in light of the then-pending Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).
 - During the process, the Provost charged the committee with looking at comparator schools (both in and outside of Oregon, both unionized and not unionized).
 - The result of this research was the report that is included in this packet, for reference, on **pages 11-12**.
- Sean Sloan began discussion of the report and its recommendations by asking Addie her thoughts on *not* including CCT as part of Senate in the future, since they are not a policy-generating body while Senate definitionally is.
 - Addie responded that she has no strong opinion on what Senate does with the recommendations, since she is no longer a member of Senate.
 - She went on to explain that most unionized comparator institutions her committee studied had Senates that were less oriented toward policy-making and more oriented toward academic development, hence the recommendation that our CCT become part of our Senate.

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- Lindy asked if it would be possible to see the comparator list(s) that the committee used to generate their recommendations.
 - Addie said that they ultimately ended up with around fifty comparison schools, and relied on data from each of them variously. The comparators that were unionized were given more weight, for the obvious reasons.
- Christopher asked if there were any committees that comparators had that we are lacking (and might need going forward)?
 - Addie said that some comparators had some extraneous committees that we don't have, but generally speaking there weren't any "new" committees coming out of Academic Standards' research that we should clearly plan on adding in the future.
- Christopher also asked if any of the comparators had student-affairs-related committees.
 - In looking back over the committee's research, Addie said there were not an overwhelming amount of universities that had this type of committee, though there were a few.
- Bobbi Kowash asked if consolidating more committees under Faculty Senate would limit service opportunities for faculty who are not Senators.
 - Addie pointed out that a faculty member does not have to be a Senator to serve on a Senate committee. Only the chair of a Senate committee needs to be a Senator, so they can deliver their report monthly to the Senate.
- Kyle Chapman spoke to make the point that we need to keep RPT as a committee because there are still matters of rank, promotion, and tenure that are not covered by the CBA.
- Lindy spoke to clarify that this report from Academic Standards is not the final word on the conversation around reorganizing Senate, but instead the beginning of the conversation.
 - Christopher and Addie both agreed with that characterization.
- Kyle circled back to Sean's previous question about CCT. He spoke to the possibility of CCT's role expanding the future to include policy-making.
 - I spoke here to raise the point that if we are beginning the reimagining of Senate as a body by redrafting the bylaws and the constitution, then discussions of what Senate has historically been are, in a sense, moot. We can make Senate's purpose into whatever we think is appropriate going forward, and there may well be a space for CCT to function within that new purpose.
 - Christopher pointed out in response that Senate has never actually been a "policy-making" body, but more of a "policy-recommending" body.
 - CJ Riley spoke in favor of making sure that we are doing outreach beyond Senate to hear from others about this reimagining effort, regardless of what form the effort takes next.
- Addie offered to come back to Senate in the future to discuss this effort further, if it would be helpful.

Open Floor

Christopher Syrnyk

- Christopher spoke briefly to encourage people to attend the "Oregon Tech Come-Together" on the Klamath Falls campus on October 18th. He explained that the reason for this event is to bring all campus groups together to share the same social space, and to discuss Oregon Tech's future in a hopeful way.
 - CJ spoke up in support of the event, and shared that some of his constituents had already talked about the need for an on-campus solidarity event.
- CJ also had a number of other items to bring up/ask about:
 - The FOAC chair has typically been selected by the President, and he's wondering if that is happening again this year.
 - Dr. Mott spoke to say that the FOAC chair has been appointed by the President already.

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- Will the Convocation survey's results be shared publicly?
 - Dr. Mott said the survey results will be shared once it is completed.
- Lots of concerns among faculty about the vaccination requirement (on both sides of the issue).
 - In particular, vaccinated faculty want to know if they can participate in the on-campus testing, or if that is only for non-vaccinated faculty.
- What is the status of the NTT promotion policy that was endorsed by Senate near the end of last AY?
- What are the administration's goals regarding faculty hiring in the future, especially considering the number of faculty lost over the last year?
- Management faculty wanted to echo Monica Breedlove's concerns from the June meeting that not all hires need to have a Ph.D., and that in some cases this requirement is holding up searches unnecessarily or artificially restricting the pool of capable candidates.

Report of the Provost – Dr. Joanna Mott

- Dr. Mott began by speaking in favor of the upcoming “Come-Together” event.
- She thanked everyone for their continued COVID compliance: in general, things have been going well. She also reiterated that we aren't doing anything that the big Oregon universities aren't also doing.
- She reiterated that everyone should fill out the Convocation survey, and that the administration is looking forward to using the feedback to improve the event next time around.
- The common course numbering initiative is moving forward at the state level.
- We don't have direct representation on the statewide transfer council, but will have the opportunity to work in smaller committees that can pass feedback to that group as they continue to work.
 - Dr. Mott also encouraged Senate to appoint a new IFS representative soon, as this is another way that we can make our voices heard on the state stage.
- Addressing the earlier comments about more budget transparency, Dr. Mott said that we are currently making a transition in our budget software, and this has led to less clarity than usual on the budget front.
- Dr. Mott said she has forward the Academic Standards report discussed previously to senior leadership, and they will be discussing it amongst themselves in the near future.
- She also sent to SenEx responses to Academic Standards' end-of-year report from last AY. These responses have been included in this packet on **pages 8-10**.
- On the hiring front, Dr. Mott said that we have hired a number of temporary instructors this year to fill gaps as necessary, but the plan is to participate in the normal hiring cycle this fall and try to find more long-term solutions to many of our faculty shortages through that process.
 - Department chairs have already been asked to make faculty requests.
- Dr. Mott said that enrollment is “not good.” Headcount is down 9.8% and credit hours are down 7.6%. In particular, freshman enrollment dropped dramatically in August; the cause(s) for this is unclear.
- Retention is also down; in particular, only 68% of last year's freshmen have returned.
 - Dr. Mott reminded faculty to direct freshmen who are struggling to the academic advising and retention office, which is now operating out of the library.
- We are purchasing software to help with advising and retention, so we can streamline that department's processes.
- If your department has ideas about how additional resources might help with student success, send requests to your Deans.
- Questions?
 - Christopher asked if the “freshman melt” we experienced is a shared experience at universities across the state.
 - Dr. Mott said that this information isn't available yet, but will be after the fourth week.

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- She also spoke to say that students who are not returning who have been surveying provided a number of reasons why they weren't, including uncertainty about the modality of future courses, many jobs being currently available, and unrest on campus.
- Addie asked if some of the decrease in enrollment/retention we're seeing now is the overall drop in universities' enrollment that we managed to dodge last year finally catching up with us.
 - Dr. Mott agreed that this could indeed be the case.
- Kyle asked if recruiting and marketing is going to change their approach this year, or if they are going to continue using current strategies.
 - Dr. Mott responded that the current strategies *were* working, especially for freshmen, so the hope is being able to identify what's changed and then respond to it accordingly.
 - We have a new Associate Director for Admissions, which should help us reevaluate our approach to make it more effective.
- Kyle also asked what the hiring strategy is going to be going forward.
 - Dr. Mott said that the process begins with reviewing requests from department chairs, which will be happening soon. What departments want will dictate what the hiring strategy is.
- Addie asked if Dr. Mott would be willing to speak to the rationale behind some of the requirements being imposed onto job calls by administration that have proved controversial (as in the case of Monica's and CJ's previous comments, for example).
 - Dr. Mott spoke to Addie's chemistry-specific concerns, but did not address the larger question directly.
- Terri Torres asked about an apparent budget item: \$1.8M for a "data center."
 - Dr. Mott clarified that this is for an applied computing center. It is one-time funding, and some of the funds will likely be used to upgrade the cybersecurity labs on both campuses. Right now, this is in an early stage, so there will be more information later, including exactly which fields or departments the funding will effect.
- Yuehai Yang asked if we have any resources to help train faculty on how to positively contribute to retention efforts, especially faculty that teach primarily general education courses/students.
- Bobbi spoke to reiterate some of Monica's points from the June meeting: in the MIT department, it makes no sense to require a Ph.D. from job candidates, as it is not the terminal degree in the field.
 - Dr. Mott answered that having a faculty member or two in each department with a Ph.D. can be beneficial to the entire department, but she agrees that it should not be a requirement for everyone if that doesn't make sense within the profession.
- Dibyajyoti Deb expressed concern over the "exodus" of faculty over the last few months, and asked if the upper administration has discussed this and what we might do in the future to keep it from happening again.
 - Dr. Mott responded that what has been happening here isn't unique to Oregon Tech: the exodus of faculty is reflective of a national trend.
- End of report.

Report of the President's Council Delegate – Christopher Syrnyk

- No report.

Report of the Association of Oregon Faculties (AOF) Representative

- There is no AOF representative, so no report.

Report of the Inter-institutional Faculty Senate (IFS) Representative – Lindy Stewart

- No report.

Report of the Fiscal Operations Advisory Council (FOAC) Representative – Christopher Syrnyk

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- No report.

Report of the Administrative Council Delegate

- There is currently no Administrative Council delegate, so no report.

Adjournment

Christopher Syrynk adjourned the meeting at 7:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Bunting, Secretary

Response to the recommendations of the Academic Standards Committee
Academic Affairs 09/28/21

Charge #1: Review the current waitlist policy and make recommendations.

Recommendation of the committee is that the Registrar's Office **turn on** automatic waitlists with 10 student spots per course and a 48-hour window for students to register when it is their turn.

Response: The Registrar and AA leadership support a one year trial period of this recommendation during which any unforeseen issues can be identified. The plan will then be modified if needed. This will be implemented winter term 2022. One concern is the 48 hour window – we suggest a 24 hour window in order to allow the sequence of students to have the chance to register in a timely manner.

Two questions brought up in committee discussion:

- 1) can waitlists be turned off AFTER registration begins?

Response: Yes they can be turned on or off at any given point.

- 2) once turned off, do we have to turn it off every term that course is offered?

Response: Yes it is all term driven.

Charge #2: Review the recent decision to limit services offered by Testing Services and make recommendations for Senate action.

The recommendations were:

1. Faculty need a clear explanation of testing services options, policies, and procedures. (An email had been sent at the start of the year and a reminder was sent at the start of Winter term at our recommendation)

Response: The Office of Student Affairs has sent additional details. Please let the Provost know if more/clearer communication is still needed.

2. Make the testing center available for all course levels, not just those taught in-person, especially for students with disabilities.

“Any student with an approved testing accommodation that is taking remote courses is most likely approved for remote delivery due to the fact that they are a part of the population of students whose disability puts them at an increased risk for COVID, which means they cannot or should not come on to campus. To the best of our knowledge, Respondus is the software that the Online Learning Department chose in

*order to offer proctored atmosphere for remote/distance students.”
(Note from conversation with Testing)*

Response: This appears to have been addressed. Please let us know if this is incorrect.

3. Reopen the Portland Metro Campus Testing Center for at least proctoring for students with disabilities.

The PM testing center was closed in Spring 2020 due to COVID restrictions and the center was kept closed due to no in-person lecture courses being offered on the PM campus. Once the PM campus opens for in-person lectures, Testing will reopen to serve students with approved accommodations. (note from conversation with Testing Services)

Response: This appears to have been addressed. Please let us know if this is incorrect.

4. Reduce the seven (7) day lead time for submitting requests for proctoring tests. Add staff members to Testing Services if this is part of the limitation.

Response: Please let us know what lead time the committee would recommend?

5. Make the Testing Center available for proctoring of makeups for in-person courses.

On the Klamath Falls campus, make up proctoring is available for student athletes and other faculty approved situations.

Response: This appears to have been addressed. Please let us know if this is incorrect.

Charge #3: Evaluate the transcription evaluation process and make recommendations. *This has been resolved with the Registrar.*

Charge #4: Evaluate the student add/drop procedure timeline and make recommendations.

The recommendations were:

1. Registrar’s Office move the Add/Drop form to an online document as well to help eliminate need for tracking down signatures.

Response: The move to using Etrieve (online) is in process

2. The timeline for the add/drop period should be changed so that add/drop is possible through 8 am the Monday of Week 2, to help allow for nontraditional course scheduling to be accommodated at all of our campuses.

Response: The Registrar is reaching out to the Budget Office and Payroll to determine if this can be done logistically, using our processes.

Charge #5: Review the Academic Standards' report – “The Recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee Regarding Faculty Senate Committee Structure Upon Unionization at Oregon Tech” and make recommendations from the perspective of your committee for implementation.

Response: Academic Affairs leadership will review the document this fall and respond at a later date.

The Recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee Regarding Faculty Senate Committee Structure Upon Unionization at Oregon Tech

In the fall of 2019, the Academic Standards Committee was charged with the following:

- Prepare proposal for changes to Faculty Senate committee structure and overall organization in light of the pending faculty collective bargaining agreement, with a particular focus on bringing the undergraduate and graduate curriculum under Faculty Senate control for review and approval.

In response to this charge, and at the direction of the Provost, Dr. Joanna Mott, the committee looked into comparator schools, both inside and outside of Oregon and both union and non-unionized. The following recommendations are based on that research and are based on the assumption that the only Faculty Senate committees which will remain after restructuring are Elections and Academic Standards.

1. The committee recommends the integration of the following committees to Faculty Senate: Curriculum Planning Commission (CPC), General Education Advisory Commission (GEAC), Commission for College Teaching (CCT), Graduate Council, Assessment Committee, Online Learning Advisory Committee (OLAC), Advising Commission, and the Admissions Committee. In our research, it was unusual for curriculum committees to not be under Senate, whether the school was unionized or not. We believe this list encompasses all of the relevant curriculum committees.
2. As part of these additions, we also recommend that Academic Standards be dissolved as a *standing committee*, because there is a significant overlap of duties and responsibilities with CPC. Should something indirectly related to CPC come about, an *ad hoc* Senate committee of Academic Standards should be formed to address it.
3. Additionally, it is the view of the committee that some CPC duties should go to GEAC such as the review and approval of General Education Courses. GEAC should be responsible for approval of whether a course should be marked as general education, taking care of the bulk of approvals before passing to CPC for final approvals.
4. All committees should be streamlined as much as possible (with #2 being a specific example of this) and given a *specific purpose*. This will give more weight to recommendations made by the committees, more productive work coming out of the committees, and generate more respect for the work that is completed.
5. These committees should be internally restructured to house rotating leadership, where a chair and assistant chair serve together, with the idea that the assistant chair will one day take over as the chair. This would allow for the preservation of institutional knowledge, especially in what has previously been tried by a committee in past years.

Though outside the exact purview of this charge, we also recommend that the combination of standing committees outside Faculty Senate be considered, with a cultural shift to

relying more on ad-hoc committees to deal with issues as necessary. This would require a shift in institutional thinking and definition of institutional service, but the committee agrees with points made during the February Faculty Senate meeting that service points is not a good reason to have a large number of committees and that there are other ways to impact the institution in a service capacity.

We would also agree with the February Faculty Senate note that many standing committees are too large to be effective. We would advise against committees larger than 7-9 individuals (an odd number avoids ties in voting), with a default of 5 members for most committees. Committees larger than this make it hard to schedule meetings at times everyone can attend, come to a consensus on any decisions that need to be made, or making sure that the voices of all members are adequately heard.

We also suggest that the model of leadership we are proposing in #4 above be applied (especially) to all standing committees. We would also advocate for a better way to rotate people on and off all committees so that many people with talents relevant to the committees have a chance to serve.

The selection process for all committees should involve more people than just the President of Faculty Senate and the Provost. We propose an application process in which applications are reviewed by the individual chair and assistant chair of the respective committees, with the final assignment approved by the Faculty Senate President and the Provost to ensure that one person is not assigned to too many committees.

The research for this report is held by Academic Standards Committee Chair, Addie Clark (Natural Sciences) and can be produced upon request.