Governing Faculties Meeting Approved Minutes

November 11, 2016

French Hall 111, 10:30am-12:00noon


The meeting was called to order at 10:35am

1. Minutes.

The minutes of the 09.23.16 Governing Faculty meetings were approved as revised.

2. Chancellor’s Comments.

The Chancellor and Provost commented on the following issues, which were presented to them prior to the meeting by FC in behalf of the Governing Faculty.

- Representation of Academic Affairs in the Cabinet,
- Consultation with faculty before university decisions are made.
- Turnover on administration positions and lack of institutional memory which may be associated with low staff and faculty morale.
- Communication between faculty and administration (structure, how and what).
- Extensive use of out, and waited until second year to make others. side sources (including consultants) on issues that can be achieved more effectively and properly internally.

This is a summary of her comments:
The Chancellor indicated that she was hired to (and therefore responsible for) increase retention, increase giving and reach to the community. The faculty, and not the administration, determine which programs to grow. Involving faculty in the strategic plan committee formation is an example on good ongoing communication. During her first year, the Chancellor made just one change in administration seats and waited until the second year to make strategic decisions. When she arrived, she encountered a faculty that did not know anything about the capital campaign, space challenges and/or support challenges; and this help determined metrics of performance on designing her team. Regarding continuation of leadership, the Chancellor indicated that after a national search, the Provost appointed two deans that were institutional members. There has been no freeze on hiring, and the vice-chancellors have the authority to seek what is needed. She accepts that she made a mistake on the way to communicate with faculty on her first year. She is having lunches with faculty (called by random lists) to listen to them.

With regards to the use of consultants on campus, the Chancellor indicated that her past experience in enrollment management lead her to get consultants in order to obtain a quick and thorough review of the different offices. Following best practices is what led her to hire consultants for the “Climate Study,” and she said that no consultant has been hired that did not work with an internal campus group.

With regards to financial issues, the Chancellor has asked Jerry Glasco to do a presentation to CAC/BCP on the budget, and then, if faculty wants, to all faculty. She is creating a fact sheet about the budget in order to keep faculty and staff better informed of the process. The chancellor indicated that there have been no discussions on budget cuts or lay-offs for the current academic year. The university has a $ 95 million endowments and we are in very good financial situation. The Deans have used carry forward funds to create new space and buy new equipment, as indication of the academic emphasis of utilization of budgets. Regarding the North Tower, she mentioned that Ann Arbor does not approved any new building without a long term plan for sustainability, which was presented to the Regents. We have a lot to do due to the 7% decline in the last two years in enrollment, but we cannot stop investing in infrastructure. She is convinced that there are a lot of resources that are not being used as effectively as they could be, and this fact is driving the revision of positions on different areas. There is no plan to buy the YMCA.

Provost Knerr also presented some comments.

He started by mentioning that there is so much that unites us, that the current cabinet is the most academic strong cabinet he has seen. The orientation and focus is to strengthen the institution, specially the academic success of faculty and students, and maintains a close relation and frequent communication with the other vice-chancellors.

The Provost mentioned that we are well prepared and in good position to the upcoming accreditation process. The trust and affinity of values and mission between faculty and administrations needs to be authentic to our students needs. The dialogue between faculty and administrators must have as central components the clarity of roles and cost of decisions we make. The Provost mentioned several accomplishments: a very effective and dynamic council of deans; increase in creativity and entrepreneurship; program innovation, bringing a logical framework with external partnerships to create new opportunities and solutions to bring to the community; enhancing research and productive activity on campus; faculty support and equity; strengthening connections and work with student affairs and development; investing in and
approval of new good programs; becoming part of MCube; revision of FYE by Kathy Miller and her committee.

Regarding the budget, he recognized that there was a structural deficit in the CAS budget and he is working with the deans and vice-chancellor for budget and finance to fix it. Provost Knerr indicated that online education needs to use provocative and creative innovation. We are engaging in conversations to make sure our strategies and philosophy in recruiting and retaining faculty produces a diverse and inclusive campus. We are also working on improving advising and restructuring the Student Success Center.

The floor was then open for questions from the Faculty.

J. Lawand was disappointed that so much time had been spent on an academic affairs update that we could have received by other means, when the item on the agenda was "a frank discussion with the Chancellor", and that now there were barely 30 minutes left for that discussion.

B. Smith requested that faculty have access to organizational charts of the university. The chancellor said she will update them on the website and send them to C. Douglas for distribution.

E. Newberry asked for update on the ad-hoc committees the Provost had called for. He indicated it was ambitious and he did not realize how much work was going on those areas. He has put on hold the shared governance committee since there is already conversation taking place at different levels. With regards to the promotion committee, he believes it is better to channel it through the council of deans for future discussion.

S. Lippert commented on the angst expressed by students in light of the election results and how this relate to diversity on campus. The chancellor indicated ways that we have for open discussion, including the campus climate study, safe environment for communication with students, a vigil Wednesday night, and more conversational meetings in the works.

J. Sanders asked what is the best way to communicate with her? She mentioned email, and if a meeting is needed, to please coordinate time with Dru in her office. The Provost indicated he is also open to any meeting requests.

H. Wehbe-Alamah asked the chancellor what can she tell faculty who has concerns about approaching the chancellor for fear of repercussions. The chancellor said that the faculty has the safest place on campus, and she lets the Provost guide any discussion. C. Douglas mentioned that you can approach him and Faculty Council and we will work with the Chancellor and Provost.

H. Laube said it is about staff fear more than faculty fear. The chancellor indicated they should talk to HR so they can address any problem. H. Laube indicated that there exists a tension on staff members due to all the changes the chancellor has implemented. We perceive a resurrection of silos rather than a community as we have been working in the past. The chancellor said that she has position people where they are successful, even if it meant changing the position. The chancellor indicated she is right-sizing and right-positioning people in upper level administration, and understand this brings fear.

A. Lutzker brought the Student Success Center as an example of the silo perception. The SSC is changing policies without faculty input. The Provost mentioned that connection with faculty and staff are important and that we will get to a more stable point in the near future. The chancellor
said that students have been asking for better success and career centers. She has worked on student success all her life, and since retention has not gone up in the last three years, changes needed to be done.

H. Siepke asked that rather than announcements, we are lacking more conversations about ideas, goals, and current projects. As a faculty we do not get report of the faculty committees working with administration, and there was no communication on the planning of changes on personal and unit structures prior to its implementation. The chancellor said that early conversations freaks out people, and there needs to be a balance. E. Newberry suggested to have a site for logs of updates on the different works of the groups working with administration, like the Strategic Plan, and the Student Success Center.

H. Wehbe-Alamah asked FC to ask the Chancellor to come to the Governing Faculties meeting at the beginning of next semester to communicate her vision. S. Lippert commented that she is not opposed to the idea, but “access build trust”, and we should emphasize open forums rather than the information approach.

C. Douglas said we will invite the chancellor to the governing faculty meeting in the Winter. C. Thomas said it would be helpful for faculty to know the top leadership team. In the past we knew who to call for problems, but now we are unfamiliar with the leadership team. We should reestablish those personal contacts, suggesting maybe EOs to come to department meetings.

E. Newberry said that the coffee meetings with the Chancellor are good and should continue. The chancellor asked that faculty put a bug on her eras about what they want to talk at those meetings. She has to answer to many other constituents, but do not let communications issues or her actions to get in the way of our mission of success with students.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo Alfaro
Secretary Faculty Council