Faculty Council - Minutes of October 24, 2018

Location: 320 TL Library Director’s Conference Room

Present: Emily Newberry (Chair), Sy Banerjee, Marilyn McFarland (AAAC), Aviva Dorfman, DJ Trela, James Schirmer (Secretary/Chair-Elect), Cathy Miller (CAC/BSP), Adam Lutzker, Suzanne Selig, Judy Haefner, Ricardo Alfaro (Past Chair)

Absent: Mickey Doyle

Meeting brought into session at 904am

Minutes of October 10, 2018, approved by acclamation

Chair update
E. Newberry reached out to President Schlissel about the search process for the next chancellor, AAAC chair Vickie Larsen about the course evaluation process, and to Senate Assembly representatives about the charge of the Tri Campus Committee. Despite not much new information, Faculty Council appreciated these attempts at clarification.

Recap of October 19 meeting of governing faculty
E. Newberry summarized the meeting, noting it was mostly discussion of the possibility of standing committee documentation. Faculty present were in favor of working documents for committees to provide to new ex officios as well as to educate new committee members. C. Miller asked if standing committee documentation would be more detailed that a given committee’s charge; E. Newberry replied that, ideally, the documentation would build upon code language, emphasizing additional functions, a committee’s specific work, and its reliance on a chair.

E. Newberry revisited the campus climate study at the governing faculty meeting, emphasizing the need to address issues beyond those involved with the current chancellor. E. Newberry also provided Faculty Council with new information: the Deans are looking at the climate study and will put together a response, although there is uncertainty as to when this work began or who charged them with it. S. Selig related prior instances of other groups working in response to the campus climate study and/or strategic planning and stressed the importance of improving
coordination and avoiding duplication, adding that David Luke, Director of the Intercultural Center, will be reconfiguring a university-wide diversity council. E. Newberry replied that she will touch base with relevant groups, including the Women’s Commission, David Luke, Marge Murray-Wright, and others.

Faculty Council discussed the AAAC report given by V. Larsen at the October 19 governing faculty meeting, mainly the issue of responsibility for preliminary degree audits. A. Lutzker noted the problem of non-binding audits and how these may provide a false sense of security for faculty. A. Dorfman stressed that if the software (DegreeWorks) performed as needed, there would be no discrepancy between faculty and Registrar audits. A. Dorfman also noted the lack of faculty control over conferring the degree and that primary responsibility for degree audits should remain with the Registrar and that AAAC should work with that office to continue preliminary degree audits across the university. A. Dorfman questioned the Registrar’s authority in certain actions, identifying both preliminary degree audits and the committee to consider late drop/withdrawal decisions as part of a larger pattern of naming and solving problems without faculty input. E. Newberry will bring up these related concerns at a future meeting with Kristin Hottenstein, VC for Enrollment Management.

Faculty Council considered the memo and policy related to students declaring a major at 54 credits. Per M. McFarland, the policy sounded reasonable to AAAC, but various members of Faculty Council took issue with the poorly written memo’s contradictory language. Again raised was the issue that problems continue to be solved by upper administration without real consultation of faculty and students. DJ Trela noted that, as an office, the Registrar holds certain legal responsibilities and that while faculty would like the widest possible consult, faculty should also respect the office as far as what it is legally required to maintain. A. Dorfman appreciated the safeguarding of the value of a UM-Flint degree, but clarified that when it comes to imposing policy, there could be better implementation if in coordination with faculty and students. Faculty and the Registrar share a valued interest in making sure the preliminary degree audit is correct.

**Standing committee documentation**

Faculty Council discussed its own approach to standing committee documentation with the idea to create and modify a document that would serve as a guide for both the council and all other university-wide standing committees. Various members suggested internal document creation and external template creation, agreeing both should include purpose, function, structure, meetings, and procedure- and context-dependent actions. E. Newberry will create and circulate a Google Doc for
council members to edit and discuss at a future meeting.

Expectations for/of next chancellor
Faculty Council weighed the possibility of brainstorming expectations for and of the next chancellor. Discussion subsequently covered procedural questions as well as prior documents that might already communicate expectations, including the campus climate study. Faculty Council ultimately decided to wait and respect the process, with J. Haefner noting that while it may be important to communicate that council members are paying attention, no one will interfere in something that needs to be handled and should be handled by President Schlissel.

Next governing faculty meeting
J. Schirmer will send out save-the-date notice about November 30.

CAC/BSP update
C. Miller shared that there was a brief meeting with ex officios in which they went through budgets and came up with questions for the next meeting. C. Miller also noted that most units are on target and within proper framework.

Matters arising
A. Lutzker shared that when the economy endured its most recent crash, there was also a birth rate crash and that the latter has not recovered. Having already suffered a regional economic decline, UM-Flint and other universities of its tier level will face a sector-wide enrollment crisis in the late 2020s. DJ Trela noted that the fiscal skills of the next chancellor will be critical, given that UM-Flint is facing enrollment stagnation or decline. S. Selig suggested engaging President Schlissel in conversation about vision, given these external pressures and challenges in UM-Flint’s unique future.

S. Banerjee asked about an update on the HR audit report and its alignment with faculty concerns. R. Alfaro replied that Faculty Council requested a copy of the HR audit once finalized, but there has been no reception. E. Newberry requested a summary of the audit in September, but there was no response.

Meeting adjourned at 1044am