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USU FACULTY SENATE- FACULTY FORUM MINUTES
NOVEMBER 3, 2014
Taggart Student Center Auditorium

Doug Jackson-Smith, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Introduction

Doug provided an overview of what is the Faculty Forum:

The Faculty Forum is convened in lieu of the regularly scheduled November meeting of the Senate. This annual scheduled meeting of the Faculty Forum is open to all faculty members to attend and speak, with the exception of the President of the University, the Provost, the presidential appointees, deans and department heads, or the student members of the Senate, unless specifically requested by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Forum...Participants may discuss subjects of current interest, question and debate any policies and procedures, and formulate recommendations for consideration by the Faculty Senate...The Faculty Forum Executive Committee sets the agenda for the November meeting...The agenda includes all items raised by the petition(s) of faculty, together with items deemed pertinent by the Executive Committee. (Code Section: 402.9.1 & .9.2)

Doug asked anyone who is not a faculty member, or who is a faculty member with a primarily administrative appointment to leave.

Doug quickly reviewed progress on topics/suggestions made in the 2013 Faculty Forum

- **Post Tenure Review.** The discussion is continuing. The Faculty Senate rejected the formal Task Force proposal that was discussed at FF last year, but decided it was important to continue the work on the issue to explore ways to improve the code. The Senate has discussed and provided guidance on many aspects of a possible new process. The Faculty Senate President recently appointed a workgroup which is currently working to draft a new process and the full senate could be debating the overall ideas by this December or January.
- **More frequent reviews of administrators.** In working with the Provost's office a three year regular evaluation schedule has been established and will be administered through the IDEA system. The results of the reviews will be made available to faculty in each of the units involved.
- **Faculty voice in university governance.** Efforts are being made to raise awareness of the need for administration to route issues affecting faculty through appropriate Faculty Senate standing committees. Policy issue involving other levels of the Code (100,200, and 300 level policies) should be vetted with faculty groups prior to taking these policy changes through the system.

Forum Discussion Items:

- **Discussion of policies related to guns on USU campuses**

Background information (Doug). Recently, a speaker invited to address the student body during the Common Hour received credible threats of violence on campus. As a condition of her coming to make the speech, she requested that USU make the venue a gun free area. Because of State Law, USU was not able to accommodate her request and the speaker subsequently canceled her speaking engagement. We invite questions and are seeking input from faculty about their own experiences and suggestions related to this issue. We have asked representatives of the university to be available to answer factual questions later this hour if faculty would like them to be invited in.

Faculty discussion and comments:

- Doug attended a meeting with university administrators shortly after the incident here on the Logan campus and understands that the University's hands were tied because of State law. The option of creating a gun free area was not available. This is not only a question that affects USU. I've talked with other senate presidents across the state about this issue.
- We will never have consensus on the issue as a faculty; it might be useful to do a survey to gauge what the majority feels.
 - Is it possible to survey the faculty on this issue?
- These types of threats constitute censorship through violence. Gun control looks a lot like prohibition, which didn't work very well, and 2nd amendment rights need to be protected as well.
 - What is the solution for protecting free speech when such threats of violence occur?
- If state law does not allow for a gun free space on campus, is there any speaker for whom federal law would allow a gun free area? Is there any instance where federal law would trump state law?
 - Later we were told that Secret Service was able to screen for weapons when a Supreme Court Justice came to campus
- A letter was composed in response to the recent events and 200 signatures were gathered which brought media attention to the gun issue. Any faculty with experience with this issue or faculty who have changed teaching practices because of this issue are encouraged to share information about this with one of the authors of that letter. There are many players involved with a powerful voice in the state, and this brings about opportunities for debate about whether guns can be controlled on campus.
- Some distance campuses have no USU security force on campus. They have to call their local police department if they see a gun on campus. The police response is typically that there is nothing they can do unless the person does something illegal with the gun.
 - Are faculty able to do anything at all if someone walks into their classroom with a gun? What options do they have?
- In 1992 an activist group put a firebomb in a faculty members' office. The intent was to cause mayhem. You can't tell by looking at a person if they are good or bad. It is not likely that the state is going to change what it allows us to do. My reading of state law is that it is not illegal to open carry on campus, it just has to be unloaded. Concealed weapons by law must remain concealed.
 - So what are we legally able to do as a faculty if someone comes in with a weapon?
- Tomorrow is Election Day. If we want new policies, we need to change Utah's legislature.

We invited a guest to answer questions about the politics surrounding this issue. There is firm opposition to creating gun-free campuses in the legislature. Any efforts to change policy would only involve very modest and reasonable reforms, but even these have little legislative support. To be effective, any push for more options would also have to be instigated by the entire higher education system, not a single school.

We also asked another guest to help faculty better understand state law and campus policies regarding guns. In answer to questions from faculty, we learned that concealed weapons must remain concealed at all times, and anyone carrying an openly visible weapon that is perceived as threatening in the eyes of a reasonable observer would be confronted and asked to leave. When police are called about someone seeing a (usually concealed) weapon on campus, they verify if the person has a CW permit and educate the student on the need to keep the gun concealed. All of the students so far have complied and they have never been called back to the same person twice. If faculty on regional campuses see a weapon, they may contact local authorities to handle perceived gun law violations on campus. By state law, faculty are not allowed to ask students if

they have a concealed carry permit. Only law enforcement can ask, a state employee or official cannot ask. Since we are state employees we are considered state officials. The only time the state law would be superseded in creating a gun free zone for high profile speakers would be if the Secret Service was involved (as happened when Justice Scalia spoke at USU recently). It was also noted that recent campus shootings have occurred on gun free campuses. Persons who intend to harm others may do it regardless of what the policy or law is. At the same time, having citizens with guns get involved in a shooting incident can complicate the work of police (who won't know who are the 'good' or 'bad guys').

Open Agenda – comments and questions from the faculty on any topic

(Roughly 3 minutes per speaker, 10 minutes per topic unless we vote to extend discussion)

A faculty senate member shared several issues that had been brought to him by colleagues for possible discussion in the forum. Among these were suggestions that:

- A position be created for a full time faculty advocate,
- We seek to expand compensation by adding free tuition for dependents of faculty,
- We change 400 code to allow appointment of temporary replacements on P&T committees when members are on sabbatical leave (currently not allowed, but it appears to have been done), and
- We expand availability of TedX tickets for faculty.

In response to the faculty advocate suggestion, it was mentioned that the AFT committee is about the only resource faculty currently have and this is not their primary purpose. Faculty senate leaders also regularly get approached by individuals concerned about possible code violations (which often get addressed informally). A few years ago we had a 'Code Compliance Committee' that consisted of faculty senate presidents, and several complaints or concerns were investigated. Perhaps we can create something more formal or enshrine it in code? An advocate would be particularly useful in keeping abreast of 300-level code changes coming out of the business side of the university. It would be nice to have more say over the other areas of code.

Response to the free tuition for dependents included a suggestion that this also be extended to sons and daughters-in-law. Another person commented that they would hate to see the addition of this benefit replace actual salary increases.

Regarding appointments to P&T committees for sabbatical leave, another faculty member commented that in this age of electronic communications, there really should not be a need to replace committee members who are on sabbatical (who could call in or join via web conferencing software).

Changing topics, one faculty member noted their desire to see more humanists on university committees and councils. The focus on quantitative data and analysis does not always match everyone's way of thinking. For example, it seems that SCH's are more important than they used to be. Someone heard that there is an initiative by the Provost Office for new hires to be based on student credit hours. More broadly, humanists and humanist concerns often capture issues of values and meaning that are not as likely to be represented by social and natural scientists.

Adjournment

The Forum was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.