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Faculty Senate Committee Minutes September 5, 2023

Utah State University

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MINUTES

Call to Order - Maureen Hearns
Approval of Minutes – May 1, 2023
Minutes approved as distributed.

University Business - Elizabeth Cantwell, President | Larry Smith, Provost
President Cantwell – She will review the topics of what is being shared each meeting. She would like the senators to consult with their colleagues across the university and find matters that we can work on together – looking for multi-disciplinary efforts. Looking at changes that USU and other state institutions are seeing with the change of the State Board of Regents. Had 18 board members and everyone was affiliated with a specific institution. The board has been pared down to 8-10 of which none have experience in higher education. These members are not there for a political future, but they have a desire to assist and help the Utah System of Higher Education. President Cantwell was selected by the previous board but will now be working with the new board. The president and university are adjusting to things that are not quite clear yet. There will be less in the weeds and more action. Really nice right now to see how calm it is here. Arizona is 10 years down the line with political and economic issues. Is Utah and USU ready to be catapulted into the future? The institution is creating a handbook for the USU Board of Trustees. This will be shared with the Faculty Senate by President Cantwell. She prefers to participate as a member of the university community. Question of students harassing faculty. President Cantwell wants to see what is happening and know if there is an institutional policy in place or do, we need to have one regarding that issue. Looking at ad hoc committees but does not want them to be in individual colleges. Let us do this as an institution. What are examples of politicized education. Critical race and DEI are example. These are associated with the question of is higher education important. We must produce data and be prepared to defend what we are doing and articulate what we represent. We need to demonstrate the capacity to thrive in this world and show our students how to do the same. Faculty governance should play a role in the governance of an institution of higher education. Faculty is elected to represent their colleagues within the academic enterprise. This is a partnership between faculty and the administration. President Cantwell feels that faculty governance is not one that we need to mess with. It appears that USU is doing well in this aspect. Policies are great but they only work when they are followed. They need to be constructed so that they are followable. They must also be reviewed on a regular basis. Will be bringing Diana Sabau to the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Provost Smith – Welcome to everyone to the new academic year. Spent a lot of time this summer in reflection. As the provost looked back on last year, he met with faculty several times to talk about some controversial things. This is a source of pride for the provost. He appreciates the fact that faculty felt safe to come and talk about virtually anything. Created a to do list for the provost office for this coming year. Graduate support is really the number one issue that needs to be looked at and addressed. Reached out to the President of the U of U to explore a unified approach for the research institutions in this area. Looks forward to working with the senate presidency.
Faculty Senate Business - Maureen Hearns | John Ferguson | Grant Cardon
Remind senators that join via Zoom that they can use the raise hand emoji if they have any questions.
John Ferguson – Faculty senate statewide group met this last summer. Going to take a more active role with the legislature and governor’s office. This is part of the representation role. Met with the governor’s office and several people at USHE. What we saw last year in the legislature is coming back. Especially DEI, it will be a little more stringent. Look at how we message things. Some of the things that are said in public need to be looked at. It matters how we represent Utah State University. Messaging and images are being seen and transmitted. The legislature is looking for data and they fully intend to use that data. Legislators may be looking at data that may not be correct for our daily living. Make sure that we are clear and consistent in our messaging. Tomorrow from 3:30 – 5:00 pm the Faculty Senate will sponsor a President Cantwell Meet and Greet for the faculty.

Information
Faculty Senate Committee Assignments - Maureen Hearns
It is the faculty senator’s responsibility to talk with their colleagues to hear their voices and then to bring issues/concerns to the senate. We are the representative body of the faculty. Ask how you can communicate better with the faculty in your individual colleges.

Periodic College Reporting - Maureen Hearns
Allow colleges to report back to the senate with anything that is happening in the colleges. This will be an open line item.

Reports
Empowering Teaching Excellence Annual Report - Travis Thurston | Neal Legler
Added a lot of new teaching strategies. Recently added dealing with disruptive classroom behavior. Developing AI tools to bring into the teaching world. Beefing up course and program designs. Continuing to publish the journal on empowering teaching excellence. Just published two new books in the open access series.

Old Business
Committee on Committees Nomination - Maureen Hearns
Need a nomination for the Committee on Committees. Opening nominations now. John Ferguson nominated Susan Cogan. Susan Cogan has accepted the nomination and will be the third member of CoC.
Motion to close nominations made by Grant Cardon. Seconded by Denise Stewardson. Nominations closed.

Task Force Updates (Divestment, IRB, Term Faculty) - Maureen Hearns
Last year we had three task forces that were looking at divestment, IRB and term faculty. The chairs are being contacted and asked to bring updates back to the faculty senate.

New Business
Faculty Code 405 original | track changes | final (1st Reading) - John Ferguson
Rewriting all faculty code. Make sure our practices align with code. Already completed 401-404. Of all the code sections these next four are going to be the most complicated. Code 405 needs to be broken up and simplified. The only thing left in 405 are items that pertain to all faculty members. Codes 406-407-408 will now pick up all the other policies from 405. Welcome to make comments but we need an up or down vote. This is a first reading and the updates/tweaks will be taken back to PRPC.
Motion to move code 405 back to the Dean’s Council was made by Matt Bunnell. Seconded by Rose Judd-Murray. Sent to Dean’s Council.

Adjourn: 4:16