
Absent: Ayoob, Bauer, Floyd, Fraker, Gehl, Harris, Hyndman, Lindemann, Newhouse, Ostrom, Owen, Rautman, St. Arnault, Smith, Wildman, Wilson, Wolfson

The meeting began at 3: 20 p.m. with a full quorum present.

Approval of Agenda:
The agenda was approved as distributed. The President noted the Provost was delayed and will give comments when he arrives.

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes of October 17, 2006 were approved as distributed.

President’s Comments:
The President reported she had just returned from a meeting with the Council for Competitiveness in Washington, DC. There was discussion about the recent elections and the possibilities on changes in financial aid, the reauthorization of the farm bill and additional research dollars and competitive dollars for agricultural bio-economy related research. There is a mandate from both parties that we need to move forward on and a number of key issues. Locally, we had the election of two new Trustees who take office January 1, 2007. The President noted that the experience to-date with Trustees Cook and Porteous have been extraordinarily gracious. The Proposition 5 which was the guaranteed funding for Higher Education and K through 12 was defeated. The Higher Education community had become very concerned about the overall effect of that Proposal on the entire structural budget of the State. The other important action was related to Proposition 2, the MCRI Initiative. The outcome was not surprising given the poll going into the election. This result is of great concern to MSU and to the State. In an economy that is struggling there are many misconceptions as to what is meant by affirmative action. MSU is an institution that has historically reached out to populations
across the State who were disenfranchised from higher education. Historically MSU has worked very hard, prior to permissive laws, to have an inclusive society so that this value was reflected in every county of the State. This is a fundamental value and will not change with the passing of the Proposal. We will continue to have a dialogue and conversations about this important issue.

Provost’s Remarks:
Provost Wilcox commented that this time is an interesting point in the year when all of us are tested, as the semester is closing in on us and a busy time. The Provost acknowledged members who were present and their commitment to shared governance. The Provost noted that there were some impressive and sustaining values at the University. The MCRI was a bump in the road. Over the last two and a half years the Women’s Advisory Committee to the Provost was charged to do a survey of the campus climate, particularly for the women faculty and staff on campus. The survey was completed last spring and the group has been analyzing the data and making recommendations. Parallel with this survey, the University participated in a National survey of climate called COACHE. The National survey of junior faculty allowed the University to see how MSU compared to other universities in terms of campus climate. The data from these two surveys provides a sense of opportunities that we need to address regarding campus climate. The Provost announced that Cathy Trower, one of the key individuals in developing the National survey and in analyzing the data, will be on campus January 20, 2007 and will host a public meeting.

Executive Committee Chairperson’s Remarks:
Professor Potchen reported that there was some contention at the last Board of Trustees meeting. He noted that in the tradition of academia, our strength is in our diversity and we will seek to continue this. Professor Potchen stated that he had spoken out at every opportunity in favor of retaining and enhancing the diversity of our faculty. He reported that a request has come to ECAC from the Retirees Association that they have an opportunity to be included on Faculty Council by having one or two representatives with voice only. This request has been referred to the UCAG. The Voice Implementation Committee (VIC) has been working and moved a long way in trying to move to closure. There are a number of reports on the Task Force Groups today.

Discussion Period with President Simon re: Faculty Voice Task Force 2 Report (Administrator Review) and Faculty Voice Task Force 3 Report (Program Review):
The President identified some issues regarding the Task Force 2 Recommendations. The overall goals of transparency and expanded faculty participation are goals supported by the President and Provost. One of the concerns embedded in Task Force 2 is the timeline and frequency of these kinds of reviews and what is to be assessed at different times. For example, if one thinks about a five year review for a Dean or Department Chairperson, you expect long term objectives from an administrator that recognizes you and will see
the results over a long period of time. There are long term objectives that are integral to the leadership role of an administrator. The question is how best to think about those and that is one of the reasons that five year reviews are a part of the framework. The question is what constitutes a good “temperature taking” at periods of time. An alternative might be half way through this process, a reasonable time to take the temperature so you do not have administrators only dealing with short term objectives and forgetting to address the more difficult things to move the unit forward. What would be the focus for a mid term review? If there was a mid term review, what would be a legitimate set of smaller activities that would be the focus for an annual review? The question is how to differentiate the areas to review at midterm and the annual review.

The security and retention of data proposed is longer than any set of data currently collected so it seems out of balance. There are challenges in the instrument development process. There are concerns about online forms for administrators just as the concerns of faculty about online SIRS forms. Typically in a 360 evaluation process the focus is on improvement and not assessment. In order to have the improvement there is an interesting tension between a 360 evaluation process which is proposed in the recommendations and the openness of the outcome of that process to all concerned. The question is how does that openness beyond the unit facilitate the 360 evaluation for improvement, or does it harden peoples’ positions as people have to defend themselves publicly against allegations. This assumes there is the same openness for the principles of 360 evaluations in the name of transparency for Department Chairs and Deans. Are there unintended consequences in terms of the boldness and the change necessary to continue to have academic improvement, for example, to handle difficult budget situations and personnel situations?

The President noted she wanted the opportunity to express some of the concerns and consider suggestions from faculty before being more definitive. Provost Wilcox believes there are ways to increase communication and conversations on the five year review and maybe the mid term review. There is a need to develop a communication process. The Provost questioned if the proposed system would have a chilling effect on the recruitment of Chairpersons and Deans knowing that every year there would be a public posting of performance.

The President also commented on the Task Force 3 recommendations. The timeline and rotation of reviews appears to be a seven to ten year rotation instead of a strict seven year rotation which would be more workable and tying it to the accreditation cycle. If there is a reason for an expedited review, the Office of the Provost would initiate the review. This is a provision that would need to be added. One issue is the role of non-departmental units, because there are many programs and activities important to the institution that cut across departments but are not a defined unit. There is a desire to include these types of programs within the scope of review.
The performance metrics that are part of this review, as the document is written, appears that these are stand alone metrics used for program evaluation. There are two forces affecting higher education currently, one is the need for overall accountability measures and secondly the strategic measures identified by the Provost’s Office that connect to the institutional strategic plans. There is support for the periodic and regular program reviews. The concerns are the administrative responsibility and cost of implementation.

The President noted these were her general reactions to the recommendations for Task Force 2 and 3. These comments will be formalized and come back to Faculty Council for moving ahead.

Voice Implementation Committee (VIC) Report:
Professor Weber, member of VIC, reported on the committee’s discussion of Task Force 5 recommendations. Professor Campbell, member of VIC, then reviewed the proposed motion endorsed by VIC and ECAC.

(1) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “voting faculty” who participate in the election of University councils and committees.

(2) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “faculty members” who may be elected to represent their unit in University-level academic governance bodies, except the University Committee on Faculty Tenure.

(3) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “voting membership” of the Academic Senate.

(4) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “voting members” of the Academic Council.

(5) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “voting members” of the Faculty Council.

(6) The “qualifying fixed term faculty” are included with the “voting faculty” who are counted in determining whether a college qualifies for more than the minimum two representatives that each college has on the Academic Council;

Two further Bylaws changes are necessary in light of the changes proposed above:

(7) Fixed term faculty who do not meet the definition stated above for “qualifying fixed term faculty” will only be eligible for election to University standing committees (see (2) above) if this is specifically provided for in their College’s Bylaws.
(8) Under our proposal, fixed term faculty who do meet the definition of “qualifying fixed term faculty” and so are eligible for election to University-level governance committees (see (2) above) will not be eligible for election to the University Committee on Faculty Tenure.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the recommendations. Following a discussion about the pros and cons, the motion was passed.

Discussion of Task Force 1 Report (Proposed Governance Structure):
Professor Weber, member of VIC, reported on the committee’s discussions and deliberations on Task Force 1 recommendations. VIC would like to have discussion on the ideas set forth in the recommendations. Professor Abeles noted that years back, the governance system had a steering committee, five members elected at-large, which channeled issues to the Standing Committees, met with the President and Provost over crucial issues. The criticism of that system was that it short circuited the Standing Committee Chairpersons so it was decided to form an Executive Committee which included chairpersons. Professor Abeles noted that this worked better but was cumbersome. The question became how to work with the President and Provost on an immediate basis. This was solved by having the five at-large members meet with the President and included the faculty liaison members. Task Force 1 recommended that there be eight members elected at-large and would be required to sit on the Standing Committees. This means those eight members would have to have dedication, time and willingness to serve in this manner. Professor Abeles noted the down side that some members would not want to serve and it might also interfere with the autonomy of the Chairpersons as they would not be on the Executive Committee. According to Professor Abeles, there are pluses and minuses to this recommendation. One of the basic issues is whether you could find eight dedicated people to serve on the committee and the standing committees. Professor Weber reiterated the question is which is the better way to go, have a smaller Steering Committee that takes over the larger role or have the current system with a larger group of involved people spreading the roles. Professor Weber indicated VIV wanted a sense of what people were thinking so we can continue to move forward.

Professor Potchen reported that VIC has had many discussions of the Task Force 1 Report and favor anything that will foster increased faculty voice. Some of the process issues were not possible but there is much that could be possible. Professor Potchen shared an approach from VIC that might meet the suggested ideas from the Task Force. The VIC had to take all of these different Task Force Reports and try to make them fit together so there is some semblance of continuing governance. One idea is to have an eight faculty elected at-large on ECAC. In the past the ECAC has been essentially a reactive body and we have not had a proactive possibility where faculty would actively be involved in governance to the effect that they could have influence on the ultimate
destiny of the institution in planning and looking to the future. Professor Potchen indicated we need a proactive component of academic governance. The eight elected at-large members could function as the proactive component. He indicated there is need to continue to have the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees on the ECAC as they are most conversant about the Committees and have voice. The name of the Committee is not an issue.

Professor Abeles reported that Task Force 1 wanted a different way of approaching academic governance rather than maintaining status quo. It was noted that student representatives would be ex officio members. Another issue mentioned was that of power and control by a small number of members. Following further discussion it was decided that materials would be prepared on the Task Force 1 Report and the current governance system for an informed and vigorous discussion at the next Faculty Council meeting.

**Other Business:**
No items.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Wright
Secretary for Academic Governance

Tapes of complete meetings of the Faculty Council are available for review in the office of the Secretary for Academic Governance, 308 Olds Hall, 355-2337.