



**USU FACULTY FORUM
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 2, 2009
Ellen Eccles Conference Center Auditorium**

The Faculty Forum shall convene at and in lieu of the regularly scheduled November meeting of the Senate. This annual scheduled meeting of the Faculty Forum will be 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, and 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 will set the agenda for the November meeting...The agenda will include all items raised by the petitions(s), together with items deemed pertinent by the Executive Committee." (Code Section: 402.9.1 & .9.2)

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm. The purpose of the Faculty Forum is to send information forward to the Faculty Senate that the faculty feels is important. No administration is present at the meeting and no reporters are allowed, in order to create an atmosphere of openness so that faculty members can feel free to speak freely. The Faculty Forum is not a governing body; therefore no business can be conducted during the meeting. The agenda was set by collecting as much information as possible from constituents about issues important to them.

Instances of lack of attention to the Faculty Policy manual (Faculty Code).

- When new positions were open, the lines were not coming back to the faculty for discussion.
- Term faculty (non-tenure track) have been allowed to serve on search committees.
- Academic Freedom (section 403.2) A roll statement template in this college states that they "expect your research activity to be compatible with the mission and goals of the college".
- Tenure and promotion committees have included people who are not of the same or higher rank.
- Hiring procedures are not consistently followed. Examples include: (a) the short list was determined for a dean's position and an administrator moved a candidate from the long list to the short list and the candidate was eventually hired, and (b) hiring procedures in the code do not appear to be followed in USTAR hires.
- The annual cycle of review in the promotion and tenure process can be upset because deans have been told they can interject their opinions at any point during the year.

It was stated that it is a very uncomfortable position for a faculty member to be in to have to go to a department head or dean and tell them they are not following the code. In cases where faculty have done this, they have paid dearly. This has created fear across the campus community that expressing opinions or correcting wrongdoings will put your job in jeopardy. This is not a sign of a healthy institution.

Perhaps some instances of code violations are because of ignorance of the code, but it seems the more serious problem is when the administrators know their actions are not in line with the code.

Faculty members need to pay attention to the code. Administration will push the code as far as possible. If faculty sit on their hands and do not stand up for the code, then they get what they deserve. They should challenge violations and not be afraid to stand up and let people know it is not acceptable. Faculty members need to understand that when you have a dean that is willing to violate the code at any time,

you need the code to protect you. If they allow the code to be watered down, everyone suffers as a faculty. Faculty Senate and all of the committees need protect and enforce the code.

The question was raised as to what enforcement mechanisms exist for resolving code violations. The code does not specifically talk about enforcing the code. There is a senate committee, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, to deal with code violation issues in the form of grievances and sanctions. The problem is that anonymity is impossible if a faculty member files a grievance.

A motion was made that USU Faculty Senate participate in an annual review of high-level administrators. Because no business can be conducted during the forum no vote could be taken, however the issue was open for discussion. Other institutions include the faculty in their review of administrators and feel it is a "reasonable and useful method in insuring institutional health". An Executive Committee member committed to bring the issue forward to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for discussion and possible placement on the Senate agenda and forwarding to the appropriate committees for action. Faculty members are encouraged to contact their senate representative with their concerns and issues for debate and discussion in the Faculty Senate.

Furlough structure and budget cuts.

Section 401.9.4 of the faculty code states that the faculty role includes participation in decisions relating to budget. The faculty to large measure have not been involved in the recent budget cut decisions. It is questioned if how the budget issues have been handled are really in the best interest of the university.

It was requested that the Senate look at the proliferation of administrative positions at the university, as it seems that even during the years of budget cuts, administration continues to grow.

Concerns about the Budget Reduction Committee were raised that they had major decision-making power about the positions that have been cut or reduced and for those cuts approved for next year. It was questioned if they had enough information about what each program, department and college need. Questions asked were; what criteria is the committee using to make decision about faculty lines, is the committee a temporary or permanent committee, and what input can faculty have to the committee about their decisions. It was suggested that at the next Faculty Senate meeting, that these questions be asked of the President and Provost.

In the President's State of the University Address, he stated that furloughs would be used again in the future as a budget savings device, yet when the March furlough was announced he stated that furloughs should be used only in an emergency. Several concerns were raised over a graduated furlough system proposed by the President including if it aggravates salary compression issues and the fairness of breaking points in the graduated system. Considering these issues, perhaps a percentage system would be better.

Concerns expressed included whether a creation of a school of the arts is a wise decision given the current budget climate of the university. Other faculty stated that this has come forward as a result of a large donor gift to the university.

A faculty member stated that if future furloughs were enacted on days when the students were supposed to be having class, it would send a stronger message to the legislature, even though cancelling instructional days may jeopardize university accreditation.

Strategies for increasing diversity.

A faculty member stated that more should be done to promote diversity among the faculty. This is an important issue and necessary to provide role models for students. Faculty Senate could do more to try and train search committees in this area.

Sense of being valued as faculty members.

It is felt by some that the work done by tenure and promotion committees is irrelevant because the Central Committee will make an original decision regardless of what the committee recommends.

A faculty member expressed that all the issues on the agenda are part of a more global issue. While not completely universal it is believed to be quite common that there is a diminished sense of involvement and feeling valued in the university over all, and this should be the message sent to the administration. The faculty also needs to stay solution focused and offer solutions to the issues presented.

Open forum – other topics of interest from faculty members.

A faculty member stated that a vote of no-confidence could be taken among faculty without passing thru the Faculty Senate for any member of administration on campus.

It was expressed that the faculty has the right and responsibility under shared governance to be part of the university. The Faculty Senate needs to take a more active role and ask more questions and demand more answers of the administration.

A faculty member asked if the existence of a one-day faculty forum undermines the purpose of the Faculty Forum and if the Faculty Senate would feel as if it had more authority if the faculty were meeting as a whole more regularly. More venues for open discussion need to be provided.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.