

University Academic Senate Grand Valley State University

March 28, 2008

PRESENT: John Bender, Matt Boelkins, Lee Copenhaver, Sigrd Danielson, Gayle Davis (ex officio), Kurt Fanning, Roger Ferguson, Rob Franciosi (Chair), Julie Garison, Joe Godwin (ex officio), Gabriele Gottlieb, Jennifer Gross, Richard Hall (for Yatin Bhagwat), Robert Hendersen, Hugh Jack, Jon Jellema (ex officio), Paul Keenlace, Brian Kingshott, Sharon Leder, Nancy Levenburg, Jean Martin, William Morison, Kristine Mullendore (Vice Chair), Harvey Nikkei, John Peck (for John Stevenson), Ross Reynolds, A. Scott Rood (for Charles Baker-Clark), Ellen Schendel, Steven Schlicker, Robert Schoofs, Gary Stark (ex officio), Paul Stephenson (for Soon Hong), Kathleen Underwood, Deana Weibel, Roger Wilson (for David Bair)

GUESTS: Teresa Beck, Linda Masselink, Diane Rayor, Curtis Smith, Yan Yu

Called to order at 3:05

Agenda Items	Discussion	Action / Decisions
1. Approval of Agenda	The agenda of March 28, 2008 was reviewed.	The agenda of March 28, 2008 was approved as presented
2. Minutes approval	Review of Minutes of January 18, 2008.	The minutes of January 18, 2008 were reviewed and approved as amended
3. Report of Chair	<p>a) The Chair noted that he was aware that CLAS has not finished its election process yet and he encouraged all senators to encourage their colleagues to consider serving in various positions at both the college and university levels.</p> <p>b) The Chair reported that UAS will meet on April 4, April 11 and April 18. Vice President for Inclusion and Equity Jeanne Arnold will attend the April 18 senate meeting and make a brief presentation.</p> <p>c) The Chair reported that a number of Final Plans are coming forward, including the Doctor of Nursing Practice, which is a high priority proposal. ECS will deviate from its normal procedures by distributing all material concerning these Final Plans to UAS members before ECS consideration in anticipation of the possibility of ECS approval, as several of the proposals are quite long.</p> <p>d) The Chair reported that he and several other senate members attended a presentation by an architectural firm that specializes in designing contemporary academic libraries and learning centers that was held as part of GVSU's ongoing planning for the construction of a new library building.</p>	

	<p>In response to questions raised from the floor, the Chair reported that the planning process does include technology being integrated throughout the new building and that the presentation he saw also reflected planning for different types of space for different types of learners and learning activities.</p>	
<p>4. Report of Provost</p>	<p>a) Provost Davis reported that Roy Olsson of the State University of New York, where he held a similar position, has been hired as the new Dean of the College of Health Professions. He will start at GVSU in July. b) The state budget still remains unresolved and the university budget will be discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting in April. In the absence of a student representative there was no report</p>	
<p>5. Report of Student Senate President</p>		
<p>6. New Business</p>	<p>a) A summary of the Final Plan for a Major in Chinese Studies, which was distributed earlier and recommended for approval by ECS, UCC and FSBC, was presented by Curtis Smith and Yan Yu. Discussion. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Final Plan for the Major in Chinese Studies and forward it to the Administration for their action with a recommendation to proceed with implementation of the program.</p>	<p>MOTION: The University Academic Senate approves the Final Plan for the Major in Chinese Studies and forwards it to Administration for their action, with a recommendation to proceed with implementation of the program. APPROVED voice vote with 1 abstention</p>
<p>7. Old Business</p>	<p>a) The FPPC Recommendation proposing revisions to the Faculty Handbook's policies regarding the role of the College Personnel Committee, the method to be used to determine if there has been a positive vote on the action under consideration, and the eligibility requirements to vote on personnel actions involving contract renewal, tenure and promotion that was distributed earlier was presented for general discussion. The Chair informed the senate members that no motions or amendments to the proposal would be considered at this meeting. Teresa Beck, Chair of FPPC, presented an overview of material and highlighted the changes to their proposal that were made since the last ECS review. The Chair fielded questions from the floor and the Vice Chair summarized the concerns, questions, and identified "pros and cons" to the proposed change in voting eligibility on the projection screen. This summary is</p>	

8. Adjournment	Appendix A to these Minutes.	
	The meeting adjourned at	
	5.04	pm

March 28, 2008 UAS Discussion

Should only tenured faculty vote on personnel actions involving contract renewal, tenure and promotion?

Questions:

Any thought to smaller change in not having first year faculty vote?

No

Any thought to allowing faculty to abstain and not being a negative vote?

Encourages non-involvement

Can there be different policies according to the Colleges?

University Counsel says that is not a legally defensible position for the university

What has been the record of College Personnel Committees overturning the unit decisions?

Small number

Do our peer institutions have the same emphasis on unit level decisions as GVSU?

Processes vary

Role of use of "abstention" only for first year faculty suggested

Could be explored

Using unit committees to address this were discussed

Problem with units that are very small

It was noted the ultimate authority is with the Appointing Officer (Dean) and that a wide variation in voting patterns by tenure and untenured would be a "red flag" for College Committees and Deans

How many people can say with confidence that all the faculty members are fully informed in their vote? Suggested that it is more often a "gut check" or a personal reaction.

Suggested that the issues raised in the FPPC statement could be addressed in other ways and also need to be addressed in additional ways, even if this policy is adopted

Seidman reports that no one in Seidman is aware of GVSU policy at other institutions

It was noted that the SUNY system does allow this with a slightly different process

Nothing was presented that indicates that the problems identified by the FPPC are represented in a tenure/untenured break? Would like to see the evidence that it is the untenured faculty who are evidencing these problems

FPPC didn't have any numbers; was based on readings about what the system is about and that this proposal is the accepted practice; the anomalous nature of GVSU's approach

Comment from one unit that when untenured involved problems consistently present in decision making process.

Whether the FPPC considered that when talking about untenured faculty not talking about a group that always includes inexperienced faculty and was there discussion about faculty voting at their rank?

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FPPC's discussion was that current policy has embedded in it elements that promote participation by persons who are not informed with the full understanding needed to make these decisions and are subject to political pressures

Does the policy contemplate having participation (voice) even though no vote?

Yes

Question was asked about what is category for determining whether a sufficient number is present to cast a valid vote?

It will be the tenured faculty as the denominator

If this is the number then the numbers deciding would be increasingly smaller?

Yes

Request was made for more information from university Counsel concerning the need for consistency across the Colleges on this policy

University Counsel reaffirmed position when asked

Pros and Cons:

Cons

- Chemistry department has found the input from untenured faculty in their decision making processes has improved the quality of their decisions making
- CCPS faculty present at faculty forum voted unanimously to maintain current policy and HTM has had the same experience that Chemistry reports
- Logical problems with proposal
 - o Doesn't seem how reducing the number of people voting leads to a better decision
 - o If other people are being bullied most likely will be tenured faculty bullying the untenured faculty and to remove untenured faculty leaves the bullies making the decision
- How having voice but no vote will impact negatively in attendance and also impact participation in other decisions making processes
- Being part of the process is very important to educate them even if made uncomfortable
- If bullying and intimidation is a cultural problem not necessarily a personnel problem
- The impact on small departments much different than large ones and they have concerns about revisions and that issue will persist
- Unless there is evidence of asymmetry in bias has problems with this proposal; the conflict of interest issue is always present
- The use of smaller committees by other peer institutions to manage this process from peer institutions not same as GVSU – how do their policies in this regard inform our decision?
- Physics unanimously opposes
- Members have had a vote do not want to be “disenfranchise” and notes it is about more than personnel decisions – also about direction and culture of department
- This is an egalitarian proposal

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- Tenure is important to protect free expression of ideas and that is the most important consideration
- Junior colleagues bring a more “current” culture to the decisions and have a greater stake in the longer term future in a rapidly growing institution that we will lose their valuable contribution

Pros

- Current system allows untenured faculty who have not yet met standards to determine whether or not other more senior faculty have met the standards
- Uncomfortable for the untenured faculty
- In English and in Classics many untenured faculty have expressed discomfort as to their power to vote
- Seidman by a straw poll at Seidman faculty (66 in attendance) senate to unanimously to support the changes and also to encourage voluntary attendance at meeting on personnel action
- Some have seen that the bullying (trading of support) occurs among untenured not among tenured
- Some units using smaller personnel committees and see their reports unanimously rejected by faculty as a whole where no support in materials for that change in position
- Question was raised as to whether or not there is a legal risk to university in having untenured people vote in the process
- Why do we have different ranks if everyone is the “same” – why don’t these “ranks” also apply to determining who can vote? If no value to these differentiations, why have them? Why not have system that promotes true expression of what is valued?

Comments:

- Some of the problems are based in the professional cultures of the different groups
- Consistent policy needed for more than legal reasons – cultural also
- Need to remember that there are more provisions than this in the Faculty Handbook
- Question was raised about whether tenure is in unit or in College and Provost understood that it is in the unit – not certain
- CLAS Committee has discussed this (5 – tenured and untenured); see sense in position but not close to consensus
- Suggested that standard be after first successful review should be able to vote,
- Suggested that there be some sort of mechanisms to solicit more faculty input