



Academic Senate

College of the Siskiyous
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www.siskiyous.edu/academicsenate/

Academic Senate Minutes

Friday, May 3, 2024
12 pm to 1 pm in DLC Rm #3

Attendance:

Voting: Emaly Brann, Michelle Knudsen, Ann Womack, Jayne Turk, Kyle Heath, Ed Kephart, Neil Carpentier-Alting, Thad Wallace, Kirk Thomsen, Jenny Heath, Liz Carlyle, Carly Zeller, Jude Baldwin, Sherice Bellamy, Alison Varty, Tevin Cadola, Adam Groppi, Tim Frisbie, Andrea Craddock, Patrice Thatcher-Stephens, Sarah Kirby, Leigh Moore

Non-voting: Christina Van Alfen

Convened at: 12:06 pm

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

A pre-recorded video of a public comment from Ron Slabbinck was viewed. Ron explained why he and Ann decided to run as Co-Presidents of Academic Senate and need to split the duties and release time. He also explained why they decided to remove their names from the ballot. Ron made a plea for those who participate in today's discussion to assume good intentions, be open to speak and to listen. How we speak is as important as what we say. He concluded with a statement of hope that the passion and wisdom among faculty will translate into improved engagement and communication.

Ann Womack shared advice learned at a workshop on difficult conversations at the ASCCC spring plenary. In difficult conversations it can be helpful to check in before we speak. Does what we want to say add information to the conversation or does it add heat? If offering criticism, try to also provide a suggestion for what you would rather see.

2. ACTION ITEMS

- a) Interpreting the Constitution more broadly to allow for Co-Presidents

The context for the meeting was described, including information provided by ASCCC. The LHE received by the Senate President could be split between the President and Co-President.

What happened that led to Ron and Ann withdrawing from the ballot? There were two primary communication-related issues that led to their decisions to withdraw. Individuals who did not agree with having Co-Presidents expressed their dissent to Andrea but did not engage in conversations with her or directly with Ann and Ron about other possible avenues forward. This was frustrating and counterproductive. The second communication issue occurred during a Senate Exec meeting. The toxic dialogue from one member of Exec made it impossible to have a constructive conversation about future leadership.

COS is a unique Senate of the whole. We are also at a unique time in our history, with many senior faculty stepping down from committee roles before retirement and many junior faculty who are not yet ready to step into leadership roles.

The Senate President receives a lot of criticism. It's not a good fit for everybody and can be a daunting role for individuals to consider stepping into. Having Co-Presidents to share the burden could be helpful.

Sharing the SLO Coordinator role has been really helpful for the Co-Coordinators. It saves time because there is someone to talk through issues with and problem-solve. Similar benefits could be available with Co-Presidents if we can find a way to make it fit with our institution, with appropriate guardrails and a structure that reflects what we want. Co-Presidents would need to be a team, not just two random individuals.

The point of Senate Exec is to have people to talk issues through. The release time could be split between the President and VP. Faculty chose to have a two-year term for the President and a one-year term for the VP. This would be a disregard of our constitution, not a reinterpretation. The constitution could be changed if it is the will of the body.

Faculty seem reluctant to step into leadership roles. The CBA obligates faculty to 5 hours per week of professional obligations. Faculty who are beyond their first year should be stepping into more committee roles. It's not fair for the same small group of people to do all the work on behalf of others.

Faculty are overwhelmed and burned out. Many faculty take on a lot of committee work and overload contracts. The people who tend to step up are already doing so in many other ways.

Forty percent of our current faculty are new and not tenured. Senate Exec may mean sticking your neck out, which could be intimidating for untenured faculty.

There seems to be an implied assumption that if you receive release time, you'll continue to teach your normal class load.

Concern was expressed that Co-Presidents could be played against each other. The "mom and dad issue" of playing faculty in leadership roles against each other already happens frequently. The Senate makes decisions, then they are undermined or ignored.

Co-Presidents should be established through a change in the constitution with clear specifics about how the role would be shared and other defined boundaries.

Senate Exec has a lot of reassigned time that could be distributed among the VP and other Exec members.

It's troublesome when the rules start to be fudged or ignored, or when people feel like they will get in trouble for doing the right thing. This is a campus-wide issue. Co-Presidents might open Senate Exec to manipulation.

Our current administration is good. Andrea feels she can be honest with the President/Superintendent, who has remained supportive. As President, the people who have hurt her the most are her peers.

There is a clear distinction between being passionate and being disrespectful. Sometimes, this becomes evident only afterward, but it is essential to resolve disagreements respectfully. These positions often go unappreciated, particularly when one's passion is teaching rather than pursuing other ambitions. It can be intimidating because those with over 20 years of experience always possess more knowledge. Those with greater knowledge should share it graciously rather than being critical. The current climate makes stepping into leadership highly unappealing.

The ballot only has two at-large candidates. If seats remain vacant, the Senate will need a special election. A list of interested write-in candidates could be distributed, asking people to write them in, or each individual who wants to step up needs to email the faculty and ask to be written in. Voting on this is moot at this point since there are no current candidates wanting to be Co-Presidents.

The majority of the body is not in favor of changing the constitution to allow Co-Presidents.

Jayne Turk moved to interpret the Constitution more broadly to allow for Co-Presidents. Neil Carpentier-Alting seconded. The motion failed.

What changes can be made to the President role to make the position better?

Support was expressed for the role of President continuing to be a two-year commitment. The President can step down early if it's not working out.

Do we want to stop inviting administrators to meetings to help people feel more comfortable? The previous President/Superintendent was adamant that we couldn't have closed sessions, but our current administrators will respect requests to step out of Senate meetings.

Administrators are not being directed to attend Senate meetings. Christina Van Alfen attended today because she understands that the Senate is struggling. It hurts everyone when a group on campus is suffering.

Non-tenured faculty feel more comfortable speaking and voting when not in the presence of their direct supervisor, as they may be approached about their comments or votes later.

Very new faculty sometimes don't have the information they feel they need in order to vote.

Would Andrea be willing to serve for another year? No. That would be a hardship, and she believes that another person is willing to step up.

If we have write-ins, we need to have good participation.

There was a plea for newer faculty to consider serving on a couple of committees. How will faculty know who is interested in being written in? Andrea will communicate, or candidates will communicate via email.

The election must occur next week. If there are vacant seats, we could hold a special election with names listed.

3. GOOD FOR THE ORDER

4. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at: 1:04 pm

Academic Senate Officers:

President: Andrea Craddock
Secretary: Ann Womack
At Large: Tyler Knudsen

Vice-President: Patrice Thatcher
At-Large: Jayne Turk
Past President: Ron Slabbinck

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