

LIX No. 8
Faculty Senate Minutes
November 6, 2024

The Faculty Senate of Southeast Missouri State University met on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, in the Redhawks Room of the University Center. The following Senators were present: Michael Aide, Michael Bezushko, Larry Bohannon, Abram Book, Eric Clements, Jenny Cropp (Chair), Corrie Dudley, Erin Fluegge, Pam Gershuny, Barbara Lamont, Andy Liu, Hayley Love, Kelly McEnerney, Jenna Moore (Chair-Elect), Joe Murphy, Josh Newth, Tomoaki Nomi, Peter Oman, Anthony Scherer, Kyle Schneider, Mike Taylor, Misty Tilmon, and David Yaskewich. Interim Provost Doug Koch and SGA Liaison Sophie Martin were also present. The following alternates were present: Arika Wiggins and Belinda McMurry.

Chair Cropp called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and asked for approval of minutes from the October 23rd meeting. The spelling of the name of one senator was corrected and the minutes were approved as corrected and will be posted on the webpage.

OLD BUSINESS

Motion to approve resolution 25-X SGA Liaison (Second Reading) was made by Senator Taylor and seconded by Senator Bohannon.

The resolution, which opens the opportunity for an SGA liaison role to adjunct faculty as well, was read with changes explained to Ms. Martin by Senator Murphy. With one abstention, the resolution passed, allowing membership to send out a call for interested participants.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to introduce resolution 25-X SmartEvals Calendar Announcement (First Reading) was made by Senator Bohannon and seconded by Senator Murphy.

Senator Love introduced a resolution proposing that the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) set up an automated Canvas calendar notification to remind students to complete their SmartEvals. The reminder would include a single sign-on link, providing each student with one notification rather than multiple class-specific ones. Students would be able to manually dismiss the reminder without completing the evaluation.

Key Points of Discussion:

1. **Alternative Notification Methods:** Senator Schnieder suggested adding the reminder as a pop-up on the student portal or Canvas, which might further increase response rates. Senator Love agreed to look into additional notification options that the software may provide.
2. **Timing Concerns:** Senator Fluegge expressed caution about suspending the rules to expedite passing the resolution, as rushing it might be perceived negatively. Cropp asked if implementation could still occur by the end of the semester if the resolution is passed on November 20th. Senator Love will follow up to determine if that timeline is feasible, if not, this would be implemented in the spring semester.
3. **Impact on Evaluation Authenticity:** Senators Oman and McMurry raised concerns that integrating the reminder into Canvas might make it appear as a course requirement, potentially influencing the honesty of student responses. Senator Oman questioned whether subtle pressure to respond could affect the evaluations' objectivity. It was additionally pointed out that this calendar reminder would not be associated with a specific course.

4. Senator McEnerney noted that responses to evaluations often tend to come from students with strongly positive or negative opinions.

Next Steps: Ms. Martin will present the resolution to the SGA for feedback, and senators were encouraged to discuss it with their departments.

GUEST

Dr. Chelsea McNeely, Director of Early College Programs and Online and Graduate Services, presented on SEMO's new partnership with Archer Education, a firm specializing in online program growth. After previously exploring other Online Program Management (OPM) options, SEMO decided against a traditional OPM model and chose Archer due to its flexible, year-to-year contract and non-revenue-sharing, fee-for-service structure. This arrangement allows Archer to support SEMO's online program growth while gradually building SEMO's in-house capabilities, creating a sustainable model for the future.

Archer's work will focus on four key areas:

- Online Growth Enablement: Archer is conducting a campus assessment to understand SEMO's programs and will return with strategic insights on positioning SEMO in the online market.
- Marketing: Archer will handle marketing for all SEMO online programs, bringing extensive resources beyond what SEMO's previous local agencies could offer.
- Graduate Admissions Support: Archer will assist in connecting prospective graduate students with programs by streamlining the admissions process from initial interest through application, but not post-admission.
- Onward Software: This decision-tree tool will guide students through a personalized inquiry process to ensure they connect with the right programs and staff, leveraging SEMO's degree maps and program coordinators.

In addition, Archer will support reporting, analytics, and technical improvements (e.g., SEO), helping SEMO maximize its marketing investments across targeted areas or "verticals" such as Business, Education, Healthcare, Social Sciences, and Technology. SEMO's aim is to build internal capacity for Archer's services, with Archer committed to training SEMO's staff to eventually take on these functions.

McNeely invited questions on maintaining campus communication about these developments. Faculty suggested possible presentations to groups like the Student Government Association (SGA) and asked about regular updates on Archer's impact, to which McNeely indicated a willingness to provide annual progress reports.

McNeely also reports that SEMO, today, expanded its "Educator's Advantage" program, offering a 20% tuition discount on online programs to educators from partner school districts. Five additional districts—Advance, Bell City, Central R-III (Park Hills), Chaffee, and Gideon—have joined the initiative, allowing their faculty and staff to access this discount. Faculty members were encouraged to help connect other local districts with the program, which aims to improve access to SEMO's online education offerings for teachers.

Chair Report: Chair Cropp reports that the faculty Senate Executive Committee met with the President and the Interim Provost this morning and that the Budget Review Committee (BRC) will meet tomorrow. The Administrative Council meetings were canceled last month and will not take place in November. Erin and others anticipate providing more updates following the budget meeting, where ongoing budget concerns are expected to be addressed. The president has indicated that there should be another update on the Strategic Action Plan before the semester ends, though budget challenges persist.

Rebranding Initiative—SimpsonScarborough, working on the campus rebrand, hopes to launch the initiative next fall. They are currently focused on understanding campus culture and student perspectives to shape the brand strategy. Faculty have been encouraged to provide input on areas where the university excels.

There has been discussion about transferring responsibility for the academic calendar to the registrar's office. Two years ago, Provost Godard suggested this shift, but this sparked ongoing debate amongst the senators about its potential impact on faculty input and decision-making processes for dates like fall and winter breaks. Faculty raised concerns about how dates are currently determined, noting that in some years, there is little to no break between the winter and spring sessions, affecting faculty and students who participate in study-abroad programs. The timing of fall break, midterms, and homecoming continues to be contentious. The lack of advance notice for the football schedule, due to conference shifts as late as January or February, complicates the planning. Senators are concerned that moving fall break earlier could cause scheduling conflicts and additional stress, especially with homecoming events, but there was discussion and strong support for keeping this responsibility within the Faculty Senate.

Ms. Martin noted that SGA has expressed concerns over burnout related to the current alignment of fall break and homecoming and suggested that SGA could benefit from more involvement in these discussions.

Administrative Liaison Report: Interim Provost Koch wants to remind faculty that FFR (Faculty Funding Requests) proposals are due Monday, November 11, and Faculty Mentored Student Research Grants (FMRG) applications are due December 1.

SGA Report: Ms. Martin reports that the SGA has seen an increase in funding requests compared to last year, with at least two or three requests each week, leading to a need for more careful allocation of funds. Additionally, they passed a bylaw reducing the required meetings between Senior Senators and Deans from biweekly to monthly. SGA is also focusing on organizing events and open forums.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs: Senator Love reports that the Academic Affairs committee approved a resolution regarding SmartEvals and discussed curriculum processes across colleges. They are currently working on a resolution containing the academic calendar and preparing a graduation resolution.

During the report, a question arose about the classification of winter courses within the spring course load, which can lead students to exceed the 18-hour maximum, thus requiring advisor approval. According to the undergraduate bulletin, a student who enrolls in more than 18 hours must get advisor approval and a student enrolling in over 21 hours must petition the registrar. Interim Provost Koch noted that this policy might be tied to federal aid, while additional discussion clarified that advisors typically decide on such requests, though faculty advisors may not always be responsive. The committee will look further into the consistency of this policy.

Compensation: Senator Fluegge reports that the Compensation Committee met last week to review their charges and discussed revisions to the sick leave policy, suggesting it should include alternative delivery methods for classes. Erin also reviewed a CTS longevity salary proposal and met with representatives from CTS and PSC to discuss it. The committee plans to meet again next week.

Documents: Senator Bohannon reports that the Documents Committee discussed plans for their charge to research election procedures. He distributed Article 4 on departmental senator elections, along with a request to

gather information on current senator election practices. They are researching these methods and request feedback to return to the Senate. Implementing any changes based on this review would require a constitutional amendment.

Governance: Senator Newth reports that the Governance Committee did not meet this week. They are currently working on finalizing the standing committee and council selection procedures in bill format.

Professional Affairs: Senator McEnerney reports that the Professional Affairs Committee discussed several initiatives. They received a charge to explore ways office hours and certain faculty behaviors impact student success. They aim to draft a statement for the handbook to clarify expectations and accountability.

The committee is also examining non-tenure-track (RNTT) faculty designations, considering options like 3-year contracts for non-probationary faculty, alongside appropriate compensation adjustments. Questions were raised about RNTT involvement in this process, with suggestions to form a subcommittee to ensure RNTT input. Additional topics included the "post-professor" compensation pool, its funding, and its implications for RNTT faculty. Concerns about transparency and representation were discussed, with some senators noting that RNTT faculty contributions to the post-professor pool could be reconsidered. Erin Fluegge will follow up on RNTT merit funding.

Membership: Senator Murphy reports that the Membership Committee did not meet and will expect to discuss the text provided by the Governance Committee this week so that the bill that they are working on can be finalized.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moore: Faculty Social hour is November 15, 5-7pm at Ebb and Flow Fermentations at 11 S Spanish St.

Moore: Oklahoma in the Rust Flexible Theatre on Nov. 14-16 and 21-23 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 16-17 and 23-24 at 2 p.m.

Murphy: Space Week 2nd Lecture Johnson 200 tonight at 6 p.m. "Reflections on the Eclipse"

Murphy: Space Week Astronomy Club hosting trivia night in Rhodes 121 at 6 p.m. Thursday evening.

Murphy: Space Week - Open House at Observatory from 5 to 10 on Friday if the weather cooperates.

Bohannon: taking 27 students to the Missouri State Teachers Association

Fluegge: went to President Godard's inauguration at Indiana State University, he keeps the desk ornament that he was gifted by Senate on his desk

McMurry: had the Build My Future, a construction career day and industry showcase, where they hosted 2196 HS students, 177 educators, and 68 employers filling the Show Me Center on October 8

Cropp: a reminder that it is all of our job to communicate back to our departments with as much information from senate as possible.

Adjournment: Chair Cropp called for a motion to adjourn. Senator Taylor made the motion; seconded by Senator Murphy. The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 20th, from 3-5 pm in the Redhawks Room of the University Center.