

Senate Minutes
Tuesday, April 19th, 2022
3-5pm, ZOOM

Present: Adegoke, Barger, Bethman, Bhat, Boots, Chatterjee, DeSimone, Ferguson, Grieco, Grimes, Hiatt, Hunt, Kador, Keeton, Kilway, Lynch, Mardikes, Myer, Olsen, Riggers-Piehl, Shiu, Thompson, Torres, Turla, Van Horn, Wellemeyer, Wooten, and Zhu.

Excused: Ball and Patterson.

Guests: Nara Newcomer, Lark Lim, Ann Wood, Scott Curtis, Lindy Smith, Crystal Gorham Doss, LaVerne Berkel, Cynthia Flanagan, Brent Never, Christine Poppola, Bob Prue, Brenda Dingley, Laurie Ellinghausen, Susan Hankins, Julia Pluta, Thomas Newby, Tim Nguyen, and Ye Wang.

1. OPENING BUSINESS:

- a. Call to Order & Approval of April 5th, 2022 minutes – Grieco
 - i. Motion passes
- b. Approval of Agenda – Grieco
 - i. Motion passes

2. PRESENTATION:

- a. Proposed changes to UM-System Pension Plan - Eric Vogelweid, UM System Controller (30 minutes; 3:05 – 3:35)
 - i. Vogelweid clarified changes to the UM-System Pension Plan. It's a closed plan now. The policy does not change guaranteed benefit payments. The policy now clarifies ad hoc COLAs. (cost of living adjustments) The policy is attempting to make it transparent how the school contributes to plans.

Q: Do you have a comment on the article from the Columbia newspaper? - Wooten

A: I think there are issues with the tone of the article. It made it seem as if the plan was in danger. But we believe the policy will put the plan in a strong place in the future. - Vogelweid

Q: People depend on that plan, are they still guaranteed their pensions? -Wooten

A: Yes. - Vogelweid

Q: What's the status of taking deductions from people's paychecks? - Shiu

A: This is something related to pensions that we've been working on for years. Overall, our viewpoint is that the employee base participating in the plan continues to shrink. In this labor market, implementing something like that would be challenging. We decided not to move forward with it. - Vogelweid

Q: Forward looking in your model, how far do you project? Why are you linking this to ten year treasury when it's going to be stagnant for the next ten years - Van Horn

A: We did take the policy and run it forward. We modeled it against 100 years of historical data. We were looking at putting the plan into better shape than it was previously. - Vogelweid

Q: Changes to private equity, modifying your portfolio. Is the plan too conservative, given what could be done? How much are you indexing vs actively managing your portfolio? How conservative is your stance in managing the portfolio? - Van Horn

A: We're shifting to a riskier mix than before. But we'll become less risky as the plan matures. We have some of both active and passive management, I'd be happy to provide more details. - Vogelweid

Q: What do you mean by discount rate? - Bhat

Q: Do you mean discounting liabilities? Your chart shows that the 10-year treasury yield has been going down. - Keeton

A: Rising interest rates are helpful in the long run. There's a big gap there that we're starting to fill. We want to make sure the assets are there to pay the benefits. - Vogelweid

Q: Could you speak to faculty about the option to take their benefits out of the program? - Grieco

A: We're looking at contacting employees who have left to let them know what the value of their benefit is and let them know they have the option to withdraw for a present value payment. We can roll it into a current plan or pay them out. Our membership is now limited. It also reduces our investment risks in the future - Vogelweid

Q: Do you plan on sending info out to employees, staff and faculty to eliminate concerns? - Wooten

A: I've been talking with communications. We're debating how to send the info. We're looking at addressing key concerns. - Vogelweid

3. BUSINESS CONTINUES

- a. National Awards Committee Update – Grieco (5 minutes; 3:35 – 3:40)
 - i. There has been an announcement through the conservatory that the committee has worked to successfully nominate Professor Gary Abbot for a Guggenheim Fellowship. Grieco asked to recognize Professor Yi Chen for mentoring the candidate through the process.
- b. Completion of IFC Term due to election of Shiu as Chair-Elect - Grieco (5 minutes; 3:40 –3:45)
 - i. Grieco asked for nominations so that the senate could hold an election. Ideally, we'd like to have faculty with senate experience.
- c. IFC Report – Shiu & Leiter (15 minutes; 3:45 – 4:00)
 - i. Eric Vogelweid reported that the IFC discussed pensions. Information technology updates were discussed at the March meeting. Continued conversations about administrators access to computers. The IFC received updates from the committee on criteria-based salary reductions and the task force on shared governance.

- ii. In the April meeting, the IFC had a productive conversation with president Choi. Choi is interested in having both students and faculty receive prestigious awards. Marsha Fisher informed us of a shift in terms of leave days into paid time off for staff. They're also considering an incentive program for recruiting staff members. We discussed pensions. We had a new chief online learning officer. She is aware of complaints from faculty about lack of communication between her office and the faculty. She's committed to supporting faculty and students over the next two years. Personalized training sessions for faculty. After the previous leader left the department is left with "legacy projects" they need to fulfill.
Comment: IT is aware of the amount of work for chairs to manage their software. We have partners in our outlook. - Grieco
- d. FSBC Report – Olsen (15 minutes; 4:00 – 4:15)
- i. Olsen focused on spring projects of the FSBC, the major issue being lack of information sharing from the administration. Despite requests, Olsen wasn't able to get what the budget is and how it's being allocated. FSBC made a formal request stating that it didn't have the info we need to do its work. FSBC met the new vice chancellor of finance for the first-time last week.
 - ii. Report from outside consultants to review administrative spending. That was presented late last year, but we were not provided with the full report until December. We've been reviewing that over the spring and are preparing our report. We have concerns about the report and need to convey those to the senate.
 - iii. The university has hired a consultant (Huron) to provide a new budget model for the school. We're in the information gathering stage of that. In the fall of 2022 we're implement a new tiered tuition model (which the FSCB did not participate in creating)

Q What's your sense of how the conversations with the consultant are going? - Shiu

Q: Will the consulting group get any/accept any input from faculty? - Van Horn

A: I'm pleasantly surprised with Huron's interest in hearing our concerns. They're genuinely interested in hearing what problems we have with the current model. They also are able to anticipate some of our concerns that we have. - Olsen

Comment: The executive committee met with the firm last week and they were very forthcoming. - Grieco

Comment: That was the first question asked by the Huron representative yesterday. We keep hearing this issue of transparency. I think that's a symptom of the opaque nature of communications with the campus. I also

discussed FNA with them and they are well aware of those concerns as well. - Olsen

Comment: I'm a member of the Faculty Senate Budget Committee, and Erik summed up our current issues well. And I too was fairly impressed with the Huron consultant we met with yesterday. - Lynch

4. DISCUSSION:

a. Proposed modifications to faculty bylaws. Summary of proposed changes followed by discussion – Shiu & Keeton (45 minutes; 4:15 – 5:00)

i. Keeton shared proposed changes to CRR 300.020. The 2 formulas are the same and include 1 at-large senator. Keeton's plan keeps the CRR from needing to be changed with the change of the units. The other proposal does not provide for a change in representation if numbers grow. This plan specifies how to deal with this scenario and keep the senate manageable.

ii. Shiu shared proposed changes to CRR 300.020. He noted the overlap in plans.

Comment: When we talk about unranked NTT, that includes post docs. - Kador

A: I think they have to have a .75 appointment in the CRR - Riggers Piehl

A: It's true they have to be full time. I'd have to look at how post docs fit into that. - Keeton

Q: Is the plan that the NTT at large is that the only NTT representation that is allowed in that model? Or, can the units elect NTTs if they choose to have that as one of two have them as one of their representatives?" - Turla

A: The voting doesn't change. The at-large is guaranteed because we want a member of the NTT faculty focusing on conveying information to the rest of NTT faculty. - Shiu

Q: Is that at-large member non-voting? - Wooten

A: They can vote and would be elected at the same time at the others. - Shiu

Comment: The majority of our school is NTT and we often have 4-year terms. I don't think that should be a concern. I feel as if we might have a problem with over representation. Right now, arts and sciences have 8 voting members. - Grimes

A: It's hard to imagine what's too big or too small of a senate. The formula speaks to establishing a norm. With my model the majority of units will have 2 senators, some will have 3. We thought this would share the burden of sharing info for every 25 faculty over 50. - Shiu

Comment: That number was perceived as a fair number before we had staff cuts. We have the opportunity to make that number a fair number now. - Grieco

Q: Should our IFC and executive committee be voting members?

Maybe this is outside the purview of this conversation. - Grimes

Comment: If it feels heavily arts and sciences it's because we have more people interested in service from arts and sciences. We could restrict voting, but that would be established by the senate SOP. - Grieco

Q: Anthony, you showed 2 different documents with overlap and differences. Is that correct? - Lynch

A: We developed a CRR centric model which was the 2nd document. - Shiu

Q: The 2 documents are different options? - Lynch

A: The change is how we implement them. - Shiu

Comment: The big difference between the 2 is what you have drafted for B1. To me it doesn't make sense to make the composition of the senate in the SOP. Between your two options, I wouldn't support the one with SOP changes. I was also a little uncomfortable with his idea of leaving the adding of a senator to the discretion of the senate. To me it seems like we don't want to hardwire the system. - Lynch

A: We don't anticipate any large controversies. If units are going to make cases for themselves every 3 years that can be triggered by a number of different things. This was meant as a process. I think it's an issue of sovereignty. I don't see a potential for abuse in it. - Shiu

Q: On the GK plan, how is the School of Graduate Studies accounted for, since they have a dean? - Mardikes

A: The requirements are to have a dean that reports to the provost and being a home for tenure. No, SGS will not have representation. - Grieco

Comment: When talking about this I was concerned about recounts every year with senator numbers going up and down and how that would be implemented with 3-year terms-Kador

Comment: I think we're proposing a CRR change and that's important to empathize. - Van Horn

Comment: I'm confused on the thought process on going forward.

Q: Why don't we come to an agreement in the senate on the best way to go forward and present that idea? - Lynch

A: The risk is we'll have a proposal with little approval after sending it out. - Grieco

Comment: We could vote if we have the majority - Lynch

Comment: The senate executive committee felt that we should send 2 versions. - Grieco

Comment: I'm in favor of sending one proposal. We owe it to our faculty to agree on a version and send it out to the faculty to vote. - Keeton

Comment: I agree we should vote for either 1. The status quo, or 2, what the senate recommends. - Bhat

Comment: I would recommend that we present one plan to the faculty with our recommendation. At least we could combine the pieces of the proposal that are the same and present the differences to the faculty. - Riggers-Piehl

Comment: I'd like to do just the CRR version of our proposal. I would rather have each team create lists of affirmative statements. - Shiu

Comment: I move that we move forward with the Shiu/Kador plan with Anthony's changes. - Wooten

Comment: Seconded. - Riggers- Piehl

Vote: 7 yes; 13 no; 1 abstention. - Mardikes

Comment: Motion to adjourn and continue the discussion till next time. - Bhat

Comment: I suggest we start the next meeting prepared to vote for one version of the proposals or the other. - Grieco

Comment: As long as we can have a discussion before we vote. - Bhat

5. ADJOURNMENT

a. Motion Passes.