

Report of Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Career-Line Eligibility to Serve as Senate President

TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Randy Dryer and Leslie Francis, Co-Chairs, Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Career Line Faculty Eligibility to Serve as Senate President

DATE: December 29, 2018

Committee Charge and Composition

In April of 2018 the Senate unanimously authorized the Executive Committee of the Senate to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to “formulate proposed policy to allow career-line faculty to be eligible for the Senate Presidency.” In August, the Executive Committee established the Committee and appointed 10 tenure-line and six career-line members of the faculty, including seven past presidents of the Academic Senate. The full membership of the Committee is listed in Appendix A. The Executive Committee charged the Committee with submitting its recommended policy revisions to the Executive Committee no later than December 20, 2018. The Committee made its report within the deadline and the Executive Committee voted to place the recommended policy revisions on the Notice of Intent Calendar for the January 7, 2019 meeting of the Senate.

Recommended Policy Revisions

The Committee unanimously recommends that the Senate revise Policy 6-002 to (1) permit career-line faculty to stand for election as Senate President (2) establish the minimum eligibility requirements for all faculty who wish to serve as Senate President (3) set forth the duties, responsibilities and loyalties of the Senate President; and (4) codify the existing practice of having a person who serves as Senate President serve a total of three years: the first year as president-elect, the second year as president and the third year as immediate past president. Revising the policy as proposed will bring the University in line with other PAC-12 institutions, (none of which ban career-line faculty from serving as president of a faculty senate); will reflect best practices as urged by the American Association of University Professors (which strongly recommend that non-tenure track faculty be included in governance at all levels) and will be consistent with and a logical extension of the policy revisions the Senate previously adopted in 2013 and 2016 (which were designed to more fully integrate career-line faculty into the shared governance structure of the University).

The exact language of revised Policy 6-002 is set forth in Appendix B.

Background and Rationale

In fulfilling its charge the Committee reviewed and took note of the excellent and detailed work of the Academic Senate Career-Line Task Force which issued an initial report on the role of career-line faculty at the University in March of 2017 and a follow-up report in March of 2018. Both of these Reports were accepted and endorsed by the full Senate and provided useful information for the Committee.

The Committee met on five different occasions as a Committee of the whole during September, October and November and also established smaller working groups to focus on specific issues, collect additional factual information and do initial drafting in between meetings of the full Committee. A group consensus emerged on the following fundamental principles which subsequently informed and guided our drafting:

1. Eligibility to serve as Senate president should be based on qualifications, expertise, and experience rather the rank or type of faculty appointment. As noted in the Career-Line Task Force reports, not all tenured faculty have sufficient experience in leadership and faculty governance to effectively serve and conversely, career-line faculty, which now comprise 46% of the full time faculty at the University, may include individuals who have the requisite experience and qualifications.

2. The status of tenure, which takes 5-7 years to attain, is essentially a proxy for insuring that a candidate for Senate President has demonstrated a long term commitment to the University, has a basic familiarity with the academic structure and mission of the University and has sufficient job security to represent the interests of the Academic Senate as an institution free from undue outside influences.

3. While it is appropriate to establish some minimum, threshold qualifications to be a candidate for Senate President, the voting electorate, not policy, should make any more granular assessment of candidate qualifications and suitability.

In furtherance of the above principles, the revisions require that any candidate must:

(a) be a fulltime member of the faculty at the University for at least five years prior to becoming a candidate;

(b) either be tenured or have a faculty appointment and accompanying contract of employment that runs during the three year term of office;

(c) have demonstrated prior participation in University level governance or service and involvement in University instructional or educational activities; and

(d) not be serving as an appointed administrative officer of the University at or higher than a department chair, which may create a potential conflict of interest

The Committee debated extensively about whether to further define what qualifies as sufficient participation in University governance and teaching activities, but decided those assessments are best made by Senate voters on a candidate by candidate basis.

In the course of its activities, the Committee learned that certain duties and loyalties of the Senate President, although implied, are not specifically set forth in existing policy. Consequently, the revisions make explicit that the President is the spokesperson of the Senate; represents the interests of the Senate and its constituencies, in general, and the interests of the faculty, in particular; and owes a duty to act in the best interests of the University and the Academic Senate ahead of their own personal interests or the interests of the academic unit or college with which they are affiliated.

The Committee also made certain other administrative clarifications regarding the offices and roles of the president-elect, president and past president that are self-explanatory.

Recommendation for Further Study

The Committee recognized that for the Academic Senate to be an effective participant in the concept of shared University governance, it must attract qualified leadership and have sufficient financial resources to operate. An elected Senate leader (who essentially serves a three-year term of office as president-elect, president, and past president) must necessarily devote a significant amount of time in fulfilling their responsibilities and there currently is no accepted practice or policy regarding compensation or paid release time from other teaching, research or service responsibilities during a term of office. This issue is presently addressed in an ad hoc manner in the form of a negotiation between the elected candidate and their applicable academic unit. Similarly, there is no established budget or other financial support for the administrative operations of the Academic Senate. A limited survey of selected peer institutions reflect a wide range of institutional approaches to these issues. Although the issues are important to the effective functioning of the Academic Senate, they were deemed to be beyond the scope of the Committee's charge, but nonetheless should be further studied and addressed.

Appendices:

1. List of Ad Hoc Committee members
2. Revised Policy 6-002