

## Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

Regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate of Rochester Institute of Technology

Thursday, April 6, 2023

12:15 – 1:50 PM

Zoom

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; A. Newman (12:15)
Meeting called to order.
Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; A. Newman (12:15)
<b>Motion (S. Aldersley):</b> <b>Seconded (S. Johnson)</b>
Agenda Item No. 3: Communication Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; S. Aldersley (12:16)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having received no feedback on the draft minutes for the meeting of 3/30, I move that they be approved. I would like to remind senators that the audio recording does not always pick up names accurately, and so I ask that you clearly state your name before speaking.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A. Ray: Seconded</li></ul></li><li>• Approved by acclamation</li></ul> <p><a href="#">March 30, 2023 Meeting Minutes</a></p>
Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; A. Newman (12:18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please continue to fill out the faculty survey issued by the Calendar Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ S. Johnson: We have received some very interesting results so far. I will be sending out some information about modifications to the recommendations that you saw last time, and would appreciate your feedback on them.</li></ul></li><li>• The Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Freedom has been constituted and will shortly be holding its inaugural meeting.</li><li>• We are entering the season for reports from Senate's eleven committees. These may include recommendations and motions. Since we want to avoid having a meeting on May 11th, it is important that senators read the posted reports before they are presented at our meetings.</li><li>• Your Executive Committee will also be making a report for discussion as the last item on today's agenda</li></ul>
Agenda Item No. 5: Staff Council Update; M. Lezette (12:20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff Council is in the midst of elections for Blocks 1, 3 and 5 for 2-year terms. Voting is set to end on 4/25.</li><li>• We are finalizing plans for the annual Staff Picnic in May.</li><li>• On the Council's agenda for later this afternoon, we have a presentation from the Controller's Office and one on parking and transportation. Also, a conversation with HR on the process for staff to volunteer for events like Imagine RIT, Commencement and the like.</li></ul>
Agenda Item No. 6: Student Government Update; L. Dibble (12:21)

- SG recently completed our elections. Our new president is Darcie Jones and J.T. Lapham is the new VP. We also have several new Senators and there are still some vacant slots that we are working to fill so we can have a full Senate come next year.
- We received a grant that was given SG to use on projects related to sustainability or transportation. We can no longer use the money for its original purpose and we're trying to decide how we might use it in the sustainability space.
- We are also dealing with a situation where a club was denied funding by the finance committee and the Senate is working on its response.

**Agenda Item No. 7: Institutional Research Overview; N. Sapio (12:23) *Presentation linked below***

- Hi. I'm the interim director of Institutional Research and Analytics office. I have a quick presentation about our offices, who we are and what our roles are. Organizationally we are part of ITS in the Finance and Administration division. We have a team of 11 people and our role is to promote data-informed decision making. We work collaboratively across different groups including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and different units within F&A.
- What we do can be put in 5 large buckets: institutional intelligence, data analytics, reports, data governance practices and outreach.
- When it comes to institutional intelligence, this is the area where we focus on providing reports in interactive dashboards on topics like enrollment, degrees, persistence and graduation rates, and things like instructional activity and courses and grades. We have a lot of dashboards and reports available on our webpage. I want to highlight here a couple of the dashboards that might be relevant to you. One of the dashboards that we built last year and made available to faculty is the Program Analytics dashboard. So this dashboard provides program level, enrollment, persistence and graduation rates to faculty and college staff.  
It was one of the first dashboards that we opened up to faculty members and it was built following a Faculty Senate resolution that passed last year. We have a variety of dashboards that are available to the institution. However, most of them are restricted, based on roles. Most are available to college, department and program leadership. Chairs and program directors can see them. Some information is publicly available (like degrees awarded and enrollment trends) but you need an RIT log-in for access to most dashboards. The enrollment trends dashboard includes fall 21-day enrollment records and includes data showing demographics and geographic location. I encourage you to explore it, and the same with the degrees awarded dashboard, which shows number of degrees awarded by type, with some demographics.
- The next category is data analytics. So we design and conduct advanced analytical projects when there's a need to understand some of the more complex issues that align with institutional strategic priorities. And just to give you an example this year we are looking at first-year retention rates and trying to understand why our first-year retention rate is lower for this cohort compared to previous years. We do program evaluation studies. We help with survey design and analyzing survey data. For example, you might see some surveys coming your way from our office. We usually collaborate with other offices to put these out. We also, of course, respond to questions from deans and department chairs.
- Another thing we do is external reporting. So we coordinate with other offices to produce reports that fulfill the mandatory reporting requirements so RIT can stay in compliance. We provide data to the ranking agencies, and we work with programs when they have data needs for certification purposes. This is not a comprehensive list, but you might be familiar with IPEDS, the Federal reporting body and NYSED at the state level. We provide information for US News rankings, QS World and Times Higher Education rankings. We provide information to departments and programs for accreditation, ABET, AACSB and we participate in the Middle States annual information update request.
- Enterprise Data Management is another area we support. We are currently working towards building a framework with the goal of managing data in a secure, accessible, and well-defined manner. We're working towards a next generation ecosystem which we're calling the Data Hub, and you will be hearing about that in the future. Data governance is something I wanted to highlight here, and if you are interested please take a look at this link. We have been working towards building a stewardship model, creating data domain areas and identifying data stewards. We've also built a data sharing agreement, so that different groups have a way to express interest in sharing data sets with each other and stewards are able to communicate with people who are requesting data.

- Lastly, we try to do outreach to cultivate a culture that systematically uses information as a strategic asset. We do this through various ways. For example, we have been providing data to the Student Success Steering Committee, which is a cross-functional unit that looks at student success priorities over the years, and in the past we have worked with the DFW Task Force. And we recently built a University Survey Committee whose goal is to increase awareness of campus-wide institutional level surveys and increase best practices for survey administration, especially with regard to DEI, and also to reduce survey fatigue. We also participate in Academic Program Review. We gather data and provide annual updates using our dashboards. The last thing is something that was new to us this year – the administration of NSSE, (the National Survey of Student Engagement).
- And that, in a very quick nutshell is what my office does. Of course there's more to it and I have made our website link available. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to me.
  - L. Lawley: Thank you. I am looking at the dashboards page right now, and there is still a minuscule amount of information that's available to faculty, but a lot of things that would be extremely valuable to us, especially as we are considering things like ABB are not available. This has come up over and over again over the past several years. I would really like for us to see some direct interaction between Senate, whether it's the Executive Committee or the RABC, or some subgroup, to really dig into what faculty need to be able to see in order for us to be able to make good decisions. What are the reasons for not making it available? Why do we always start with, 'You can't have it'? Why can we not start from the perspective of this should be available to faculty, but there are specific things that we have reason to lock down. I just want to get that out there and into the minutes because it's been a constant process of frustration, of trying to get access to things that would be genuinely useful to us. Things about persistence, graduation, academic quality and academic program review. It's really hard for me to understand why you wouldn't want faculty to be able to see those things.
  - S Aldersley: Following on from Liz' points, last week we had a presentation from the Provost on the evolution of the ABB decision, which, as you know, is not yet decided, but it's moving in a direction. Dr. Granberg said that one of the major reasons for switching to ABB is transparency. And the UW model of ABB being the one we are following fairly closely, she lauded their data website as exemplary in making financial data available to everyone at the university. As Liz said, it's been exceptionally difficult for RIT faculty to get access to data. It's true that sometimes we get budgetary data, packaged in a certain way that refers to the past, and sometimes even to the present but we get no financial data and no access to data that would enable us to consider decisions and choices bearing on the upcoming fiscal year. So in light of that, I'm wondering whether your office has started to talk about doing something like the University of Washington if we do indeed switch to Activity-Based Budgeting.
  - N. Sapio: Our office has not been involved with the ABB Methodology Building. We did provide some data to the Technical Working Group that's looking at ABB, for example, credit hours, but my familiarity with the ABB is not 100% there yet. That'll be something we would explore if the University does indeed go ahead with ABB. I will add though that there is an interest at the University in opening up more data to the community. And that's why we now have the Analytics dashboard, which is the first time where for example, information about persistence to graduation has been broadly shared. There are technical limitations that we have to deal with when we do these types of things, but we're slowly getting there.
  - B. Dell: Hi, Nilay, Thank you for your presentation. I see that you talked about the survey review process so as a governance body there may be times where we want to survey faculty. Can you give a little more guidance about when we're expected to go through the review process?
  - N. Sapio: So we have been focused on institutional level surveys, not focusing on research, or any anything else that the faculty might want to do. But if there is a need to, let's say, survey a whole population like employees, we suggest that those types of institutional surveys that focus on understanding institutional practices should come to the Survey Committee. This is our first year doing this sort of thing so I suggest if you have a question, email me and we can take a look at it together and decide if it needs a university review committee review or not. If it's an in-house survey, can we help you standardize questions, for example? And at the end of it, we have a calendar that enables the community to know when other surveys are happening. So, for example, the COACHE survey, the NSSE survey are both open surveys right now. If someone else wants to do a survey of the student body, they need to be aware these surveys are on-going. If you want to have better response rates, you probably want to work within a different timeframe. So we are trying to coordinate that. But if you have questions, feel free to send them to me and I can try to respond back to you directly.
  - B. Thomas: I have two questions and a comment, which I'm going to pass on to Bruce, head of

RABC. My first question is I would have thought that, since most of your work has to do with academic affairs, why is your unit under F&A? My second question is, does your team include statisticians? We had a university survey last year whose results were presented at Senate, and we basically tore the survey question apart because of the way it was set up for statistical significance. And so I am wondering if there are statisticians in your unit who can determine if results have statistical significance?

○ N. Sapio: Let me start with this. The projects that I highlighted here today are mostly the projects that are relevant to academic affairs. I only had a handful of minutes to present, but we work across different groups across the university. We're not just working with academic affairs. Our being in F&A also helps us be a sort of independent third party when every now and then people come to us to do program evaluation. Anyway, historically speaking, that's how it's been set up for us, though it may be differ from how institutional research offices may be set up in other places. As to the other question, we have one data scientist in our office, but our survey committee does not provide help with analyzing survey data, though we would probably make some higher level administrative recommendations. Hopefully that answers your question.

○ B. Thomas: No, it does not. For the NSSE Survey that you carry out, how do you analyze the results when they come in?

○ N. Sapio: This year we administered the NSSE Survey and we do some analysis of the results with descriptive statistics. We have made some efforts to model the survey data in the past, but it has been challenging because we don't have all the student responses.

○ A. Newman: Thank you so much. If anybody has any more questions, please feel free to reach out to Nilay. Thank you for coming. I hope this is going to be the first of many visits, so that we can figure out ways for the Senate to work with you

#### [Institutional Research Data and Analytics Presentation](#)

#### Agenda Item No. 8: University Writing Committee Report; G. Wainwright (12:45) *Presentation linked below*

- Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I want to start by showing who was on our committee. We are a very cohesive group, and I want to acknowledge the work they put into this committee.
- One of the primary responsibilities for the UWC is to review and approve writing intensive courses. It's always good to show some statistics. So far we have reviewed about 25 courses, nine of which are for updates to Appendix B which I'll talk about in a minute. Most of these have been approved and there are some awaiting revision. I want to remind folks that it is the responsibility of the colleges to maintain these approved course outlines, not of the UWC and not of the Registrar's office.
- Our first charge was to coordinate with the Office of Effective Educational Assessment about the graduate writing program. We haven't really done much this year because of the change of leadership in the OEEA. I do have an email out to Leah Bradley to talk about whether or not we will continue with this charge, or if there is assistance they would like from our committee that we can incorporate next year.
- I put the second and sixth charges together, because they both relate to activities that we've been pursuing related to evaluating RIT's Writing Across the Curriculum program. We spent quite a bit of time trying to get our heads around what and how we wanted to proceed. We came up with two general types of questions. The first was we wanted to determine whether or not the course outlines that we had were consistent with our current writing policy, and some of that relates to Appendix B. The second question was how instructors are teaching their writing intensive courses: are they aware of the course outlines; what kind of pedagogy are they using, and would they like additional support, and if so, what type of support? To get to this question, we put out a survey for faculty which I'll talk about after I address the first question.
- So we went through a process of looking at data in SIS, pulled up lists of all the writing intensive courses, assigned those to representatives by college, and asked them to go back to their college curriculum committees and look at all of the course outlines. And this is the list that we came up with in terms of the number of courses that as best we can tell currently do not have Appendix B, which is the writing intensive appendix that's associated with the course outlines. We suspect that these are courses which

were last updated when we went from quarters to semesters, at which time the appendix was not added. So one of our efforts this year is really to get these course outlines up to date so that they all have Appendix B, and reflect not only the writing policy, but also the pedagogy that's incorporated in that policy. Some of them may require changes to topic lists and learning outcomes as well. We want these revised outlines to go through their college curriculum committees before they're submitted to the writing committee. I made a presentation about some of this information to the Associate Deans back in November. We've only gotten about nine or ten of these outlines from the total of 80, so we're looking for colleges to move forward a little more quickly and get the updated outlines sent to us.

- With respect to the survey we put out in the fall semester, we got a pretty good response rate of 40%. On a positive note, instructors indicate they're using a wide variety of instructional feedback methods. On the other hand, almost 40% of the faculty were not aware of the course outline or hadn't read it, which means they're really not aware of the pedagogy and the writing policy that are specified in that outline and one of our concerns, of course, is not wanting to enforce or go in and evaluate writing in these courses, if the faculty are not aware of the outlines. So we want to ensure that the delivery of these courses aligns with the outlines prior to us going in and actually evaluating student performance in terms of writing. Of other notable survey findings, faculty are not aware there is no requirement or limit in the writing policy for class size. About 70% of classes have 25 students or less, and 85% have 30 or less. On a more negative note, 80% of our respondents indicated that they were assessing grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is a bit concerning to the writing committee, because a number of studies have shown that focusing on grammar does not improve overall writing for students, and in some cases actually has a negative impact. We want faculty to focus on writing as a tool for learning and improving cognition, and I've thrown up a link here which is a really easy read about some practices that are very common in writing courses that we really should be avoiding. Only 75% of faculty indicated they were doing revision, feedback and drafting, even though that's a required part of the writing program. And lastly, there are some diversity and equity issues that come up with grading students on their use of standard American English. There's research out there that demonstrates that many English learners are being left behind in STEM disciplines due to writing standards that are not really accommodating for their backgrounds and diversity. We've found about half the faculty want to learn more about feedback strategies, which is great to hear, because that's usually the most time-consuming aspect of teaching writing courses. About a third of our faculty want to learn more about drafting strategies, and most of them prefer in-person as opposed to online presentations. Some faculty remain concerned that they're not qualified to teach writing, and we feel it's important for us to work with the University Writing Program to provide training and resources that support faculty. We're going to include all of the information from these surveys in our annual report to the Senate for this year. Lastly, we want to point out that for us to be able to provide support to faculty, additional resources are needed.
- Charge #3 concerned the distribution of responsibilities between the UWP and the University Writing Committee. When the writing policy was put into effect, there was a very different vision for the Committee. Committee members are not experts in writing, we're not English majors. As a result, and because the UWP has recently announced it is going to have a Writing Across the Curriculum coordinator, we feel it's appropriate to look at some of these responsibilities, and possibly shift them over to the Writing Program. For example, 'stay current with research on best practices in writing program administration, and assess the feasibility and desirability for instituting these practices and make recommendations accordingly.' That is clearly a responsibility for writing experts, not for us. We may get to some of this policy update this year, but we expect it to remain as a continuing charge next year.
- Charge #4 was about wanting to take a look at a review period for our writing courses to ensure that they are being taught as they're supposed to be taught. However, even though we support this requirement, until we have an electronic course management system in place, there really is no way to feasibly implement this across the university. In the meantime, we are asking that individual colleges and programs review their writing courses at least once every five to seven years to make sure that they are up to date and that students are receiving the pedagogy specified in the course outline.
- Last, but not least, Charge #5 looks at addressing the question of whether or not the writing policy should specify a minimum number of credit hours. The current policy only requires that three courses be taken, and that 20% of the grade is based on writing. Just by way of comparison, the Gen ED immersion policy requires that three courses be taken with a minimum of nine credit hours.

- Both Pam and I have been getting inquiries from various programs about wanting to incorporate only one- or two-credit hour courses as the only programmatic writing courses. And because the writing policy says nothing about credit hours, it doesn't require that we only approve three-credit hour courses. There are currently some two-credit hour courses out there, in fact, one program uses two two-credit hour courses in succession to meet their programmatic writing requirements. But when we're approving a two-credit course, we don't know how that course is going to be applied within a program. In addition, we've had some questions this year and last year about individual writing versus group writing occurring in programmatic courses, and whether or not individual writing is required. To deal with these various issues, we're working on a policy change that will require that programs have at least nine credit hours of writing intensive courses. This will allow a sequence of writing intensive courses, if that's preferred, so we're not specifying that writing courses must all be 3-credits. We want to give programs the flexibility to administer that.
- We want to make a minor change to enhance the description of programmatic courses to really reinforce that it's writing in the discipline. And we also want to clarify that when we talk about 20% of the grade, we're really referring to individual writing on formal writing assignments.
- We then took a look at the programs that would be impacted by this change, and there are currently three programs that do not have at least nine credit hours. Chemical Engineering has a two-credit hour course. Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering have two intensive courses within their programs, one of them is three credits, and one two credits, but they only total eight credits. We've met with the folks in the College of Engineering, and had some discussions about the degree to which those courses teach writing. We'd like to grandfather those three programs in, and also add to the writing policy the ability for future programs to apply for an exception to the total of nine credit hours and three credit programmatic writing courses, as long as they can demonstrate that students are getting equivalent amounts of writing within their program. Our committee members are reviewing these proposed policy changes with their various colleges and curriculum committees this week. If we get approval, our next step will be to set up a time to meet with the ICC and eventually bring the revisions before the Senate.
- If you have questions, or if you are interested in coming up with some charges for us for next year, please let us know.
- ChatGPT is something that is brought up quite frequently these days and if nobody gives us a charge on that, we'll probably give ourselves one next one as to how we might incorporate a new tool into the writing education of our students.
  - A. Newman: I'm going to ask everyone to direct their questions to you via email so that we have time for the Faculty Affairs Committee as well. Thank you so much for your presentation.

[UWC Presentation](#)

#### Agenda Item No. 9: Faculty Affairs Committee Charges; C. Schlombs & S. Aldersley (1:01)

*Presentation linked below*

- C. Schlombs: Good afternoon. I'm Corinna Schlombs in COLA's History Dept. and I will be presenting together with Stephen Aldersley on FAC charges #3 & #2.
- I'll begin with Charge #3 because it provides some background, and the information will be helpful and when considering Charge #2. Charge #3 asked that we investigate best practices regarding annual reviews. We began with a literature review, and I will present three recommendations from that review. (We have not paid particular attention to teaching aspects in the annual review, because we wanted to avoid duplication with the Teaching Review Task force.)
- Our first recommendation is that we maintain current annual evaluation practices. Because the role of chairs and department heads is central to effective annual review, we emphasize the importance of consistent training, particularly when it comes to distinguishing formative aspects in the review of pre-tenured faculty, but also with more senior faculty, using the review to align faculty work with department

goals. Of course, we cannot overlook the relationship between annual review and merit decisions.

- We see opportunities to identify and encourage DEI activities in the annual review, and we have a second recommendation coming out of that observation, which is that we would like to encourage departments and schools to consider implementing faculty activity boards which can be a useful tool to improve balance and transparency in faculty workload. So what are faculty activity dashboards? They are a fairly low tech and flexible way of representing faculty workload. Faculty in a unit that decides to experiment with a dashboard decide what to include, whether they want to look at just service, or also teaching and research, and how these activities are to be reported, for example, one could decide to focus on the number of courses taught, or the number of students. Should the data be reported at an aggregate level or at an individual level? And there's the opportunity to report anonymously. So once the parameters have been agreed upon, the dashboard is populated based on existing records requiring little additional effort for faculty members. The data can be transferred from self-evaluations, and can be represented in the form of a spreadsheet. The outcomes can then be the basis for discussion within the unit, and can also serve as a guidepost for faculty to plan their workload in the future.
- And then to our third point, we found in the literature review a surprisingly critical discussion of merit pay in higher education highlighting the fact that merit increments tend to be small, and often not consistent from year to year. For example, outstanding achievement in a given year may not be rewarded because the merit pool in that same year was particularly lean. And there are situations where rewarding strong performance can only happen at the cost of others. Out of this discussion comes our third recommendation which is to initiate a charge for next year's FAC to continue to review best practices in faculty compensation.
- S. Aldersley: FAC Charge #2 is a hold-over charge which reads: Lead a collaborative effort with all stakeholders to review how POWs are currently used and to consider proposed changes, including a way to assure consistency across colleges.
- Last year the FAC looked at this in some detail, talked to various people around the University, including the Council of Chairs, and found there is considerable support for the idea of removing the annual POW from the faculty's workload and substituting a document which would speak to a period of three to five years. However, the FAC did not bring a motion to that effect, primarily because reference to the POW occurs in so many different policies that removing it is problematic. Which is why it came back to FAC this year.
- In seeking to find a way to remove the POW that would be viable within the terms of the current policy structure, we began by talking to the deans. About half of them said their colleges depend on the POW and the other half indicated agreement with the notion that it isn't a particularly useful document, but they didn't have suggestions regarding its replacement. After lengthy discussions, the subcommittee determined that the main objection to the POW is how it has come to be used – as nothing more than a repetitive bureaucratic chore that has no obvious value to either the faculty member or their supervisor. Rather than getting rid of it, we decided that an alternative might be to adjust its use, first by placing renewed emphasis on the annual evaluation meeting that is supposed to occur between faculty member and supervisor and second, by having the POW be a record written of agreements reached at that meeting. This record would be drafted by the faculty member and signed by both parties. We did consider changing the name of the document but have been unable to come up with any good substitute. Accordingly, we offer the following motion:
- Motion: FAC Moves the reorientation of the faculty plan of work, such that it becomes a document that is written by the faculty member. After the annual meeting with the chair or department head, reflecting the activities agreed upon in that meeting, and signed by both parties.
- Three weeks ago, we met with HR's Jo Ellen Pinkham to review the motion. She did not raise substantial arguments against it, but we anticipate that further discussion will be necessary and so we see the motion, not as a final description of suggested change, but as a way of furthering the discussion.
- In the course of discussing both the POW and annual faculty evaluation (Charge #3), we came up with a further notion that represents a rather more radical departure from current practice, and we offer it here as a recommendation for further discussion, perhaps next year within the FAC. Our proposal is to reduce faculty appraisal ratings from five to three. We did discuss this idea with Laverne and Chris Licata in a meeting yesterday and they had a number of questions. The rationale for the recommendation is primarily that while something between 60 and 70 % of faculty are rated either a 5 ("Outstanding") or a 4

("Exceeds Expectations"), the distinction between the two is entirely subjective on its face and furthermore has little bearing on the percentage size of merit increments awarded, there being only one half percent difference between the two categories. At the other end of the scale, very few faculty are rated as 1 ("Unsatisfactory"), and not many more as 2 ("Does Not Meet Expectations"). So our proposal is that the current system be replaced by one with a tripartite division, "Exceeds Expectations," "Meets Expectations," and "Does not Meet Expectations," which, by significantly reducing the subjectivity inherent in the existing scale necessarily enhances its credibility.

- R. Ulin: For the sake of time I'm going to try to keep this as simple as possible. I've been at four different institutions, most recently at Western Michigan University, where for nine years I was chair of a department with a sizable faculty, fifty graduate students and a number of interdisciplinary doctoral programs. When I came here as a dean, the thing that struck me first was the extraordinary amount of administrative work that had to be completed by our department chairs. It struck me as nearly impossible for a department chair to keep up a substantive research agenda, and I find that unacceptable. I understand the reason why untenured faculty would have an annual review, write a plan of work and meet regularly with the chair. But it strikes me as nothing but nonsensical that we continue this process for associate and full professors. It wasn't the case at the University of Kansas nor was it the case at Western Michigan University. I think there's a hidden agenda there of accountability: the idea that if we're not in a continual process of surveillance of our tenured faculty, that they'll become slackers. And frankly in all my nearly 40 years of experience in higher education, I've known very few cases where tenured faculty don't do anything. So my recommendation would be that we move away from annual reviews for tenured faculty to a review every three or five years. It would also be more consistent with the rhythm of work in many academic disciplines, and, like the faculty that Stephen spoke to, I find the plan of work useless. It has no impact on me whatsoever.

- S. Aldersley: I find what you said entirely congenial, and you know we're putting this out in hopes that it will move the conversation a little bit further in the coming months. I mentioned before that we met with Laverne and Chris yesterday, and the same topic came up and I can see the possibility of a different format for evaluation for professors, though I'm not so sure about those faculty who are tenured, but who aspire to becoming full professors. I think maybe you need to be a little more careful with those folks. However, the problem is that as long as we have this admittedly rather fictional attachment to merit pay, you need some system to determine how you're going to distribute those dollars - unless, as long as we're only talking about two or three percent, you want to get rid of the merit system entirely. But in general I don't disagree with what you've said.

- L. Lawley: A couple of things on this. First of all, the policy already says that the plan of work is done after the annual review is complete, so I guess I'm not understanding what change is being proposed here, and before I ask the second part of my question, I would like to find out if I am misunderstanding what you are requesting.

- S. Aldersley: I re-read the policy yesterday and it's ambiguous. I think that the general practice is that the faculty member writes the plan of work before the meeting, and then often indeed the meeting doesn't occur. It's a bureaucratic thing that's just signed off on. What we would like to see from this particular change, even if it's a very small change, is that those meetings become substantive, that the chair actually does have a meeting with each faculty member in which the discussion is about the coming year. It would also give the chair an opportunity to exercise department leadership. It's not just management. If a chair and a faculty member hardly talk to each other we're missing something. But I do know what you're talking about and I agree that the way the current policy is written is ambiguous.

- L. Lawley: Okay. And then my second question concerns the fact that RIT uses those annual review scores for a lot of things beyond salary increases, including benchmarking - because you don't get benchmarking funds unless your annual reviews have averaged to a particular level over the past several years - as well as promotions. I am all in favor of the idea of going away from our current model of reviews. Robert's right: most universities do not require annual reviews of tenure track faculty, but there's a whole trickle-down effect that we need to think about in terms of how HR stuff is handled.

- S. Aldersley: Yes, you're right. I've already mentioned our meeting with Jo Ellen. I thought she gave some very solid arguments in response to the motion. I don't know what she went away with, though, and I'm looking forward to hearing a further response from her. Again, all we're trying to do here is push the conversation forward. But certainly, the POW, faculty evaluation and merit are all intermixed, so it's a complicated issue.

- A. Newman: It would certainly be very helpful to review implementation of the existing policy and there's a comment in the chat about the importance of removing any vagueness in that policy.
- J. Venkataraman: Having five rating categories is very useful when considering promotion. It almost translates to A through F, five grades, five levels, and if you make it just three, it makes it a little harder to assess. I really think we should have some more breakdown than just three.
- B. Thomas: I also have a follow-up question. The data Jo Ellen provided Stephen and Corinna is data that comes from department heads. However, where you have a department head and a faculty member arguing over the evaluation, what does HR receive? Is it the chair's evaluation or what the faculty says? That's very important. Chairs and faculty may disagree completely around teaching, research or scholarship or service. Which is a problem because that affects what sort of raise that faculty member will get for the year. I actually didn't know that data goes from the department head to HR. I thought it goes to the dean's office.
- E. Granberg: That's a great question: what happens when a faculty member and a department chair disagree. I believe the way that works is the department chair determines the rating. If the faculty member and the chair can't reach agreement, then the faculty member has the right to grieve the rating. Laverne will tell us. But it's the supervisor that assigns the rating. The other area where there's this lack of clarity is around the plan of work. It's really unclear in our policies: if a department chair and a faculty member cannot agree on a POW, what do we do? It's come up a few times in the time I've been here, and there is no easy solution to that. How do we navigate it? So there's a couple of these areas in the policy that I do think would benefit a lot from some clarification.
- S. Aldersley: To Jayanti's point, I've been a chair and I do think that the distinction between outstanding and exceeds expectations is very blurry. I mean how do you decide that somebody is outstanding rather than just exceeds expectations? It's entirely subjective, and so to decide somebody's fate in terms of tenure and promotion based on something so subjective. I don't think that's right. There's no objectivity to it at all.
- C. Kray: I think the question of subjectivity and ratings depends on the department. Because some departments have a numerical system which has at least the appearance of objectivity. Secondly, regarding the difference between needs improvement and unsatisfactory, it's been some time since I looked at the policy, but my understanding is that the practice is meaningful in that if someone receives a "Needs improvement" rating twice in a row, they then receive an "Unsatisfactory" rating. So it's a sort of a warning signal to them. But again I don't know where that's written up, and that's just my recollection from having served as department chair some years ago.
- S. Aldersley: Christine, I remember that, too. When FEAD first came in, it was designed to help faculty who were judged by their department head to be under performing. But FEAD has evolved since then and it's no longer used for that original purpose. However, when I looked at the policy, I discovered that it's been replaced by something called an FIF, a faculty improvement plan, which I had not heard of before. Oddly, the term FIF is only referenced parenthetically in E.07 and apparently nowhere else. And you can be given one if you get either an Unsatisfactory or a Does Not Meet Expectations. So, whatever an FIF is, there is no distinction between a 1 or a 2. So that's something that needs to be clarified too.
- A. Newman: Thank you, Stephen and Corinna. I really appreciate the work that the FAC has done on this. I think this is definitely going to be something that's going to bear more scrutiny.

[FAC Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 10: FSEC Charge; A. Newman (1:32) *Presentation linked below*

- A. Newman: You have been hearing about a lot of things this year that the Executive Committee has been doing in the background, systems and things that we have been looking at in an effort to streamline how the Senate works, address inconsistencies in our policies overall and reduce the service burdens that have been placed on faculty by the Senate in pursuit of some of our own very ambitious goals. To that end we've come up with some ideas for discussion today, whereby we might make our lives easier and more efficient.
- One of the first changes that we want to suggest for the Senate's consideration is having the ExComm Treasurer be one of the at-large members on the Research and Budget Allocation Committee. This year we have already had two reports from the RABC and we've been hearing consistently about their concern with not being able to get access to data from the Provost's Office or Finance and Administration. Because the Executive Committee has more contact with the Provost, and now also with the President, we thought it would be a good idea to have the Treasurer sit on the RABC to facilitate conversation when needed.
- The next thing we would like to bring up concerns the Nominations Committee. I don't know if senators are aware, but every college has a Senate representative on University Council, and those representatives are actually also members of the Nominations Committee. However, for the past few years, the previous chair of Senate has been the person doing the work of the Nominations Committee, which is inconsistent with our policy. We would like to recommend discontinuing this particular committee and replacing it with a nominations officer to be elected from among senators early in the fall. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, the person could obviously not be a member of the Executive Committee. The Nominations Officer would then be the person responsible for soliciting nominations and running elections at the end of that year.
  - S. Malachowsky: I want to note that the reason we're looking at the fall is this year we needed to elect two or three replacements to the Executive Committee, and that may be rare situation, it would be appropriate to have the Nominations Officer in place to take care of those types of situations.
- The other big conversation that we are having, about which we would very much like feedback, is the number of standing committees. At this point we have 11, plus three subcommittees, which have to be populated every year. Since each of these committees has to have representation from each college (with the exception of GIS), it can be overwhelming, and we end up having to identify over 100 volunteers to serve on these committees and do all of the work that Senate assigns them. We believe that there's a lot of overlap in the committee functions and the charges that are assigned to them. So we want to make a couple of recommendations regarding the number of committees. First, we would like to propose merging Academic Affairs, Academic Support and Faculty Affairs into one committee, because, at the end of the day, each of these committees touch on the work of faculty. Sometimes, there has been confusion about where particular charges should go and it's hard for different committees to get together if they are working on shared charges. So we are suggesting to bring all this into one place under the FAC.
- The other big change that we want to recommend is to bring together the RABC, the Research and Scholarship Committee and the Long Range Planning and Environment Committee under one umbrella, particularly because all three deal with funding and resources and would benefit from having the additional contact with the Administration that should follow if we appoint the Senate's Treasurer to the RABC. If we implement these two recommendations, it will result not only in a smaller number of committees, but also hopefully more effective committees. We are not looking at the remaining committees at this time, but we would like your feedback on these two recommendations.
  - A. Gehret: One question about collapsing those committees: have you given any thought to expanding membership in what you might call these mega committees? Because I think about FAC as it currently exists and then, being on SSA myself and the work we've done this year, you would probably need to expand the membership. Also, these changes would involve charter amendments.
  - A. Newman: Yes, and that's the other aspect. Just about every single one of these recommendations would require a charter change. In addition, we have also been discovering a lot of discrepancies in the listed membership of these committees. For example, when we switched from an

Academic Senate to a Faculty Senate, we actually removed deans from all of the committees. However, the current charter still lists deans and their representatives and even has the provost's representative as voting members on a lot of these committees, even though, from what I understand, that is no longer the practice we've been following. So as long as we have to make charter changes anyway, it makes sense to actually review the committee structure and their membership. I would recommend increasing the size, but not so much that they just require the same number of faculty under the current set-up.

- A. Gehret: Yes, thinking about how the committees function, they do usually break into subcommittees depending on the number of charges.

- C. Lutzer: I have a question about combining Academic Affairs and Faculty Affairs. When we look at the list of charges that we typically give these committees, the charges that are about the faculty, for example, promotion and tenure, go to FAC, whereas AAC is given charges that have to do with content over which the faculty has purview. So it seems to me like one committee is about the things we do, and the other committee is about us. To me that seems like two very different ideas.

- J. Venkataraman: Yes, I was going to say the same thing. I've served on both FAC and AAC and I don't think it will be easy to combine their responsibilities which are very different. The RABC and long range planning could be combined, but the Research and Scholarship Committee has a different mission. It's not just budget. They oversee all the policies related to research and scholarship. I think it needs to remain a separate committee.

- A. Newman: This year there was a charge that came to the RABC that actually had to do very particularly with research and research funding. Which is one of the reasons why I thought the committees should be combined. I understand that there are a lot of policies that have to do with research. But this is a faculty committee, a committee comprised of members who want to deal directly with the University regarding those things.

- J. Venkataraman: If it's a charge related to budget items, then I think they could be given the same charge and asked to work with each other. But the Research and Scholarship Committee does have different tasks around research policies that RABC does not have, so I think they should not be combined, especially since research is becoming increasingly important at the University.

- B. Thomas: Having served on the RABC, and on the Research and Scholarship Committee and been chair of the FAC, I think that the Research and Scholarship Committee and the FAC could go together. For the six years I was on the Research and Scholarship Committee, we had multiple charges that we had to coordinate with the FAC. So if we have to merge committees in order to reduce the service burden on faculty, I think those two could go together. RABC should be on its own. I also think we should have some time to think about this instead of voting today.

- S. Aldersley: I'm on the FAC and the RABC this year and in both committees we've broken up into subcommittees, and that's where most of the work is being done. Presumably that would continue whatever structure we use. But at the beginning of this year, I made several comments about the selection of charges, particularly for the FAC, where there were so many. I think one way to control the workload and make the committees more manageable is to be more thoughtful about how many charges we're giving them. It's a matter for the Senate to decide which charges are to be given, but you don't have to accept every charge that is suggested. You could limit the number given a committee to three or four. That's enough work for the year. Yes, these other charges are important, but they're not as important as these other ones. Another thing is that the committees, like Bolaji just said, interact with each other, for example, just recently, FAC and DEIC. Everything is interwoven and sometimes it's not obvious where a charge should go. I agree it's a problematic issue, because there's so much work, and there's only so many faculty who are willing to do it. But I do think controlling the number of charges would be something that we could consider.

- A. Newman: I think, besides controlling the number of charges that go to the committees, it's important for Senate to seriously consider how to reduce the number of committees. We cannot keep finding and asking people to serve. Bolaji, you've been on what, 17 of these committees? There are not a

lot of faculty willing to do that. We just don't have such a large number of very committed faculty, who will work to such an extreme level on service. The Administration supposedly values the service that we do, but I also know of a lot of faculty members who specifically have told me they don't want to do service because it doesn't help them in their annual evaluations, and that they actually get dinged for it. It also ends up with a lot of people on committees not really doing much work, just showing up once a year, and letting everyone else pick up the slack which is just very unhelpful. So that's why I say, let's make it so that we have a smaller number of slots to fill and find the people who really care to be in those particular positions, and have them be the people who make the policies. We are three minutes over time. If anyone has more comments, feel free to reach out to me and to the Executive Committee. We would love to hear your thoughts on this, because obviously making charter changes is not a small matter.

[FSEC Presentation](#)

Agenda Item 11: New Business; A. Newman (N/A)

Not enough time.

Agenda Item No. 12: Adjournment; A. Newman (1:53)

## Attendance April 6, 2023

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended		Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Abushagur, Mustafa	KGCOE Senator			Malachowsky, Sam	Treasurer, GCCIS Senator	x
Adrion, Amy	ALT CAD Senator (Fall 2022)			McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	
Aldersley, Stephen	Communications Officer, SOIS Senator	x		Newman, Atia	Chair, CAD Senator	x
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator	x		Newman, Dina	COS Senator	x
Babbitt, Gregory	COS Senator	x		Olabisi, Joy	SCB Senator	
Bamonto, Suzanne	CLA Senator	x		Osgood, Robert	ALT CHST Senator	

<b>Barone, Keri</b>	<b>CLA Senator</b>			<b>Perez Sanchez, Alejandro</b>	<b>CAD Senator</b>	
<b>Boedo, Stephen</b>	<b>ALT KGCOE Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Puchades, Ivan</b>	<b>KGCOE Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Brown, Tamaira</b>	<b>Senate Coordinator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Ray, Amit</b>	<b>CLA Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Butler, Janine</b>	<b>ALT NTID Senator</b>			<b>Reed, Mary Lynn</b>	<b>COS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Chiavaroli, Julius</b>	<b>ALT GIS Senator</b>			<b>Ross, Annemarie</b>	<b>ALT NTID Senator</b>	
<b>Crawford, Denton</b>	<b>CAD Senator</b>			<b>Shaaban, Muhammad</b>	<b>ALT KGCOE Senator</b>	
<b>D'Amanda, Elisabetta</b>	<b>CLA Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Sheffield, Jr., Clarence</b>	<b>ALT SOIS Senator</b>	
<b>Deese, Franklin</b>	<b>CAD Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Song, Qian</b>	<b>SCB Senator</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Dell, Betsy</b>	<b>CET Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Sparkman, Torrence</b>	<b>ALT SCB Senator</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Dibble, Leah</b>	<b>Student Gov't Rep</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Thomas, Bolaji</b>	<b>CHST Senator</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Eddingsaas, Nathan</b>	<b>COS Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Tobin, Karen</b>	<b>NTID Senator</b>	
<b>Faber, Joshua</b>	<b>COS Senator</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Tsukernik, Olga</b>	<b>ALT COS Senator</b>	

<b>Fillip, Carol</b>	<b>ALT CAD Senator</b>			<b>Ulin, Robert</b>	<b>CLA Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Gehret, Austin</b>	<b>NTID Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Van Aardt, Jan</b>	<b>ALT COS Senator</b>	
<b>Ghazle, Hamad</b>	<b>Operations Officer, CHST Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Venkataraman, Jayanti</b>	<b>KGCOE Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Granberg, Ellen</b>	<b>Provost</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Villasmil, Larry</b>	<b>ALT CET Senator</b>	
<b>Hazelwood, David</b>	<b>NTID Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Warp, Melissa</b>	<b>ALT CAD Senator (Spring 2023)</b>	
<b>Heyman, Emily (sub – Michelle Lezette)</b>	<b>Staff Council Rep.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>White, Phil</b>	<b>ALT GCCIS Senator</b>	
<b>Hsieh, Jerrie</b>	<b>ALT SCB Senator</b>			<b>Williams, Eric</b>	<b>GIS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Johnson, Dan</b>	<b>CET Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Worrell, Tracy</b>	<b>ALT CLA Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Johnson, Scott</b>	<b>GCCIS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Zanibbi, Richard</b>	<b>GCCIS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Kincheloc, Pamela</b>	<b>NTID Senator</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Zlochower, Yosef</b>	<b>COS Senator</b>	
<b>Kiser, Larry</b>	<b>GCCIS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>Kray, Christine</b>	<b>CLA Senator</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>Lapizco-Encinas,</b>	<b>KGCOE Senator</b>	<b>Excused</b>				

<b>Blanca</b>						
<b>Laury, Dino</b>	<b>NTID Senator</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>Lawley, Elizabeth</b>	<b>Vice Chair, GCCIS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>Lee, James</b>	<b>ALT CET Senator</b>					
<b>Liu, Manlu</b>	<b>SCB Senator</b>					
<b>Lutzer, Carl</b>	<b>COS Senator</b>	<b>x</b>				
<b>Ma, Yunn-Shan</b>	<b>ALT CLA Senator</b>					

**Interpreters: Nic Crouse-Dickerson and Jennifer Mura**

**Student Assistant: Guru Goutham Gangadharappa Ramesha**

**Presenters: Nilay Sapio, Gretchen Wainwright and Corinna Schlombs**