

Faculty Governance
Meeting Minutes
Feb. 23, 2016

Present: Meryl Altman, David Alvarez, Bridget Gourley, Lori Miles, Jim Mills, Pam Propsom, Scott Thede

Guests: Dave Berque, Howard Brooks, David Harvey

Chair of the Faculty role.

Governance Committee met with three past Chairs of the Faculty and the current Chair of the Faculty to discuss the position. The conclusions from the discussion were that the position has changed significantly over time. The original purpose was to have a faculty member running the faculty meeting rather than an administrator doing it. Increasing duties for this position have come in a top-down fashion from the administration. There is the perception among some Board of Trustee members and administrators that this is the most powerful faculty leadership position, the “voice of the faculty,” and the “point person” to contact about any faculty governance issue.

Regarding the workload, it has varied from a large amount of work to a very, very large amount of work. Running faculty meetings is work, but when additional things come up (e.g., curricular revision, a grievance case) it becomes a lot of work and entails the emotional/social work of dealing with colleagues who have strongly divergent points of view. The workload is somewhat unpredictable. Sometimes a research component can take a significant amount of time (e.g., having to look through the archives to find precedents). There was general agreement that the most painful part of the job is elections and filling the committee roster.

Questions that we considered included the following: How do we want the president and VPAA to hear from the faculty? Who speaks for the faculty? Does the position merit compensation (e.g., a course release)? Are there tasks that could be off-loaded from the Chair of the Faculty?

Recommendations—there might be some room for adjustment in elections. An Academic Affairs administrative assistant could probably help with creating the ballot (although this would still require input from the Chair of Faculty). The perception that the Chair of the Faculty speaks for the faculty needs to be debunked, as often as possible. But then who does speak for the faculty? Perhaps it should be up to the Faculty Governance Committee to assess faculty opinion and report out.

The job responsibilities have grown and we can either continue to define it as it currently stands or scale back the position and just have the person run faculty meetings.

McDermond Center Director search committee.

From the nominations we received, we appointed Suman Balasubramanian from Math and Angela Flury from English. Pam will let Andy Cullison and Anne Harris know.

Next week's meeting. Tuesday, March 1 from 12:40-2:00 with the President and VPAA in the Administration Building.