COMMITTEE CHAIR WORKSHOP
Faculty Senate and Committee Chair Retreat - Tuesday August 18, 2015

Presenters: Dan Eveleth, College of Business and Economics and Chair of University Curriculum Committee and Marty Ytreberg, College of Science and Chair of Faculty Affairs (both are past Faculty Senate Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee on Committee Chairs)

Present: Robert Rinker (Academic Petitions), Ramirose Attebury (Administrative Hearing Board), Ralph Neuhaus (Admissions), John Anderson (Arts), Caroline Payant (Commencement), Eric Anderson (Dismissal Hearings), Marty Ytreberg (Faculty Affairs), Richard Seamon (Faculty Appeals), Annemarie Bridy (Intellectual Property), Steve Smith (Parking), You Qiang (Sabbatical), Kristin Haltinner (Student Disciplinary Review Board), Erin James (Ubuntu), Shawna Corry (UCGE), Dan Eveleth (University Curriculum Committee). Absent: Tim Frazier (Academic Hearing Board), Carmen Suarez (Americans with Disabilities), Brian Cleveley (Campus Planning), Heather Chermak (Facilities), Sanjay Sisodiya (Honors), Celeste Brown (Information Technology), Eric Aston (Library Affairs), Pingchao Zhu (Officer Education), Todd Perry (Safety), Ken Cain (Scientific Misconduct), Helen Brown (Student Financial Aid), Jennifer Johnson-Leung (Teaching & Advising), Liz Brandt (UBFC -Senator)

Context of Workshop – provide expectations, resources, tips and a history of the relationship between the University, Faculty Senate (Senate) and university committees. The following is a compilation of previous workshops and the recent workshop to share the many ideas that arise each year.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

- **Territorial Act – 1889**: “University of Idaho faculty, president, and regents are jointly responsible for governing the University, unlike other state universities.”
- **Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Standard 2.A.1**: “(The institution) decision-making structures and processes make provision for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.”

Shared governance can be viewed as a big umbrella under which Senate committees fall. Your specific committee’s role is embedded in the Faculty-Staff Handbook (FSH) under FSH 1640. The 1889 Territorial Act directed that faculty be key players in the institution’s governance. During accreditation visits the NWCCU will determine whether there is faculty involvement in decision-making at the university. Your role as committee chair is critical. While a committee’s role is often very specific e.g. commencement ceremony, review policy, awards, appeals, every committee can recommend changes about its function and structure to Committee on Committees. A committee should also share any general ideas or concerns with Senate Leadership (Randall Teal, Chair, Liz Brandt, Vice Chair, and Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary, and Ann Thompson, staff support) that may be of interest to the senate, other committees or the University.

Committee Structure/Resources:

- The committee structure at the university is to provide support to Senate.
- Don’t feel that you are solely responsible for running the committee. Senate Leadership can be a strong ally and valuable resource as they serve on various university groups and have many avenues/resources to draw upon.
- Senate Leadership meets with the president and provost regularly and will discuss issues that are sometimes best done in a private setting.
- Chairs can also seek assistance/advice/guidance from Senate.
- **Ex officio** members on committees serve a specific role. They have expertise/knowledge that is useful/critical to a committee’s work and they have a network of others with whom they can seek assistance/information. Meet with *ex officios* privately to discuss roles and establish mutual goals for the year. Seek their expertise before, during and/or after meetings. It can be challenging to manage their strong opinion given their expertise and meeting ahead can save valuable time. You may also wish to invite someone as an *ex officio* to a specific meeting(s).

- Institutional Research & Assessment collects a lot of data that is helpful (email: ir@uidaho.edu).

### Policy Process: Structure/Process/Spanning /Process = Success:

- UI structure/chain in policy process: Anyone within university, University Committees (*FSH 1640*); task force/working groups, Faculty Senate (*FSH 1580*), University Faculty (*FSH 1520 & 1540*), President – not necessarily in this order.

- Anyone can bring your committee an item, senate may delegate something to your committee, or you may send something to Senate or Committee on Committees (ConC), e.g. review policy/process, seek input, clarification, research best practices, communicate/advertise.

- **Boundary Spanning**: Realize that your committee is part of a larger group. Span across faculty, staff, students and administration at all levels. That is, connect with all stakeholders to ensure that you have a complete picture of the impact(s) your decisions will have across the University. Perhaps you would like to meet with senate, senate leadership, provost, a VP, counsel, etc. Ann can facilitate scheduling appointments.

- Identify, anticipate and resolve potential problems before sending an issue forward. Spend time as a committee considering what a colleague or group will consider or ask about your committee’s proposal. Each group must fully understand the issue(s) as discussed in your committee.

- At the end of the day you want your committee’s work to *succeed*. The end approval lies with the President who must consider ramifications to the University. There are also others who review/approve your committee’s work (other committees, senate, faculty, general counsel, regents). If you wish your committee’s work to be successful, know who your audience will be and where each group’s interests lie – be prepared.

  **Example**: Chair provided detailed information to Senate, during a tense time of many program closures. Excerpts of contentious discussions (minutes), voting results and excerpts of discussions at all levels (unit, college, UCGE, UCC) plus other details that assisted Senate in their decision. Result: discussion was minimal and all items were approved.

- Plan to attend Senate/ConC to provide a brief overview/answer questions. Include a memo (excerpts from minutes, handouts, details) that demonstrates the thorough discussions and vetting by your committee. Provide as much detail as necessary so that each group can make an informed decision avoiding disapproval or item being returned due to a lack of supporting details.

- To be put on a senate agenda contact Ann (annat@uidaho.edu). This typically involves a 5 minute update/briefing at Senate followed by Q&A, and sometimes can be an entire meeting or more.

### MANAGING THE COMMITTEE

- Guidelines for Chairs: *FSH 1620 C*. e.g. excessive absences/resignations, minutes, annual report, etc.

- **Boundary Spanning**: Connect with Senate Leadership on issues brought to you as they may have knowledge of ongoing events or other committees’ work that may impact your committee’s work. This will assist you in clarifying issue(s) without spending time in committee doing so. Seek others who might assist e.g. other committee chairs and/or members, previous chair, legal, VP, or those who might have an interest - opposed or in support.
Meeting Tips:

- **Evaluate** last year’s process and consider ways to improve, ask members for ideas/suggestions.
- **Prepare and use agendas** (set in advance, distribute and stick to it) - keeps meetings on task and controls unruly/animated members.
- **Chair’s role** is not to squelch discussion but to facilitate. As chair you **can** interrupt and request that others be given a chance to speak such as in an endless/repeating discussion. You **cannot** however end discussion (see member’s role below).
- **Member’s role**: inform them they must be recognized by chair to speak, respect others, motions and seconds come from members e.g. motion to accept, amend, propose, postpone, previous question, etc. To stop an endless/repeating discussion use previous question -- Robert’s Rules* on previous question use: member must be recognized by chair, cannot interrupt speaker (see chair’s role above), requires a second, is non-debatable, and requires 2/3 majority vote.
- **Member/ex officio** who controls conversation or rambles – ask to pause the conversation, **summarize** and then ask if others have anything new to add. This ensures understanding, keeps discussion on topic, treats everyone fairly, and allows time for a member to propose a motion.
- **Members talking over each other** – ask to pause the meeting and request that members observe Robert’s Rules by raising their hands before speaking.
- **Off-campus members** – recognize them, allow them to speak first, don’t forget they are there, use skype, google, speaker phone (Faculty Secretary’s office has disc phone that can be borrowed) [Ann is checking into the use of Scopia, a cloud based videoconference system contracted by the University, Skype is well suited for small committees.]
- **Send material in advance** and encourage members to come with ideas and share ahead if possible, especially controversial items.
- **Review processes/policy/criteria** to ensure consistency, understanding and reasonableness.
- **Meet as needed** – do not meet just for the sake of meeting, there is no set number of meetings for committees. However, don’t wait for things to come your way as they may not. Be diligent, ask for ideas/suggestions from members or others (see brainstorm below).
- **Start/end meetings on time** - finish discussion by email if possible, or carryover to next meeting.
- **Create sub-groups** to address a particularly controversial/in-depth issue to report back on summarizing findings will save valuable time for the committee as a whole.
- **Minutes/annual report** - critical for historical record: 1) saves rehashing issues/repeating history, 2) provides institutional memory e.g. why/how/when a policy was changed, 3) provides supporting documentation to ensure your hard work on an issue gets approved, and 4) new chairs/members gain a better understanding of the committee’s work/future topics. Send to Ann in Faculty Secretary’s Office for historical archiving [annat@uidaho.edu].

*Note: Robert’s Rules (RR) is your friend but be careful in its use e.g. motion to table: frequently used, typically misused, and should rarely be used - if at all. Google or contact Faculty Secretary’s Office for clarification on the use of RR.

**First meeting guidelines (setting the stage) - do early in semester:**

- **Introductions** and review/clarify purpose of committee as stated in **FSH 1640**.
- **Establish set meeting time** (if established time is in FSH, ensure members vote on change).
- **Establish procedures** (e.g. vote to sometimes conduct business by email allowing more time for face-to-face discussion/vote).
- Ask members to think about **process improvement** for meetings and to consider the committee’s work throughout the year to determine if it aligns with FSH 1640.
- **Brainstorm** - take time at this first meeting to ask members for ideas and let them know it is okay to
propose ideas at any time (caution: as chair choose one or two items you believe are important and pursue first, otherwise valuable time may be spent on issues of less urgency).

- Discuss ways to engage and retain students, often difficult towards end of the year – recognize, praise, offer to be a reference, emphasize importance of student involvement, bring food.

**What makes a good chair?**

- Bring food e.g. chocolate, cookies, nuts, fruit snacks.
- Be organized, send out agenda in advance, and stick to agenda.
- Be in tune with members and the group’s dynamics, allow all to speak and be heard - fairness.
- Be prepared prior to all meetings gathering material and your thoughts so that you can begin on time. Starting/ending on time and staying on task recognizes member’s time as valuable.
- Communicate regularly with members, but don’t overload by sending message after message.
- Don’t control every aspect - set the tone through carefully prepared messages: short, detailed description of issue(s) followed by bulleted action items or key points. Framing the discussion ahead of the scheduled meeting allows members to think about the issue for the face-to-face discussion and whether to discuss further, vote, or whether to pursue further.
- Invite individual(s) who made contact with you about an issue to the meeting, or invite ex officio/administrator who has oversight over a specific issue/policy.
- Take minutes (perhaps delegate minutes to a member) all motions, voting and decisions should be recorded.
- Conflict of interest: recuse oneself from the discussion/voting. Note: Documentation in the minutes where a conflict of interest may exist is crucial.

Feel free to contact the Faculty Secretary’s Office at any time.

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Respectfully submitted, Ann Thompson
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