

COMMITTEE CHAIR WORKSHOP

Faculty Senate and Committee Chair Retreat – Tuesday, August 16, 2016

Presenters: Dan Eveleth, College of Business and Economics and Marty Ytreberg, College of Science
(Both have served as Faculty Senate Chair, Vice Chair, Chair of Committee on Committee as well as other Senate committees)

Present: Scott Metlen (Academic Hearing Board), Shaakirrah Sanders (Administrative Hearing Board), Ralph Neuhaus (Admissions), Erin Agidius (Americans with Disabilities), Anne Marshall (Campus Planning), Kristin Henrich (Dismissal Hearings), Francesca Sammarruca (Faculty Appeals), Sharon Stoll (Institutional Review Board), Greg Turner-Rahmen (Information Technology), Sunil Sharma (Intellectual Property), Sandra Reineke (Library Affairs), Erik Coats (Scientific Misconduct), Kristin Haltinner (Student Appeals Committee) Nancy Deringer (Student Financial Aid), S.J. Jung (Ubuntu), Daryl Woolley (UBFC), Diane Prorak (UCGE), Pat Hart (University Curriculum Committee).

Absent: Martha Kitzrow (Academic Petitions), Jovanni-Rey dePedro (Arts), Jakob Magolan (Borah), Lori Enloe (Commencement), Brian Ellison (Faculty Affairs), Brian He (Honors), Bill Smith (Officer Education – late appointment), Rajung Yang (Parking), Jeff Dodge (Sabbatical), Todd Perry (Safety), Ken Cain (Scientific Misconduct), Tom Bitterwolf (Student Disciplinary Review Board – late appointment), Cheryl Wilhelmsen (Teaching & Advising), Tom Williams (Radiation Safety), Matt Dorschel (University Security and Compliance)

Guest: Kent Nelson

Context of Workshop – provide expectations, resources, tips and background history of the relationship between the University, Faculty Senate (Senate) and senate/university committees.

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.”

Dan Eveleth’s opening statement: “Shared governance is important.” Shared governance goes back a long time, Territorial Act and NWCCU. He referenced his time spent as a NWCCU reviewer visiting another university. The charge from NWCCU was to spend time interviewing faculty and the senate chair as to their role in shared governance. Today’s plan is to clearly lay out the committee’s role in shared governance.

It is important to understand that as a Senate committee, Senate is our boss. You are not off on an island by yourself. The following was presented to assist chairs in understanding a committee’s role within the University.

- Shared governance structure: your committee – Senate – university faculty as a whole, are all part of the approval hierarchy, as is the President and Regents (Territorial Act).
- Recognize that requests can come from anywhere e.g. faculty-staff-students, Senate, Senate Leadership (Liz Brandt, Chair, Patrick Hrdlicka, Vice Chair, Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary, Ann Thompson, staff support), another committee/task force, administration, SBOE.
- Know your audience and next approval levels, typically Senate, university faculty, President.
- Look ahead, anticipate problems, consult with others who might assist e.g. other committee chairs and/or members, previous chair, Senate Leadership.
- Recognize that while discussing policy changes as a committee, if there is a perceived issue and need for more feedback, request same before sending on to next approval level. This saves time and avoids an item being returned to your committee.

- Connect with Senate Leadership who may have insight into events, or other committees' work that may impact your committee.
- A task force may cross over a senate committee's charge, at a minimum both bodies should confer.
- The bulk of committees in *Faculty-Staff Handbook* (FSH) under [FSH 1640](#) are Senate driven committees whose role is to help govern the University (Territorial Act).
- Review your function/structure in [FSH 1640](#) to familiarize yourself with what to expect and your committee's role within the University. Ask members to be cognizant of this throughout the year, does the committee's work reflect the policy, is it current, should the function and/or structure change. Note the brackets with dates e.g. [rev. 7-16] in FSH 1640 indicates a revision.
- Hold a brainstorm meeting early on to identify topics of interest from all members, encourage participation from all and create an environment of fair processes.
- Committees that have set meeting times are encouraged to meet at the specified time. Members sign-up with the stated schedule in mind. However, it is possible to change (although discouraged) and all members must agree.
- Contact Committee on Committees (ConC) Chair Patrick Hrdlicka and/or the Faculty Secretary's Office at any time about processes, structure, etc. ConC is a resource that can help with any struggles, excessive absences, committee's work which becomes too laborious, function and structure changes, etc.
- Share any general ideas or concerns that may be of interest to the Senate, other committees, or the University, with Senate Leadership as soon as possible.

[FSH 1620](#) outlines your responsibilities as Chair and includes committee regulations/expectations, e.g. quorum, minutes, excessive absences, annual reports, etc. In answer to a question regarding C-10, actions are typically policy changes voted on by your committee which require approval through the hierarchy Senate, University Faculty, President, occasionally Regents.

Committee Chairs' Group Tips:

- be a good communicator, communicate clearly and often what is expected of members and what can be expected of you as chair
- good/clear agenda, stay on task
- keep meeting short/concise
- start and end on time
- hold meetings standing rather than sitting (typically goes faster)
- don't get caught up in heated exchanges, body language is crucial and will diffuse a heated exchange
- when setting up meeting times - ask members about their availability keeping in mind they have personal and other university commitments, e.g. childcare, other committees, class, etc.
- follow rule of order as noted on agenda
- begin meeting with reading minutes which allows members coming directly from another meeting or obligation time to shift gears
- recognize some members are introverts, sending material in advance allows them time to process
- send minutes out for review (minutes are important and are a record of your committee's work)
- committees that expect long meetings (disciplinary hearings ~8 hours) ensure that all members are aware of the time commitment
- students participation/attendance issues:
 - ask them to take minutes so they feel important, or consider whether there is another important role or way to encourage students
 - thank them for coming
 - draw them out, make them feel part of the group by asking them the student's perspective
 - subdivide work, ask them to explore, discuss with others, and report back to committee
 - be sure to call on them, some may feel hesitant to speak out in a room with mostly faculty

- set-up meetings in advance (day/hour/location) for semester/year, gets on everyone’s calendar and can be easily cancelled

Additional Advice from Presenters Eveleth & Ytreberg:

- As chair, your role is to ensure everyone’s voice is being heard as equally as possible. Become familiar with Robert’s Rules (RR), it provides guidance on running meetings fairly and well. For instance, in situations where a member dominates meetings, use RR to set a rule that a person cannot speak on a given issue twice, unless all have had a chance to speak at least once.
- Use of clock is discouraged, instead encourage members to wrap things up. You don’t want to squelch discussion, but you also don’t want a discussion to drag on. Remind members to be concise at every meeting until it appears to sink in.
- Situations may arise where controversies among guests are aired within your committee. It is okay to suggest that these groups go discuss and return after discussing. If, as chair, you anticipate this will happen, reach out to the parties before they come to the committee and see if you can assist. This is not to influence the outcome, but it is effective in saving the committee’s time.
- You have arrived at the end of a meeting and a few items remain on the agenda. Can you agree to vote electronically? Email voting is discouraged. However, sometimes committees have discussed enough and all that is needed is for someone to draft language, or edit policy, based off the discussion. You must ask whether the group wishes to remain to discuss further and vote, or whether members are comfortable with voting electronically. In this case, it is okay to send out electronically and vote, if all agree to this method. Suggestions:
 - Setting agenda ahead of time allows enough discussion time so the committee can comfortably vote by email, if it chooses.
 - A chair can be more effective with a well laid out agenda, moving things along and keeping members on task. If you notice the discussion begins to be repeated, interject indicating same and ask for a vote. The committee can then move on to the next agenda item and finish on time.

Note: Email voting is questionable. Email voting is not to be used to obtain a quorum or pass an item due to in-attendance. As chair, you should strongly encourage everyone to participate in person. Kent Nelson, General Counsel, present in the audience noted that email works if they participated in the meeting itself, e.g. Skype/Zoom or other video-audio means.

Roberts Rules states that committees and smaller organizations can have a more relaxed setting. However, *Robert’s Rules for Dummies* states: “A fundamental principle of parliamentary law is that decisions are only made by the members present in a properly called meeting at which a quorum is present. If you don’t attend the meeting you don’t benefit from information that’s presented during the discussion that precedes voting. If you haven’t been exposed to any discussion or debate on the topic, you simply can’t make a truly informed decision.”

Summary: Faculty Senate committees are an integral element to the University governance structure. Committee members respond best when they feel like their time is well spent and their input is validated - respect people’s time. People with a good experience on a committee will want to continue to serve and participate in shared governance at the university. Don’t be shy asking for help, reach out to Senate Leadership, Faculty Secretary, your senate representative, or ConC (Patrick Hrdlicka, Chair). ConC does a wonderful job helping chairs wrestle with problems.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Thompson, Assistant to Faculty Secretary