

FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEETING

PRESENT: Aktan, Andreopoulos, Brillante, Crick, Diamond, Duffy, Ellis, Flores-Marti, Fuentes, Griswold, Harris, Kearney, Kollia, Levitan, Liu, Makarec, Najarian, Natrajan, Nyaboga, O'Donnell, Orr, Potacco, Pozzi, Ranjan, Rebe, Rosar, Scala, Schwartz, Simon, Snyder, Spagna, Steinhart, Suess, Swanson, Tardi, Vega, Vishio, Wallace, Watad, Weisberg

ABSENT: Chung, Kecojevic, Kothandaraman, Russell

GUESTS: Only elected senators are permitted to attend a Faculty and Professional Staff Meeting.

PRELIMINARIES: Chairperson Scala called the Faculty and Professional Staff Meeting (closed meeting) to order at 12:31pm.

ADMINISTRATOR ASSESSMENT COUNCIL: DEANS: Scala invited comments on the six reports produced by the Administrator Assessment Council (AAC) and edited by the Executive Committee.

Several senators stated their appreciation for the work done by the AAC.

A senator expressed disappointment at the low response rates. He was reminded that this year there were about 187 respondents, considerably higher than the 150 or so that has been typical in past iterations of the surveys.

A senator was dismayed by the low ratings of the deans, overall, and said it was apparent that shared governance is hurt by the divisiveness practiced by some of the deans.

A senator asked how we can get the administration to discuss our concerns. Another senator noted that previous presidents have held that they were the only conduit between the faculty and the Board, but that we know that members of the Board do, in fact, read the survey results with great interest. Another member said we should insist on meeting with the Board.

Another senator added that the Board of Trustees and the administration should take note since WPU needs deans who are above average. These assessments should be taken into consideration for tenure, rehiring and raises.

A senator wondered if there are structural or cultural weaknesses at WPU that prevent the deans from doing their jobs, and advocated asking them why they fail. It was noted that the deans had received the unedited Qualtrics data at the same time as the AAC, and were given the opportunity to respond; none did.

A senator pointed out the differences between the quantitative data, which were in the average range in most cases, and the qualitative comments which were strongly negative for some deans.

A senator asked if the data could be disaggregated by faculty rank. This was done many years ago, but was stopped for fear of making it possible to identify individual faculty members when there were few respondents.

There were differing opinions on the dean of the COB, especially in regard to developing cordial relationships among the departments, and that some faculty have private reasons for their discontent. Another senator added that there are many comments about how faculty are treated by the deans.

A senator suggested that the structure of the university is a problem. All the deans under review were appointed or confirmed by the previous president.

The importance of the deans in important areas, such as the consolidation of departments, was also raised.

There is great competition among departments for resources and it is hard for the deans to manage this competition.

A senator stated that raising money is part of every dean's job description. Many don't have the skills nor success in doing so. Some do.

A senator asked if the same criteria used to tenure faculty are used when deans come up for tenure. Another member stated that at least one dean, who is holding faculty to strict publication standards, was recently tenured without any scholarly publications in over a decade.

A senator stated that there will be some training for deans this summer regarding how to deal with faculty and departments. The President is aware of the concerns of the faculty and has KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) in place to assess administrators. It is not possible, however, to dismiss every below average administrator all at once.

Another senator proposed that we create an ad hoc committee on "Dean Supervision" to oversee the performance of the deans and track how their conduct is addressed and improved.

A senator reminded the body that it is important for us to communicate clearly what we want in our deans.

A senator stated that many faculty believe that their own dean really can't get better and should pursue employment elsewhere. Another senator followed that comment up by stating that behavioral change will only occur if the President forces it. The AAC reports highlight what the President needs to work on with the deans. A third senator quipped that the Psychology department should train the President in behavior modification techniques.

A senator said that the deans serve at the pleasure of the President.

A senator noted that many search committees have recommended certain candidates for administrative positions but that other candidates were offered the job.

A senator complained that too much emphasis is being put on enrollment, which prevents deans from focusing on other issues like promoting faculty development and research.

A senator wished that the Senate had more time to discuss these issues, but the AAC reports must go to the Board as soon as possible, and today is the last meeting of this Senate.

A member concluded the discussion by noting that the AAC reports are a method for putting pressure on the President and the Board of Trustees to make necessary improvements. All administrators have KPIs from the President that serve as their benchmarks when he evaluates their performance. Will these KPIs be enough to help WPU survive?

ADJOURNMENT: The Faculty and Professional Staff Meeting adjourned at 1:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted: Since Duffy is chair of the AAC and had to answer questions during this discussion, Griswold served as Secretary Pro Tem during this meeting. Duffy reworked his notes for these Minutes.

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