

**A Joint Personnel Policies and Archivist Report**

**Submitted to the Faculty Senate on May 2, 2012**

A Report on Faculty Senate documentation that was requested by Dr. McMillan on February 22, 2012

(Preliminary and related documentation and correspondence can be found in Personnel Policies Reports and Faculty Senate Minutes of March and April 2012)

Appendices are in a separate document

April 23, 2012

From: William Lloyd Fridley, Faculty Senate Archivist and Chair of the Personnel Policies Committee

RE: Report on Faculty Senate documentation requested by Dr. McMillan

Dr. McMillan:

Here is a report that includes the documentation you requested initially on February 22, 2012,<sup>1</sup> and regarding which you clarified and specified the items you were requesting on March 7, 2012. I have attempted to provide hyperlinks to those documents that are posted on the Faculty Senate website. A separate document of Appendices includes relevant Faculty Senate documents that are not posted on the website.

[Dr. McMillan's email of 3/7/2012](#)

Dr. Fridley,

What I am trying to locate is any Faculty Senate documentation on any of the following issues:

- 1) Any long-pending policy recommendations which have not been responded to by the administration
- 2) Any documentation of the Faculty Senate's concerns about the selection processes for academic department chairs,
- 3) Any documentation regarding concerns about departmental independence,
- 4) Any documentation of the Faculty Senate's concern about policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure and promotion.

These were all identified in the Personnel Policies Committee minutes and I was unable to locate supporting documentation on the Faculty Senate website. So any information you have on any of these issues would be very helpful. Once you supply me the documentation I am hoping I can find out what happened to the administrative response.

Sincerely,

Doug McMillan

---

**1) Any long-pending policy recommendations which have not been responded to by the administration**

Your first specific request is for “[a]ny long-pending policy recommendations which have not been responded to by the administration.” In a spirit of fostering better communication, and with all due respect, the document you cite does not claim that our discouragement is solely, or even primarily in regard to policy recommendations the administration *has not responded to*. Rather, the document states: “The PPC expressed a sense of discouragement about what we perceive as a lack of **administrative responsiveness to, clear communication about, and action on** Faculty Senate concerns about policy” (emphasis added). Let us consider these three

highlighted phrases. First, is the distinction between *responded to* (an empirical fact) and *responsiveness to* (a qualitative term of degree). Perhaps your counseling background will help you to appreciate this distinction. For example, “I heard what you said, but I’m not going to help you” is *a response to*, but it is not very *responsive*.

The issue of a lack of clear communication between the faculty and administration on the matter of pending policy recommendations continues to be a matter of concern. You have scheduled a meeting with the Executive Committee for April 27<sup>th</sup>, to discuss these matters. You mentioned in your email to Diane Dixon (3/27/12) that “I have reviewed Dr. Clark’s spreadsheet concerning recommendations and resolutions from the Faculty Senate. I believe I can see where some of the problem is and would like to discuss this with you and the Executive Committee as soon as possible.” We are eager to meet with you and to hear what you perceive to be “some of the problem.”

For the issue of lack of *action on* policy recommendations, we are concerned primarily—though not exclusively—with the year-long efforts between the Personnel Policies Committee and Dr. Clark regarding the APPM. The Personnel Policies Committee began our work on the APPM with Dr. Clark in April of 2011 (see Appendix A). After over a year of work, hours of meetings, pages of writing, and numerous instances of email communication, there has not been one published change to the APPM, nor has there been a formal administrative decision on any of the Faculty Senate’s policy recommendations (some dating back to 2007). At the Faculty Senate meeting of April 4, Dr. Clark visited to inform us that he would be sending a *policy on policies* (as a prologue to the APPM), and the edited versions of Chapters 1 and 2. On April 18 the FS voted to review these documents and to vote on whether to recommend them on May 2. While this action is welcomed and appreciated, we can do better.

In short, the first item you request does not match what we claim we are discouraged about. This might also explain—in part—why you were unable to find any such documents in your search of the FS website.

---

**2) Any documentation of the Faculty Senate’s concerns about the selection processes for academic department chairs,**

The second item you request is for “any documentation of the Faculty Senate’s concerns about the selection processes for academic department chairs.” The issue of the selection processes for academic department chairs has been a topic of discussion by the FS in several venues and on several occasions. I will cite two instances in which this topic has been raised with the administration and documented. First, is a “Report to President Larry Minks: State of Shared Governance at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, [Faculty Senate, April 2010](#).” This document describes the Senate’s concerns on this topic to some degree, as well as other concerns about the state of shared governance at our university. A second example is the [March 1, 2011](#) meeting between the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and President Minks. This is cited in the linked document as a topic of discussion under the rubric of “Adherence to Existing Policies and Procedures.”

While this document does not include the President's response, subsequent discussions in FS meetings and FS committee meetings (including the PPC meeting of 1/23/12) have indicated that the response was unsatisfactory to non-existent. In any event, to the best of our knowledge, no formal actions have been taken to address the concerns that were raised. This raises at least two points in relation to this report. First, the PPC's concerns that were expressed at the meeting in question are not necessarily confined to instances that have been formally documented (though there is formal documentation for all the items you request). Discussions about these issues continue and develop over time and place and include information from academic department meetings, information from the faculty we represent, correspondence between faculty and administration (that may not be posted on the FS website), and FS documents (e.g. Personnel Policies Committee Reports) that may not have been posted by Archivists in the past.<sup>ii</sup> The Faculty Senate has worked diligently over the last three years to improve our record keeping and documentation. I believe we have made great strides in this regard. As a first-year Archivist, I am still "learning the ropes." While I am not perfect, I am trying my best to continue the FS's efforts to "elevate our game" in terms of keeping accurate and thorough documentation of our activities.

---

### **3) Any documentation regarding concerns about departmental independence,**

The third item you request is "any documentation regarding concerns about departmental independence." The issue is addressed in the document "Report to President Larry Minks: State of Shared Governance at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, [Faculty Senate, April 2010](#)." Several examples related to perceived deficiencies in maintaining departmental independence are described in a portion of this document titled "Section 2: Governance Concerns with Specific Actions of the Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences (EBS)." Other examples of related concerns can be found in the posted "Comments" section of the FS Survey of [Spring 2010](#).

Perhaps the most pointed example of concerns about departmental independence is the [FS Resolution](#) on faculty prerogatives for establishing classroom procedures. This resolution grew out of faculty complaints that the Dean of the SEBS was attempting to create classroom policies (e.g. on grading procedures, attendance policies, and the use of electronic devices in the classroom) that were inconsistent with existing university policy, were not subject to adequate faculty input and review, did not show respect for the professional judgment of faculty, and functioned to compromise departmental independence.

The resolution was approved by the FS on [November 10, 2010](#), and was sent to the administration on [November 11, 2010](#). On [11/16/2010](#), Dr. McMillan issued an email response to the resolution in which he expressed his view that the intent of the resolution focused on *academic freedom*. In addition, he requested that the FS draft a report (with citations) on academic freedom that was to include a response to six specific questions raised by Dr. McMillan. While many Senators expressed dismay at Dr. McMillan's interpretation of our resolution (the primary intent of the document was not on *academic freedom*), and several viewed his request as a "homework assignment," the PPC nonetheless got to work on drafting the requested document. We did this for several reasons: as a good faith effort to comply with what appeared to be a sincere request for faculty input, to build a dialog on a matter of significant academic concern, and to re-direct the administration's attention to the primary topics of the resolution: faculty prerogatives on establishing classroom policies and departmental independence.

The Senate's "Summary Report on Academic Freedom" and a motion to forward the report to the administration were approved at the Faculty Senate meeting of [January 19, 2011](#). The report

was sent to Dr. McMillan (cc President Minks) on 11/21/2011 (see Appendix B). It included several questions for the administration in an effort to clarify the administration's position on and response to the faculty concerns expressed in the resolution. Though we eagerly awaited the administration's response and had high hopes for meaningful dialog, to the best of our knowledge no response was issued and no answers to our questions were given.

---

**4) Any documentation of the Faculty Senate's concern about policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure and promotion.**

The fourth item you request is "any documentation of the Faculty Senate's concern about policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure and promotion." These concerns primarily relate to decisions about and actions related to Dr. Rachel Tudor's attempts to re-apply for tenure and promotion. During the 2010-2011 academic year, Dr. Tudor was an active member of the Faculty Senate and the Personnel Policies Committee. She supplied us with documents about the issues related to her tenure and promotion application, and these were the subject of much discussion. Most pointedly, in relation to your request, was the decision not to allow Dr. Tudor to re-apply for tenure and promotion in the fall of 2011. Among the reasons cited by President Minks for this decision was that "policy and University precedent are consistent regarding faculty members ability to make application for tenure only one time following the fifth, sixth or seventh year of service to the University" (letter dated March 25, 2011). The following documents include examples of FS and Personnel Policies Committee deliberations about, concerns with and proposed action on the issue of policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure.

- Personnel Policies Committee Report of November 10, 2010 (the Personnel Policies Committee Reports are included in Appendix C)
  - Faculty Senate [Minutes of February 16, 2011](#) (resolution cited in V.C.2)
  - Personnel Policies Committee Report of April 13, 2011
  - Faculty Senate [Minutes of April 13, 2011](#)
  - Faculty Senate [Minutes of May 11, 2011](#)
- 

We appreciate your interest in the work of the Faculty Senate, and we eagerly await your explanation for what happened to the administrative response on these items. What is of greater concern is the apparent lack of recognition on the administration's part that the Faculty Senate's hard work, recommendations, and proposals merit serious consideration. Our work over the last three years has been motivated by a sincere effort to improve communication, to foster a more robust system of shared governance, and to help our university to better achieve its stated mission of adhering to well-defined organizational structures, policies, and procedures. We again request and welcome your cooperation with and candid communication about these efforts.

Sincerely,

William Lloyd Fridley, Ph.D.

Faculty Senate Archivist, Chair of the Personnel Policies Committee of the Faculty Senate

---

<sup>i</sup> The following paragraph was included in the minutes from the meeting of the Faculty Senate Personnel Policy Committee on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

The PPC expressed a sense of discouragement about what we perceive as a lack of administrative responsiveness to, clear communication about, and action on Faculty Senate concerns about policy. These concerns have included post-tenure review, tenure and promotion processes, departmental criteria for T & P, long-pending policy recommendations, formal processes for shared governance, developing and publishing a policy on making policy, faculty prerogatives to create classroom policies, the selection processes for academic department chairs, departmental independence, policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure and promotion, and fulfillment of the University's mission to "adhere to well-defined organizational structures, policies, and procedures (APPM 1.5.2 "for the faculty" point 3).

In an effort to better communicate about these issues, I am attempting to develop a document that describes the administrative response to the issues that the Personnel Policy Committee is discouraged about. I have not been able to find any Faculty Senate Documents on the following issues: any long-pending policy recommendations, the selection processes for academic department chairs, departmental independence, and policy and precedent on faculty re-applying for tenure and promotion. These issues were taken directly from the minutes of the Personnel Policy Committee. Will you please send me any supporting documents for each of these items, so that I can determine if the administration ever did respond to these items. If no response has been forthcoming I want to try to get you one as soon as possible. I am working on responses to the other issues raised in the minutes and will have them to you shortly.

<sup>ii</sup> Prior to this academic year, the FS Archivist did not post all committee reports on the website. The Personnel Policies Committee Reports cited for item 4 are included in Appendix C with the emails that document that these Reports were indeed sent to the FS.