

Faculty Senate Minutes

Meeting No. 6, Spring Semester 2023

(Plenary Session)

14th April 2023, 14:00

Room A402

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 14:00.

In attendance:

- Professor O
- Professor Hsieh
- Professor Ryoo
- Professor Han
- Professor Fletcher (Professor Houghton's alternate)
- Professor Hong
- Professor Pennings
- Professor Jeong
- Professor Lenz
- Professor Kang
- Chair Omondi

Acceptance of Agenda

- Accepted by all.

Approval of Prior Meeting's Minutes

- Approved by all.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

- Met on Monday 10th April.
- Normally, the committee reports are submitted before the executive committee meet, as the purpose of the meeting is to give feedback to the other committees. However, this time, it was held earlier, as the original purpose was to voice the need for the next elections to take place by 23rd April.
- A concern over the construction of the Bylaws was raised and questions were asked as to whether they ought to be amended. For an amendment to take place, notice of at least one week must be given to the Senate. The initial thought was that it was too late to make an amendment, as it would not allow the elections to take place at the correct time. However, the rules are not to be followed blindly and as such, exceptions should be made, particularly

when it comes to an amendment regarding the election process. This amendment will be present later.

Academic Personnel Policy

- There are limited guidelines for FIT in the Faculty Handbook. Since last semester, the APP has been looking at how to remedy the situation. Presently, the policies of FIT Korea differ a lot from the home campus and there are a lot of hurdles that need to be overcome before a potential tenure process can be implemented.
- The other two issues regarding FIT are that of salaries and promotions. Neither of these are addressed in any manner in the Faculty Handbook. The APP would like to try and replicate the situation in New York, to receive as little resistance as possible. They aim to deliver a draft proposal by the end of the semester.
 - Chair Omondi asked that they stay away from issues of tenure, as this is likely to cause more issues.
 - Provost Hefazi - the administration has previously proposed the ability to hire tenure track faculty to the home campus. The proposal was rejected, and they asked for it to be revised. Recently, the home campus approved the latest proposal, for hiring academic qualified grant faculty, but not tenure track. This will be shared with the Senate soon.
 - Chair Omondi, asked whether the 3-year rolling contracts for academic qualified rank applies to FIT faculty. The provost confirmed that it does.
- The APP investigated creating a "Faculty Development Online Hub", for the faculty to share knowledge and advice about teaching and research after the faculty orientation each semester.
 - Chair Omondi questioned whether this would fall under the APP committee's remit and recommended that it would be better for the EC or the APES to look into this, both of whom may already have too much going on.
 - Questions were raised as to whether approval is needed for such an online hub. Approval would be needed if it were to be official. Chair Omondi suggested having the executive committee handle this issue.
 - Professor Lenz questioned the need for an official means such as this. Chair Omondi suggested that perhaps it could be just posted privately. According to Professor Hsieh the aim of making it official, is to encourage participation.

Education Council

- The EC presented an extensive 32-page draft of their proposal for SUNY Korea's CELT.
- They examined the CELT equivalent systems at SBU, FIT, top US and Korean universities, as well as select SUNY schools. There appears to be no overarching guidelines by the SUNY system.
- The EC has been focussed on consultations with faculty, with a new survey being worked on.
- The EC has so far created two different scenarios for the proposed CELT, depending on the extent of the investment from the administration, with there being either a full-time centre or for it to be run only during the inter-sessions. They aim to develop an intermediate scenario as well. The EC plan to finalise the proposal and distribute it along with a questionnaire to the faculty soon.
- Some work has been undergoing on Duolingo and the language levels of the students. Unfortunately, Professor Houghton could not be here today to speak about it. But it appears to be a common issue amongst faculty that students are struggling to understand in-class directions, often having to ask peers for translations.

- Chair Omondi - the second page of the committee report stated that Professor Houghton outlined a series of potential remedies for the university, but the report did not include any details, please make sure to include them in the future.
- Dean Pak asked how the faculty can deal with the use of ChatGPT in classes. Professor Pennings stated that an ad-hoc committee is already working on this.

Campus Environment and Faculty Welfare

- The Supplemental Individual Developments Awards (SIDA) program is ready to be submitted.
- A new faculty living guide is being prepared, in assistance with Mr. Sangnoh Kim from Academic Affairs, who is updating the existing document. Once this has been finished, the CEFW will have a better starting point for discussion on what else needs doing.
- Professor Hsieh asked if the SIDA program has any way to stop double payback, and whether they will have to submit their own personal credit card. Professor Hong stated that the process will be completed at the end of the year, and submission of everything will be necessary.
- The CEFW hopes that it will be possible to start the SIDA program on 1st July 2023.

Academic Planning and Education Services

- The APES committee's main topic of discussion was financial support for RAs.
 - Presently, the number of graduate students in Korea is decreasing, however, the number of international graduate students is increasing. Therefore, the target of SUNY should be to recruit international students.
 - The present situation is that RA's must pay 3,900,000 KRW up front for their semester, while TAs do not pay anything. Consequently, even though TA's earn less, 1,000,000 KRW a month compared to 1,500,000 KRW, it is seen as financially more desirable. Many TAs then try to be hired as RAs during the vacation time, meaning that they net 7,000,000 KRW, compared to 5,100,000 KRW for a student that was an RA for the whole semester and the vacation. Consequently, the suggestion is to raise the pay of the RAs to 2,000,000, to make it financially beneficial for a student to apply to be an RA throughout the whole semester.
 - The tuition fees at SUNY Korea are much more expensive than other Korean schools, and an RA at SUNY Korea is still paying more for tuition than an average student at a Korean public university. At present, another private university in Incheon requires an RA to maintain a minimum GPA of over 3.0 in their academic programs, to be eligible.
 - The proposal, therefore, is for a 100% tuition waiver (currently 70%) to be provided for graduate research assistants at SUNY Korea who have been paid more than 60% of their stipend/salary from their advisor and have a previous GPA of 3.5 or higher.
 - The cost is likely to be between 117,000,000 KRW and 195,000,000 KRW per year.
 - Concerns were aired on the GPA requirement, and the possibility that it would lead to less students being able to apply.
 - Dean Pak said that the administration is currently looking at raising the TA salary, to either 1,200,000 or 1,500,000.
 - Provost Hefazi discussed the issue of TAs. TAs do not net their income, as they pay 8% tax and must pay insurance and other fees. Additionally, most TAs work for 8 months but want to live in the dorms for 12 months. None of the present schemes are adequate. The issue seems to be that the APES wants to encourage students to become RAs and not TAs. Professors need to show students that being an RA is a higher position and is better when applying for future jobs and as such is beneficial to their careers. These proposed raises are a commitment from the school to having a better research background, and to help bring

in more grants. To aid with the development of international student numbers, the administration may have to ask faculty to travel to other countries and actively promote the university.

- There were questions raised on the eligibility of undergraduate students to receive these raises. Presently, only AMS allows undergraduate students to be TAs.
- Chair Omondi stated that it looks like the proposal is basically done and just needs sending to the university.

The Ad Hoc Committee on AI's Findings and Recommendations.

- Professors Jeong, Houghton, and Hsieh headed up the committee.
- The committee looked to create a list of best practices; however, different courses will make different uses of the technology, along with the possibility that some faculty will want to use AI more, and some will wish not to use it at all in their classes. Therefore, a list of requirements may not be appropriate.
 - We are in the early stages of the proliferation of AI, therefore, a list of best practices, is likely to change quickly in the coming months. Each committee member created their own list of recommendations, based on their field, which was then combined into one list, with the aim of sharing it with the entire faculty body.
 - The committee will send out a survey to identify how faculty members are currently dealing with AI, with some reportedly allowing students to complete work using it, while others are much stricter. The committee is working to optimise the survey so as to receive the most responses. The survey should be sent out in the next couple of weeks, so that the feedback can be collated before the next session.
- Questions were raised on how long the committee would exist for. At present, it is a standing ad-hoc committee, but it is likely to need new members for the next semester.
- Dean Pak asked that the committee find out how AI is affecting SUNY Korea's academic integrity, and warned that we need to be smarter than our students in detecting it.
- Provost Hefazi, proposed making the question how to integrate the technology into our classes, rather than outright banning it, which is unlikely to work.

Any other business

1) Professor Hsieh presenting Professor Houghton's proposal to amend the Bylaws

- Chair Omondi - The email to ask the department chairs to have their elections did not go out, due to this proposal to amend the Bylaws. If the Bylaws are seriously flawed, it does not make sense to go ahead following the other rules. Nevertheless, if the Senate decides to look at the proposal, there will have to be another meeting, which would be next Friday at the earliest. This would delay the elections. Therefore, the Senate must look at the draft and consider whether it is properly founded to serve as a notice of a proposal for an amendment.
- This issue was raised in the Executive Committee by Professor Houghton; however, unfortunately, as he is not present, the feedback received is not in the document.
- Presently, the Bylaws have a condition that half of the senators will serve for two years and half for one year, to stagger the elections, allowing continuity within the membership of the Senate. There is another clause that senators may not serve two consecutive terms. The Bylaws also state that a term is two years.
- The argument was made that it was not clear to everyone that one year would be considered a term, as this is not stated in the Bylaws. In the Executive Committee meeting, questions were

raised on whether any apparent vagueness in the Bylaws was intentional. Consequently, Chair Omondi asked the provost, who chaired the drafting committee of the Bylaws, to find out the intention, which was for one year to be considered a term.

- Professor Lenz asked about the situation of the FSH whereby the senator will have sat for only one semester before the election. Chair Omondi stated that the Executive Committee had already decided that the FSH representative would be able to run for re-election as this case is not in the Bylaws. Professor Lenz then stated that the wording is that a term is two years. Chair Omondi stated that as the FSH currently only has the position for six months, it would be neither considered a one- or two-year term, and so Professor Lenz would be able to be re-elected. Chair Omondi stated that the issue is, was the initial one year a term or not.
- Professor Hsieh asked whether the possibility that a senator could stand for three years is such a big difference from two years, that it should not be allowed? If this can be explained, then there is no need to proceed.
 - Professor Pennings - the two-year term was agreed to be fair to those on shorter term contracts.
 - Provost Hefazi - the initial assumption was to go by terms and not years. The senate has every right to change the Bylaws, but even if it is changed, the Senate will end up with a year discrepancy.
- Professor Hsieh, this is a one-off issue and will not happen again, due to the Senate being newly formed.
- Professor Han stated that he cannot find any compelling reason to change the Bylaws and to delay the elections.
- Chair Omondi - any proposal must be properly founded. Why are we trying to amend this? Unfortunately, the amendments recommended by the Executive Committee are not reflected in the document.
 - Professor Hsieh – the Bylaws must be amended for clarity, either way.
 - Professor Lenz asked how this would affect the staggering of elections. Professor Hsieh mentioned even if we allow those with one-year to serve a further two-year term, the elections will still remain staggered, so this is not an issue.
- Chair Omondi – in the drafted document, there is a second issue regarding an alternate, but that can wait for now. The main issue for today, is whether we have a proposal to amend the Bylaws, so that those elected for one year, can be elected for another two years.
 - Professor Lenz asked why the case of those elected for one year is different to that of an alternate taking over part way through a two-year period. Chair Omondi, stated that it is a different issue, as a person elected for one year is a one-off case. The first draft of this proposal had the issues separated. The issue for today, is whether to amend the Bylaws so that those initially elected for one year should be able to be elected again.
- Chair Omondi - it is unfortunate for those not on the Executive Committee that they are unable to see the feedback that was received. He asked that the senators vote on whether there is a well-founded proposal to amend the Bylaws.
- Professor Hsieh - so as a senate, we would have to disagree with the intentions of the initial drafters, to make this amendment. He gave the example of the Business Management department, whereby most faculty are tenure-track and would not be able to serve on the senate without potentially harming their career.
 - Provost Hefazi, stated that it could be good for tenure-track faculty as it would count as service for the university.
- Chair Omondi – it is important to remember that one or two years is a relatively short time, so it is important for people to think of the long term in their contributions. Professor Hsieh

responded the issue is what can a senator do in their term. The point is to have a comfortable enough amount of time to be able to see policies enacted.

- Chair Omondi stated that the vote is to be on whether this proposal is sufficiently well founded to serve as a notice for a request to amend the Bylaws and called for a vote at 15:38. Seven senators voted, more than the two-thirds required by the Bylaws. Chair Omondi will draft the proposed amendment.
- Some discussion took place on the best time for this to be voted on. There was a vote held. The result was that the vote to amend the Bylaws will take place on Monday 24th April 2023 at 8 pm on Zoom.

2) Professor Fletcher speaking on behalf of Professor Houghton

- Presently, students are required to submit an English essay to admissions in order to enter the Intensive English Centre. We have noted that the essays are not written by the students, with many openly admitting that they use AI or commission other people to write the papers. Because of this, students with 0 English ability are being accepted to the university. The suggestion to make the students come in to write this essay, as is the norm in most institutions, has been dismissed by the admissions team. This is particularly an issue with the uprising of AI, and these problems have repercussions that affect students' coursework throughout their time at the university. Because many of these students start at such a low level, not only are the IEC faculty forced to train students in elementary-level English—when their focus should be more on training students for using English in university coursework—but the students who move on to courses like WRT 101 and 102 are often not capable of the degree of English writing that is required for these courses. This forces the instructors of these courses to further reduce their own expectations for the students' work or— for 102—to hyper-focus on the bare-minimum of the university's portfolio requirements so students can pass the course. If we do not accept students who are minimally capable of the coursework from the beginning, it is detrimental to the university's academic atmosphere and the reputation of SUNY Korea. If action is not taken, we could end up with a reputation of being a degree mill, whereby students without the ability to even understand basic English are receiving a degree from an American university. This damages our ability to recruit high-quality students, graduate students, and faculty.
 - The proposal is to make changes to the method of the entrance essay. The students should have to write their essay in a timed, controlled environment.
 - Dean Pak, the admissions team wish to make it as easy for people to apply as possible. Please type up and send the proposal to the administration.
- Professor Houghton would like to see the faculty senate appeal to the administration that a stronger course of action is needed to deal with inappropriate smoking on campus. Last semester, Professor Houghton was teaching in the B building on the second floor. Professor Houghton's classes were constantly interrupted by the smokers being loud outside the window and underneath his classroom. The classroom also always smelled of smoke. Additionally, the campus is becoming dirtier and dirtier, with the smokers not only throwing cigarette butts on the floor, but all manner of other trash. This is littering and shows disrespect to the university and to the other members of the community. To make matters worse, Professor Houghton often get reports of staff members, faculty, and student workers smoking beside the B building. The smoking has also spread to between B and C buildings, and as of last week, students have been smoking in the quad. The library roof is also regularly home to smokers. Many of these areas are covered with cigarette butts, and students have been seen moving or knocking down no-smoking signs before smoking in prohibited areas. The lack of enforcement, and consistency has worsened the situation, and it will only continue to do so if the university does

not act swiftly. Emails and videos in the Guesthouse elevators have not been effective in stamping out this problem.

- Chair Omondi - sharing insight from the view of an ex-smoker, the students will continue to smoke there, as the real problem is the IGC, which has a smoking box on the other side of George Mason. The only way to fix this problem is for the IGC to be sensible as to where they position the smoking booths. It does not seem that the Faculty Senate needs to make a proposal, but rather that the Faculty Senate is asking for action to be taken. Professor Fletcher stated that if there is not enforcement of the rules, then why would the students follow them.
- Dean Pak, we are working with the IGC to position more smoking booths, hiring a guard to patrol the areas, and student affairs will also have to be strong on this matter.
- Dean Pak had two announcements:
 - The deadline for the upcoming IGC research showcase is on Monday.
 - The faculty outing will be next Friday. There are still some seats on the bus.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 15:59.