



Faculty Senate

Meeting No. 1, Spring Semester 2024
(Plenary Session)
08 Mar 2024, 2:00pm
Room A402

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 2:01pm. The following Senators were present: Lenz, Jeong, Cho, Tran, Han, Lee, Omondi, Hsieh, Cabuay, Ryoo. Senator Houghton was absent (excused). Dean Pak and Prof Ramona Dunlap (new FIT faculty) were in attendance for the entire meeting.

2. Acceptance of Agenda

The Agenda was accepted.

3. Approval of Prior Meeting's Minutes

The Prior Meeting's Minutes were approved.

4. Plans of action from each committee

a. Executive Committee

Prof Omondi noted that faculty engagement for Senate-covered issues is still not what it could/should be, and each Senator could try to increase faculty engagement by asking their departments to set aside a few minutes in each departmental meeting to talk about Senate.

Prof Omondi noted that the Executive Committee doesn't really have any unfinished business from last semester, and will continue to review committee reports and actions.

b. Academic Personnel Policy

Prof Tran mentioned that the plan of the APPC committee is to continue the work from last semester. That committee will add a table in the Faculty Handbook that covers FIT's faculty degree requirements and experience requirements necessary for new hires; and then another section that addresses FIT's assessment criteria and evaluation forms. The APPC committee will design the criteria and forms so that they are useable by all FIT faculty.

Prof Omondi pointed out that our Senate needs to take care not to revise degree requirements standardized at FIT NY campus, because they have more say in such matters than we do.

Prof Omondi also pointed out that there are many adjuncts not only at FIT but also in FSH. So, therefore, the committee may consider distinguishing between those faculty (hiring) terms and/or conditions that apply to FIT adjuncts, versus those that apply to all SUNY Korea adjuncts.

Prof Dunlap covered that, at FIT NY, it's not simply a matter of tying a salary to a job title. She mentioned that FIT NY adjunct faculty are paid for classroom hours, not for auxiliary activities (e.g. course prep, grading). If you're an adjunct and you write a course and the course is not approved by the curriculum committee, then there's no pay for that. Finally, the evaluation process is tied to reappointment. Voting members of the Union can vote to re-appoint an adjunct, re-appoint with reservation, or vote not to reappoint.

Dean Pak accepted that it could be valuable to have some guidelines written in the Handbook for the future hiring of adjuncts, and that it would be discussed with SUNY Korea Leadership.

Prof Omondi indicated that somebody in the APPC should be going through the entire Faculty Handbook to detect shortcomings or ambiguities in the text insofar that it needs changes in 'quite a few places'. And he suggests that other Senators also help with this process.

c. Campus Environment and Faculty Welfare

Prof Han re-addressed the three CEFW benefit initiatives from last semester: funeral association, resort membership, and private medical insurance. A survey should/will be sent out to the faculty to get their feedback, in order to help the committee design the benefits.

Prof Ryoo mentioned that he has the log-in details for the new Faculty Senate email account, which he can share, to help the CEFW committee to send out the survey. Prof Han will tentatively be sending the survey text to Prof Ryoo and the latter will send the email out. Prof Han also pointed out that the list of faculty members eligible to opine about these initiatives is not the same as the entire SUNY Korea faculty list.

Prof Omondi asked Prof Hsieh to email each Senator a reminder to compile a list of emails of those faculty that are eligible to take this survey.

Prof Lenz mentioned that their committee will try to wrap up the policy development stage by the end of the semester, in order to present policy proposals to the leadership at that time.

Prof Lenz also mentioned that there is a smoking section near SUNY Korea's building. They also mentioned that faculty have approached the committee recently inquiring about the possibility of adding bike pumps around campus; making up for the lack of markers/erasers in classrooms; fixing or upgrading poorly functioning projector equipment; and adding some form of interior design or decoration. She wanted to know whether her committee (or the Senate more generally) needed to make proposals for each of these action items.

Dean Pak responded that any faculty can pick up new markers and erasers in A201 anytime. Overhead projectors are "IGC items" and sometimes IGC doesn't have new/spare ones available. Regarding any problems/'issues' with our building facility (i.e. classrooms), SUNY Korea faculty can contact Academic Affairs, which will then make the necessary contacts to address/fix the situation. In the long run, SUNY Korea may invest its own money to buy technical equipment, but until that time comes, we have to ask IGC to come and fix these matters. Prof Omondi indicated that it's valuable to make a distinction between 'minor' things and 'major' things, and that for 'major' things, the committee should go through the process of consulting with the Admin.

Prof Lenz indicated that their committee has been hearing suggestions from other faculty regarding CEFW issues, and also has been generating some suggestions on its own, and that any SUNY Korea faculty can feel free to them with other ideas for campus improvements.

d. Education Council

Prof Cabuay mentioned that he has written out an initial 10-page-long framework for the Center for Teaching and Learning ('CTL'), which could be launched in a gradual, simple, memorable, fun, cheap, flexible effective way, via an event, allowing 'incremental buy-in' from all faculty. The value proposition for similarly proposed Centers was not articulated in a way in which people could readily understand it. In the short run, the Center would be an 'instrument' useful for standardizing the teaching of our newly appointed professors. In the long run, he envisions the Center as a relationship-building forum where SUNY Korea faculty could celebrate the teaching experiences that professors have had during the semester. One kind of purpose of the Center could be inviting guest speakers to come talk and highlight the usefulness of technological platforms based on emerging technologies (e.g. AI). Another possible role of the Center would be to conduct field trips where professors could tour the Learning & Development facilities of large corporations like LG or Samsung... By the end of the semester, there can be a pilot/on-boarding event for the CTL.

Prof Cabuay also addressed that participation in the CTL's program offerings would be voluntary, but that records of participation could look good on faculty members' yearly evaluations.

Dean Pak wanted to address the topic of education, while the Senate was discussing it. He said that this semester, there was a record number of students enrolling, more than ever before. Placement exam scores suggest that the quality of students hasn't gone down but rather have gone up a bit. Yet, the administration is seeing more requests for tutoring. Dean Pak suggested that the faculty and staff may have to develop programming or instructional material that teaches the students some study methodologies, not just teaching the course material itself. The students may need to be increasingly trained to learn how to become more academically independent as they go through earning the SUNY Korea degree.

Dean Pak also indicated that some students don't appear to be familiar with professional etiquette and that maybe this can be taught during a session or course on 'public speaking'. He pointed out that, although the SUNY Korea CDC offers sessions that address this skill, he would like all faculty to teach professional etiquette as well (e.g. how to address professors and other professionals).

Finally, Dean Pak mentioned that DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) is becoming a big trend in the USA. FIT (NY) now wants to meld DEI into its courses (instead of having a separate course on it), and they have a webinar about it. The EC should look into how we could bring DEI into our SUNY Korea coursework.

Prof Hsieh indicated that we don't really have any culture of supporting or recognizing teaching excellence on campus. The vast majority of universities announce teaching awards, but at SUNY Korea there seems to be some cynicism (a la perceptions of 'popularity contests') blocking the adoption of such awards. One way to begin motivating our teachers here to participate in CTL programming is to institutionalize a teaching award. Prof Cabuay responded that such an award could also be presented at the CTL's end-of-the-semester event. Dean Pak indicated that this kind of award is better off being driven by the Senate as compared to Admin; that care should be taken to ensure that there can be widespread agreement about the judging criteria; and that such awards could be announced and given out during commencement. Prof Omondi remarked that the teaching award might be something that could be developed independently of the CTL.

Prof Omondi mentioned that part of the reason the Teaching Award has stalled in the past, here at SUNY Korea, has to do with skepticism about the use of teaching evaluations as a basis for determining award winners. SUNY Korea might consider benchmarking against other universities to get some guidelines on what kinds of teaching awards we could stand to give.

Prof Omondi also indicated that getting faculty interested to participate in the Center may be tough, especially insofar that some/many faculty already get good student evaluations and might then see no point in the Center's programming. Along the same lines, gauging faculty interest may also require understanding what programming that faculty want from this kind of Center in the first place. Prof Hsieh responded that the CTL might be able to increase participation by framing programming in terms of giving professors a chance to share their expertise, instead of telling them that the CTL will "teach them how to become a better professor or teacher". Prof Hsieh also pointed out that an online forum ("Communication Hub") was created on Slack last year, in part to help professors share

their knowledge and expertise about teaching. Through today, about 30 professors have registered, but participation generally has been minimal. Prof Cabuay responded that he would like to approach faculty individually and explain that this Center intends to honor and celebrate our faculty's efforts. Prof. Cabuay also mentioned that he supports all the technological mechanisms that can eventually be implemented in the CTL including the "slack" platform. Prof. Cabuay suggested that acquiring "political" buy-in may be achieved through personnel meetings and small group briefings to deliver a personalized "value statement," of the CTL to each potential SUNY Korea member. As a result of this approach, the CTL may be able to include more sophisticated technical metrics that can be accepted as a "norm of operations" for the CTL moving forward – in other words, "personalization for institutionalization."

e. Academic Planning and Education Services

Prof Ryoo mentioned that SUNY Korea used to offer research awards, choosing three award winners to receive cash grants as a kind of incentive. Nowadays, if we want to incentivize faculty to make large proposals (i.e. for government grants), we need to have clearly documented rules for any accompanying incentives.

Dean Pak mentioned that the other option is to follow the typical policy adopted by other universities, re: incentivizing per paper published. Prof Ryoo remarked that up to 6% of a government grant can be distributed as incentives to the grantee's staff/research team (including PI's and co-PI's), and the max distributed to any PI is 3% (of the entire government grant). If large government grants can be awarded at some institutional level within SUNY Korea, this could attract more (high-quality) graduate students.¹

5. Possible change in regulations re: Senate Terms (via ad hoc committee)

Prof Hsieh described that the Senate had been concerned at its inception with the matter of turnover. If all departments re-elected their Senators at the same time (every two years), then there could arise the potential situation where the Senate would be renewed entirely with "freshmen" (i.e. inexperienced) Senators. For that reason, it was decided to split the Senate according to two sets of departments (one set being CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE (called "Track 1"); and the other set being AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP (called "Track 2")); and every year, only one of these two sets would go up for re-election (i.e. alternating sets every year).

At the same time, at inception, it was decided that the Senate would also have an Executive Board (composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary; and then two more at-large Officers). Officers would also have two-year terms. Today, the Chair comes out of CS, and the Vice Chair and Secretary respectively come out of BM and ELP. Sparing the details, as of today, with our current

¹ In a follow-up within 24 hours of this March Senate meeting, the Senate's Secretary asked Prof Ryoo to clarify, and the latter commented: "When a professor secures \$100 for the institution, between 20% and 30% of this amount is dedicated to salary expenses. Within this salary allocation, a maximum of 20% may be designated for incentives, translating to between \$4 and \$6. From this incentive fund, the principal investigator (PI) can claim up to 50% for themselves, with the balance being shared among the team members, including co-PIs and research students. This distribution results in incentive payments ranging from \$2 to \$3."

setup, the Chair could only come from CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE and the Vice Chair/Secretary could only come from AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP. This is not equitable.

Back in December, an ad hoc committee (made up of Profs Hsieh, Lenz, and Han) was formed to address this problem (“Problem #1”: see attached). Prof Hsieh shared the three options (“scenarios”) for updating the policy, which involves holding Officer elections at twice the frequency of Senator elections. As those figures indicate, updates that use Scenario #2 or Scenario #3 would require extending the service of current Senators from Track #2. Now that these options have been presented to the Senate, it can go for a vote in April.

In addition to this change to the frequency of Officer elections, there is also the matter of the re-electability of Officers, which would be a separate policy that could be proposed for a May 2024 vote.

Prof Cabuay inquired how we ended up with Track #1 being where the Chair was drawn from. Prof Omondi indicated that this particular part of the policy was inadvertent and unintentional.

Prof Omondi raised the issue that if term limits are indeed removed, then there’s a difference between whether we vote/decide on that before our upcoming elections this semester, versus after those elections (esp. in terms of whether current Senators would be allowed on the ballots). Prof Hsieh responded that one way to reduce the conflict or controversy would be to introduce any new clause for (relaxed) term limits to take effect at a later date (i.e. Fall 2024).

Although it would be valuable to be able to vote on both the Officer tracks issue and the term limits issue concurrently, these two are interdependent policies, and the ad hoc committee’s original idea was to give each Senator extra time to think about how to vote on the second issue re: term limits.

Prof Omondi indicated that a 4-year term for Senators (i.e. “Scenario 3”) would be hard to sell. Prof Hsieh replied that it is only there as an additional option, given that it gives Officers a full 2 years to manage the Senate (which can be useful given that the first semester of an Officer’s term can probably be required to get acclimated to the role). Prof Hsieh mentioned that, at the very least, this same kind of thinking led the ad hoc committee to introduce the 3-year/1½-year option (“Scenario 2”). Prof Omondi asked the Senate to consider the effects that their vote would have on other rules and aspects of the Senate, namely what constitutes an “adequate rate of renewal” of the Senate’s membership.

Prof Hsieh then described another potential problem (see attached: “Problem #2”) with regulations, brought up by Prof Han in the December 2023 Senate meeting. The issue has to do with the committee representation on the Executive Board. Prof Hsieh described the options, the second of which potentially puts 9 Senators on the Board. Prof Han indicated that it could be possible to reduce this number by two, by dropping the at-large Senators. Prof Omondi remarked that not only is the Board possibly too big with its 5 members, but this extra policy perhaps need not be formally instituted as a rule change, insofar that it appears to be anticipating problems that would not actually materialize. Instead, such considerations regarding committee representation (on the Board) could be handled via more informal ‘table-talk’ after Officer elections or during the committee assignment procedure (for the other Senators).

6. Any other business

Dean Pak added some announcements. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) came recently to SUNY Korea to evaluate us as a part of an accreditation process. Students were invited to participate in that process, and they made comments that our faculty were great and they enjoyed their time at SUNY Korea. The Commission left our campus with a good impression of our school.

Dean Pak also referred to his “Welcome” email from last month, where he addressed the importance of upholding a zero tolerance policy regarding violations to academic integrity.

He also mentioned the upcoming IGC Research Showcase, to be held on May 10th. About 200 applications were submitted, from students and faculty. There is, however, a low number of submissions from FIT.

Last, Dean Pak talked about this semester’s Faculty Outing. Last Spring 2023, the outing was held in Gangneung. This year, the Outing will be held on April 26th. The announcement will be made soon.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned around 3:38pm.

Appendix -- Problem #1: The “Departments/Officers” problem

So far in our Senate, Senators are elected for 2-year terms, and Officers (Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary) are also elected for 2-year terms.

Re-electing Senate representatives from all Departments at the same time would lead to a turnover whereby nobody on the Senate would have any experience, and the Senate would have a steep learning curve to learn what the previous cohort was doing. To reduce the magnitude of this problem, it was decided to cut the turnover in half, by re-electing half of the Senate representatives at the half-way point of each term. Thus,

- Even-numbered years (2022, 2024, ...): senators for CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE would be re-elected; and as of Spring 2024 the Chair comes out of this set of departments
- Odd-numbered years (2023, 2025. ...): senators for AMS, BM, DTS, FSH, ELP would be re-elected; and as of Spring 2024, the Vice-chair and Secretary come out of this latter set of departments

This means that Officers can come from only newly elected senators, the Chair can only come out of CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE; and the Vice-chair and Secretary can only come out of AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP. This is not equitable.

The so-called “Regulations” ad-hoc committee (comprised of Senators Changwoon Han, Chihmao Hsieh, and Mackenzie Lenz) determined that one way to ensure that all departments can have the chance to be elected to all Officer positions is to use the scheduling format described in the Table on the next page.

In essence, the idea is to design Officer terms to last half the time of the Senator terms, according to any of the following options. The setup below also advocates/ensures that Officers are changing regularly. Lastly, Officer elections would be held for those who have likely had some experience on Senate.

SCENARIO I: 2-year term for Senators, 1-year term for Officers																		
Year	24F	25S	25F	26S	26F	27S	27F	28S	28F	29S	29F	30S	30F	31S	31F	32S	32F	33S
Track 1	Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE				Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE				Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE				Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE				Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE	
Track 2	Term of AMS, BM, DTS, FSH, ELP		Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP				Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP				Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP				Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP			
Officer	Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2	
* Term of Senator is 2 years as it is. Term of Officer is one year.																		
** All current CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE senators stay until end of Spring 2024.																		
*** All current AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP senators stay until end of Spring 2025.																		
SCENARIO II: 3-year term for Senators, 1.5-year term for Officers																		
Year	24F	25S	25F	26S	26F	27S	27F	28S	28F	29S	29F	30S	30F	31S	31F	32S	32F	33S
Track 1	Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE						Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE						Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE					
Track 2	Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP		Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP				Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP				Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP							
Officer	Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1		Officers from Track 1	
* Term of Senator is 3 years. Term of Officer is 1.5 years.																		
** Term of current senators in CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE stay until end of Spring 2024.																		
*** Term of current senators in AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP extended until end of Fall 2025.																		
SCENARIO III: 4-year term for Senators, 2-year term for Officers																		
Year	24F	25S	25F	26S	26F	27S	27F	28S	28F	29S	29F	30S	30F	31S	31F	32S	32F	33S
Track 1	Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE								Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE								Term of CS, MEC, FBM, FD, EE	
Track 2	Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP		Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP						Term of AMS, EM, DTS, FSH, ELP									
Officer	Officers from Track 2		Officers from Track 1				Officers from Track 2				Officers from Track 1				Officers from Track 2			
* Term of Senator is 4 years. Term of Officer is 2 years.																		
** Term of current senators in CS/MEC/FBM/FD/EE stay until end of Spring 2024.																		
*** Term of current senators in AMS/BM/DTS/FSH/ELP extended until end of Spring 2026.																		

The ad hoc committee would like to put these three “Scenarios” up for a vote at the April 2024 Senate meeting. If necessary, to break a tie, there would be a re-vote among the Top 2 choices... In the May 2024 Senate meeting, then there would be another vote regarding Term Limits, as in whether Senators and/or Officers should be allowed to stay on for multiple consecutive terms. In case Officers are allowed to stay in Office for 2 or more consecutive (Officer) terms, then we would need to revise the language in the green/red cells above.

Appendix -- Problem #2: The Board-Committee composition problem

The Executive Board is made up of three *ex officio* members (the Senate Chair, Vice Chair, and the Secretary); and then two additionally elected at-large members. Currently, as of March 2024, in total, these five members only represent two of the 4 committees (i.e. Senators Han, Lenz, and Houghton all serve on the CEFW committee; and Senator Hsieh serves on the APES committee); and the concern is that, without any rules or regulations regarding committee-oriented composition of the Executive Board, we run the risk of such lopsidedness in the future. This lopsidedness is at risk of biasing the decision-making of the Board, and it also potentially increases (or exacerbates) the costs of communication and information-sharing leading to equitable decision-making. For many decision-making matters, it is certainly convenient if somehow the Board is optimized to represent a higher number of committees.

Of course, the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Secretary should all remain as part of the Board anyways. In other words, generally, the issue boils down to the selection process for the at-large officers.

The "Regulations" ad hoc committee has identified two basic easy-to-implement solutions, and would like to hold a vote between these two candidate solutions at the April 2024 Senate meeting:

- (i) One solution is to assign committee affiliations of the Board's Officers after the Board's membership is finalized, but before all other Senators have been assigned to the committees. This procedure can basically ensure that representation of a diversity of committees is maximized on the Board. In this setup, we stay with 5 Board members, and these 5 Board members will be able to represent 3-4 of the committees.
- (ii) A second solution is to include 5 members on the Board as it is currently described above (i.e. according to our By-Laws); but then add the chairs of each of the 4 committees to the Board as additional *ex officio* members. In other words, in principle, the Board would then have up to 9 members.