

AAUP IRSC Chapter Meeting

Minutes ****DRAFT****
August 23, 2019

Call to Order

AAUP IRSC Chapter meeting held August 23, 2019 at 12:45 p.m. in Room W242 on the Main Campus. Chapter President Bruce Fraser, Treasurer Taylor Kilman, and Secretary James Dinsch were present. Attendance sheet indicates 48 individuals signed in. EC officers and advisors introduced.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from the April 12, 2019 meeting were posted on the AAUP website. Motion made and seconded to waive the reading of the minutes, passed without dissent. Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes as posted, passed without dissent.

Reports

The treasurer submitted a report indicating a current balance of \$16,178.64. Expenses included Q2 and Q3 dues, elections charges, and fees for a scribe used during negotiations and split between AAUP and the administration. Current membership of 154 represents 60.63% of the 254 full-time faculty members.

Old Business

Contract Negotiations

President Fraser invited IRSC VP of Finance Barry Keim to present on the current financial environment of the college. VP Keim reported that the college has been in deficit spending for the past 5 years, which was planned; however, the spend-down of the college's fund balance, or reserves, was accelerated over the past 2 years due to a significant, unexpected drop in enrollment and corresponding tuition revenue. That has placed the fund balance at a point where it is set to hit the minimum amount required by statute and where the college needs to build that balance back up.

Enrollment has dropped 1,080 FTE over the previous 2 year period. An FTE is equal to 30 credits. Given part-time students, that's estimated around 7 students per FTE. The drop was split almost 50% each year—17/18 and 18/19. While part of that may be related to Workday, an almost equal drop occurred in the year prior to Workday implementation. The unknown about enrollment poses challenges in planning for the budget process.

As of 8/23, we are 85 FTE below the same date last year. Still have options for Express and Minimester, but those did exist last year also. Need to monitor enrollment closely.

We are still in deficit budget spending, and the college will monitor spending closely to not spend more than revenue.

Tuition and fees capped at the state level. FCS presidents working hard to get authorization to raise.

Is this an issue at other institutions? Enrollment has inverse correlation to employment/economy. Funding is opposite as tax dollars are related to economic health—enrollment goes up in a down economy when taxes are down and funding isn't available, and when the economy is up and taxes are up, enrollment is down so the state doesn't see the need to fund the colleges.

Is aging population an issue? Unknown, but there are fewer middle-age graduates.

If we fall below FB min, what is penalty? Need to go before state board with plan to get it back to min. That will probably require a solid plan to reduce expenditures, and that would probably mean a force reduction. Budget puts us right at the FB min. Keim's job is to make sure we don't fall below FB. Budget is built on flat enrollment; if enrollment goes down, it could get worse.

What is admin's plan to boost enrollment? Plan is still being developed. Focus on non-credit areas. Address issues with dual enrollment reimbursement as summer is non-reimbursed and has been growing that needs to be addressed legislatively, working with commissioner who is the former house speaker.

What is the outlook for people seeking promotion in the next couple of years? There is going to be a backlog. May be more than a year. May be addressed through the collaborative bargaining process. Needs input from a number of people.

Have we ever considered 9-month contracts? Deferred to Bruce. This has been discussed for a few years. Need to look at creative ways to address issues. Option to not do summer teaching may be a way to address financial issues. Need to look at feasibility of the pay scale for faculty over the long term. The collaborative bargaining process will need to bring SMEs into the conversation, not just a negotiating team. Any changes need to be well-vetted.

We have students applying that we're turning away because we only have capacity for a limited number. Can that be addressed? While we need FTE and revenue, there is a cost to producing FTE and revenue. Some programs cost more than they generate, i.e., health programs.

How do we address the issue of not getting budget dollars the next year if you save this year? Use it or lose it is not the way the institution works, though it might at the department level, but it shouldn't have to be. There should be no incentive to spend-to-spend.

New Contract

Fraser reviewed the key components of the new contract. Financials as previously stated. Department Chair release time will have an application process that is still being worked out. Level I vs. Level II Department Chairs needs to be clarified. Class caps are still an issue, but got protection for writing-intensive English classes, but not modern languages; difference of opinion with admin as whether that is workplace conditions (negotiable) or managerial prerogative (non-negotiable).

Some change may have unintended downstream consequences. That is the point of the collaborative bargaining process.

There may be a difference in interpretation of the language. May be issues at dean level implementation. Try to work and communicate without union assistance first, if possible.

Will you be paid reduced load for small enrollment classes if you have not agreed to it? No. Reduce pay for low enrollment should only be in an overload status.

Can/should that be put in writing? Yes just for the safety of proving what was agreed upon. Suggestion of a standard form to be used in that process.

DC stipend fairness? For fairness, there will be an application and review process, not precluding individuals staying in the position. Leveling should be based on department size.

Where will low-enrollment exemptions for things like internships, capstones, clinicals, etc. be initiated? At the dean's level. Language in contract references this is in the faculty handbook, but it won't be completed until January. The Chapter has exercised its right to not require enforcing this until January to allow time to collect documentation. Need to document procedures in the meantime.

When will steps come in? Pending Board approval on Tuesday, August 27, that will be paid retroactively to 8/1. Latest should be 9/15 check but may be ready by 8/31 check.

New Business

Upcoming Nominations for Negotiations and Executive Committees

Nominations will be sought in the near future for the Negotiations and Executive Committees.

Fraser discussed that the EC has asked him to remain on the NC for continuity. He is still considering. VP Clark has asked to step down. Jen Capers is willing to continue.

Collaborative Bargaining

Fraser provided an introduction to the collaborative bargaining process, also referred to as "interest-based bargaining." Difference between an annual and 3-year process is that in new process, during a collaborative bargaining negotiation within the 3-year contract period, only one issue would be on the table for discussion, limiting leveraging one issue against another. The benefit here is admin's willingness to come to the table and negotiate and work through issues. This will require a standing committee to negotiate and discuss issues, which is a very early entry point of toward increased shared governance. Would like to avoid the need to file grievances; this is an opportunity to just have open conversation about issues. Still need to work out what this process will look like, but we would want to put all changes to the faculty at least one time per year versus just non-binding MOUs, the latter being to admin's benefit.

Need to build the union to fortify this process to leverage SMEs from the faculty and allow them to contribute.

Concern expressed over comfort in speaking up without being a full professor or tenure. Fraser stated the possibility of retaliation is likely overstated, though position is stronger through the union versus independently. Individuals need to work within their comfort zone, though.

Virtual Campus

The Virtual Campus (academic freedom, instructional quality, student success) was determined by both admin and the Chapter to be first topic of the test of a collaborative bargaining process because it was too much to bite off with just the six people in the main negotiations process.

A dossier was prepared by select faculty and is being reworked for presentation to the faculty overall. Some of the issues include the structural issue that the VC reports to a non-academic VP and classroom expectations are not set by Academic Affairs. While there is a stated distinction between course content and design, there is virtually no separation between the two creating tension between designer and faculty.

The Chapter is pushing that the VC is a work conditions issue.

Issues brought up by faculty include the VC not being concerned about whether or not individuals have time to do the course maintenance. Question was raised whether we even need QM? External review isn't necessarily being done by legitimate SMEs.

How did we end up here? VC evolved over 5 years with very little faculty input. There is a VC workgroup, but it isn't faculty driven with the agenda set by the VC administration. Evolved without checks and balances and without opportunity for faculty input to be evaluated in balance with admin's desire to push it forward as a marketing and brand issue.

There is a need for online instruction, but there is also value in an individual faculty member's ability to design a course to their strengths and needs of their location.

Members are encouraged to share ideas with the EC as this issue begins moving forward. Need to focus on the problem, not demonizing the individuals.

Building the Chapter

The EC believes we need to find opportunities for chapter members to use their areas of expertise to help the chapter. Focuses on equity and Inclusion, technology, finance, legal, communication, research and Strategy.

Need to be the part of the college that is fielding great ideas about what is going on in higher education in general. We need to be networking with other unions in the state and the nation. Need research and strategy groups to prepare in advance rather than reacting to issues on the fly.

Questions & Comments

Thanks expressed to the negotiating committee as it was clearly a hard year.

Will promotions-queued professors get title? No, that would be a violation of contract.

Will non-promoted faculty still get continuing contract? Yes, they are separate processes.

When will the 3-year timeline period for the next promotion starts when? Remains after the actual award of the promotion, which cannot happen until the money is available and the Board approves. Those in the queue will be getting a letter indicating that the President has approved them for promotion when the money is available.

Adjournment

Motion made and seconded to adjourn, carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

James Dinsch
Secretary