Faculty Senate Minutes

July 14, 2020

**Virtual Meeting**

*Primarily paperless, wou.edu/facultysenate*

# 3:15 - 3:30 p.m.

*Better Know a Colleague (informal gathering, optional)*

# 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

*Special Meeting*

## 1. Call to order

## 2. Call of the roll (by calling attendance of representatives for each Division)

## 3. Special business (posted to Faculty Senate website)

### 3.1 The Retrenchment Process

### 3.2. Possible Program Curtailments and Eliminations

### 3.3. PC Evaluation Rubric

**4. Open discussion**

* **Comment**: Request for collegiality, avoid inflammatory language.
* **Comment**: We need to vote to suspend Art 6 Sec 4 if we want to vote on anything. If we don’t have another meeting this summer, we need to wait until Fall. Suggestion to keep an eye on the clock and need to keep this extra step in mind if we want to pass something.
* **Comment**: Suggestion to begin with questions and general discussion first
* **Question**: why was the rubric created without faculty input? Follow-up questions (posted in chat): How was the rubric developed and how will it be used? What is the rationale for each of the items in the rubric? Who has been trained to use the rubric and how was the training conducted? Has interrater reliability been established? How will you verify that all of the data and evidence used is accurate and current? If the rubric is used, what weight will it carry in decision-making? How will results of the rubric scores be reported and when during the process will they be reported? How will the recommendations/planning scenarios submitted by the Deans (drafted in collaboration with Division Chairs) be used in the final decision-making?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: We referred to the method and categories of interest developed by Robert Dickeson. One key factor is demand for programs, including external demand (e.g., meeting statewide needs) and internal demand (e.g., Gen Ed, interdepartmental programs); program quality; value by state (performance based on Student Success Model used); about 35% of funding comes from Public Univ Support Fund Productivity Level (e.g., diversity, statewide needs); overall productivity (with loss of enrollment, how do we align instructional resources with programs?); emerging trends (e.g., HSI, new markets/programs). The rubric is a “starting point” but doesn’t replace other methods of assessment – it is just ONE tool; Deans are entrusted with being Chief Academic Officers. Their plans are due this week, and they have the opportunity to add qualitative measures; also a task force will be identified, which will include the Deans, Rob Winningham, Ryan Hageman, Sue Monahan, Ana Karaman and me ; Administration has already met with the Union as well; a lot of info was given to Deans to help determine efficiencies/targets.
* **Comment by Rob Winningham**: People are really focused on program reduction, program curtailment. But a main point to stress is that the rubric is one tool; Deans are looking at other tools to see where we can get greater efficiencies; also, there is a narrative component to the rubric; people often get concerned with quantitative metrics, but there are also qualitative inputs (additional components such as supporting mission); The deans are likely to use additional tools beyond the rubric when developing their plans. There are a number of levers to help us get to where we need to be (e.g., retirement, salaries); the bigger picture is we are making cuts in ALL areas of the university.
* **Question**: What is being done to assess value/need and identify potential efficiencies of administration? Do you have a rubric for this as well?
* **Comment by Rob Winningham**: We are looking for savings from all types of employees, classified, unclassified and faculty. In Academic Affairs perspective, we are doing this work by working with supervisors from different areas for 10-17% cuts needed; we want to reduce harm but also fulfill mission to the best of our ability; we recognize that a single rubric doesn’t fit all (e.g., may work for registrar, not custodial staff)
* **Question**: What about administrative level? Are you having administrators justify value/role?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: We already made some cuts in April (layoffs, furloughs); cabinet officers will need to come up with triangulation of pay reductions, other steps to get to the 10-17% (Chapter 2 of book we are creating); curtailment comes out of the CBA, looking at overlap/efficiencies/reductions to try to reach a structural balance for the budget. Mandate is to find solutions to balance budget by Nov. 15th.
* **Question**: Enrollment has been going down for several years; there are lots of effort on rubrics/program elimination; why would increasing enrollment not be the primary focus?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: Enrollment decline is a decade-long problem; we have been focused on enrollment (e.g., transfer pathways; degree completion options; encouraging retention); we have external issues, such as the campus in Bend, OR that has been growing, as well as demographics of Higher Ed and low graduation rates in OR; “nudges” are examples of ways we have tried to increase enrollment/retention; we also changed the way we do remissions, provide financial support; there are many efforts, mostly behind the scenes
* **Comment by Rob Winningham**: There has been a lot of progress, such as work to get students who register for previous term to register next term (e.g., nudges, surveys, removing advising holds, basic financial needs help, online pathways, recruitment, new markets like WOU Salem). We are actually identified as a University that does far better than average in Transfer work; transfer students are 10% more likely to graduate compared to peer institutions, and we have been noted as such.
* **Comment by Erin Baumgartner (recognized)**: We would like to remind everyone the reform of the General Education program is essential. We had some recommendations we would like to be considered (posted in chat): 1) Course availability (how often and regularly sections of a course are offered, how many sections are available each term, what is the SCH per term?) 2) Requirement "capacity" (how many courses, sections and seats are available within a requirement each term?) 3) Variation within a requirement (how many different disciplines are already represented, how much duplication does an individual discipline provide with the number of different courses offered within the requirement?)4) Capacity to teach FYS (how much FTE is retained for disciplinary faculty to teach an FYS on an annual basis?) 5) Uniqueness to General Education (how much overlap is there between the course as a major requirement and a General Education requirement - i.e. how many students are in majors that require the class and are likely to double-dip?) 6) Transfer considerations (how many students transfer in particular General Education requirements; i.e. which requirements have the lowest transfer rates and thus require more capacity?)7) Flexibility (how available are the courses in face-to-face, hybrid and online modalities to meet the needs of students?How administration shows communication methods. We were wondering whether it may be outdated?
* **Question:** We were told that dips in enrollment due to crowded Gen Ed would not be penalized; are enrollments from last year going to be assessed or thrown out due to uniqueness of this past year and the launch of the new Gen Ed?
* **Comment by Rob Winningham**: Agreed, there needs to be a good degree of trust, acknowledgment of how Gen Ed affects program enrollment; we also need to look at trajectory of metrics; also think programs that have engaged Gen Ed will show additional student credit hours, especially if their majors/minors have declined.
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: It is important to note that WOU’s Institutional Research has provided data (it is \*the\* source of information guiding decisions) so we can identify trends; quantitative data are a provocative starting point for the conversation, but we need qualitative perspective too
* **Question**: How were Robert Dickeson’s methods chosen? These were published in 1999, and they were recently updated, but does it make sense to use them for evaluating recent academic issues?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: The book has been recently updated. It is still considered a guidepost. The theory of the rubric was modeled after some of his ideas.
* **Question** (posted in chat): The non-greyed out rows are subjective. Who is going to fill those out? Will that process be transparent? Regarding the "evidence of students achieving learning outcomes" row, we have concerns that we are not far enough along (as an institution) in our assessment system to use this. Plus, assessment is not just about showing achievement. If our students are not achieving learning outcomes, that is good information too, which would hopefully cause us to try to adjust.
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: The rubric is expected to be used as a tool; chairs, deans will share work of assessment. It is true that we have made a lot of progress in assessment; Deans will have final responsibility but will use team members to develop responses program-by-program.
* **Question** (posted in chat): It seems as if the rubric is going to help the WOU administration decide on a new direction for WOU. In the past, since President Fuller has been here, major decisions impacting the entire campus have included key employees and students. For example, the strategic plan included faculty, staff, administration and students. Program prioritization is another major initiative. WOU faculty have not been involved until just recently yet we know the plan for this could not have been made just recently. Please share your timeline from when the decision to re-invent WOU was made to when you anticipate the process being completed.
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: First, program curtailment is driven by/in accordance with Article 15; identifying new markets goes back to strategic plan, mission; developing new programs have been part of that (e.g., WOU Salem, transferability). We’ve had concerns for decades around degree completion; these are not new ideas; many new programs have been developed, with faculty (e.g., WOU Salem grad program)
* **Comment from Rob Winningham**: It is often the faculty that know the niches that are needed. I have not heard anyone say we are using the rubric to launch new programs; new programs bubble up from faculty themselves; we have commissioned projects to look at new markets. For example a few years ago we commissioned a STAMATS report to look at market needs for new graduate programs. That report identified DPT as an unmet need in the regions; we look at workforce data, as these data drive new students to the university.
* **Comment**: in chat, two quotes were posted that come from Dickeson book: “During program prioritization, the process must be open, the data accurate, and the participation by all those affected encouraged. This does not mean that everyone will agree with the results; that is unlikely. It does mean, however, that participants will feel that the process was fair, even if they disagree with the outcomes.”; and “when the best leader’s work is done, the people say ‘we did it ourselves’” - Lao Tse. All of the people who are being affected by these sorts of changes should be consulted. The entire process has been top-down. … With all due respect, this is in contradiction to the described bottom-up process.
* **Comment from Emily Plec (recognized):** as one of the inter-institutional reps, we want to share more insight from colleagues about what has beneficial/useful around process from other universities.
* **Comment**: in Creative Arts, there was discussion about the university budget that created questions; from the audit, it seems there is a large sum ($42 million) that is in possession of the university, and we are curious if this money can ease the financial difficulties? Audit also mentioned that faculty pensions (~$33 million) were being carried on the WOU books but are actually held in state of OR books, so we want some clarification around this?
* **Comment by Ana Karaman (recognized):** Thank you, I saw this report and presentation; please reach out if you want more information after I provide some explanation;
  + Regarding $33 million pension liability: this is not real cash; best way to explain is like a mortgage, you have interest that is a liability being paid to the bank; it sits as liability on us, and if we pay it faster, we don’t get that money; it’s important to differentiate between cash and liability. Net pension liability is for everyone, not just for faculty. Every year that net liability gets reevaluated. The consultant pointed out this is state liability, which is not correct; Until 2015, it used to be state liability and then changed to University liability in 2015. It has impacted not just universities, but every agency. It is on our books because state shows the entire university financial statements as a discrete agency component. It has to be reported since 2015. When the year 2019 ended, the university had cash on hand. The consultant says that there is about $42 million cash that has no claims. If we have $46 million in cash, what does it mean? Every day we collect money and we take it to the bank, all of our money goes to the Treasury which goes to the Public University Fund (PUF). [Request to wrap up explanation due to time] Can we get this surplus as cash? We are using cash reserves, because we are running in a deficit. Last fiscal year we ran more than $8M in deficit. We covering our expenses from cash reserves. At the end of FY20, our cash reserves dropped down to $34M because we used cash to cover our deficit.
* **Comment**:: If we want to vote on a resolution, we need to do this. Regarding Article 6 section 4.
* **Motion: "Be it so moved that Faculty Senate suspend regular rules of order at the July 14th, 2020 meeting, so that items introduced today may be voted on." Seconded. Note: need ⅔ majority to suspend bylaws. Motion passes, 23 yes out of 27 responses**
* **Comment by Ryan Hageman**: Reminder not to destroy public forms. E.g., Google Forms.
* **Question**: What does the university want to do with the prioritization plan?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: We follow Article 15 of the CBA; the rubric is one input, and then there will be collective discussion among Deans/Chairs, and both quantitative and qualitative data will be weighed. We will work with others to develop written plan and will work with Union. Cabinet officers also will be asked to cut 10-17%, submitted to Board of Trustees.
* **Comment**: Faculty are concerned about level of involvement; if there are not faculty at table when decisions are made, even when proposal is made, people will be pretty upset. Decisions seem very top-down. Seems like it should take longer, and more people should be involved. Is there any possibility of faculty involvement in how decisions are made?
* **Comment by Rex Fuller**: Memos are dense at times, but my last one does include sharing through Town Hall any results from the Deans’ work (e.g., to what extent have Deans identified efficiencies). Also, this process should involve Division Chairs, and if they want entire faculty to be involved, that’s fine too. Also important: the 17% figure is not out of thin air; it is a directive from HECC out of work with agencies to build budgets. There is a lot of uncertainty. 17% is outside the worst-case-scenario. There is a Town Hall planned, but a date has not been set. (Likely later this month).
* **Comment**: Thanks to Rex and Rob. Additional context to resolution introduced (posted on website); it is our understanding is that faculty have partial authority over curriculum, including cutting degrees and programs; if cuts need to be made, should be done strategically with curriculum in mind, and faculty need seat at table.
* **Motion to extend meeting to 5:30. Seconded. No objections, motion passes.**
* **Comment**: The resolution is more generalized, global than the statement our division (Humanities) shared. Rubric needs to go back to faculty-level evaluation. We can’t just be informed at end of process, these are curricular decisions. **Motion to endorse resolution (see Appendix C). Seconded. Call for discussion.**
* **Question**: Should there be a timeline associated with the resolution?
* **Comment**:: As it stands, the resolution seems to call for quick work to be involved; also that it encompasses the Humanities statement; we do not need a new direction, we have done the work of creating a strategic plan, mission and direction for WOU. Our general problem is not with the process, but that there is a process.
* **Question**:: Section 2 of resolution - about meaningful participation, what is that? How do we decide on that?
* **Question**:: if there is nothing to control for speed or lack thereof, how do we know we will be involved adequately? There has to be a timeline (idea that we are following the timeline of the administration)
* **Comment from FS President**: Pause to call for comments from other divisions? None.
* **Comment**: If we pass this resolution, we would be saying we wish to engage in conversation about what meaningful participation is, coming to consensus; hopefully would be opening to conversation that would be collaborative
* **Comment**: Any resolutions we pass are not binding, it is purely symbolic, a good-faith request for participation
* **Comment**: One thing to consider about Faculty Senate is that if you drop a single course, this will cause changes … It doesn’t seem to make sense to cut faculty out of the picture. We ought to be able to vote on changes.
* Call to vote. **Motion passes: 20 yes out of 23 response**s
* **Comment**: “meaningful participation” in chat:
  + “Meaningful participation” in public participation processes typically involves: access (to information, resources), standing (being recognized as a stakeholder with influence), and accountability (responsiveness from decision maker). This is called the “Trinity of Voices” model and is a productive alternative to the “Decide, Announce, Defend” approach often taken in organizations and agencies
* **Comment**: A lot of bodies care about shared governance, even accreditation bodies - we have to report on whether and how we have shared governance.
* **Comment**: Given immediacy, can we think about what needs to be done just this year and then the process of making long-term shifts? We keep thinking about this immediacy as COVID-19, but this is different from long-term decline in enrollment. Can we make more thoughtful, rational decisions over the long-term.
* **Comment**: Thank you. Wise to make plans but not large cuts/curtailment with such little information about the future.
* **Comment**: How will our participation be implemented? Perhaps another senate meeting? How to put this into practice?
* **Comment**:: Can Admin respond to resolutions? Express interest in shared governance? Exec Committee should ask them to respond to the resolutions in a timely manner.
* **Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Based on yes checkmarks, motion passes by majority vote.**
* **Meeting adjourns at 5:20 pm**

**APPENDICES**

1. Statement from Humanities: Thus, we, the Humanities Division reject the current rubric, and believe that any effective approach to program and curriculum prioritization must, at the very least, be conducted
   1. via methodology derived directly from faculty input;
   2. by looking at the Division as the essential unit of evaluation, rather than isolating individual departments.
2. Statement from Division of Deaf Studies and Professional Studies: We, the faculty in the Division of Deaf Studies and Professional Studies, want to see a process that honors the development of professionals who are able to serve in a well-rounded, critical, and compassionate manner. This rubric does not achieve this goal. We propose a long-term thoughtful self-study process that involves all of the stakeholders, not a rubric that is initiated by administration and haphazardly employed.
3. Resolution on Shared Governance Principles Related to the PC Rubric -THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Faculty Senate requests meaningful participation in any processes related to program curtailment, reduction, or elimination. In particular, the Faculty Senate ​*requests direct involvement in the creation of and use of any rubrics or other decision-making tools related to program curtailment, reduction, or elimination.* To assure that the Faculty Senate has accurate and current information, the Faculty Senate *requests access to all data that has been used or will be used*​ in program curtailment, reduction, and elimination decisions. Additionally, the Faculty Senate ​*requests regular written updates about planned administrative actions related to program curtailment, reduction, or elimination, and an appropriate amount of time to respond with its own recommendations.*