

Intra-University Summit
April 7, 2018
Michigan League, Michigan Room

Session 1: Faculty Governance in Contentious Times: Moving Forward

- How can we strengthen our faculty voice?
- What are current campus trends to faculty governance?

NOTES:

- Discussed challenges to faculty governance (Examples of topics over the past year):
 - Faculty and Student Relations – when injustices and student unrest arise
 - Tenure and promotion grievances
 - Salary equity / committed relationship hires / stigma
 - Free Speech (Spencer visit)
 - Sexual Assault and Faculty reporting
 - Roles / Relationship with Regents / Trustees re: Shared Governance
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – how evaluated and for what?
 - Governmental Relations and assault on higher education
 - Faculty Governance as Service – how can it count beyond unit workload assignment
 - Academics and Athletics - Role of faculty
- Additional concerns (by attendees):
 - What to do with budget crises: need to consider the cast of characters; people making decisions without consultation; e.g., senate budget committee – surprised when decisions were made
 - Undergrad admissions and enrollment management
 - How to get influence with the “pros”; the admin who are in the know and who make decisions about institutional matters?
 - Paternalistic view of faculty by Regents
 - Programmatic review; the role of admin is supposed to be supportive of faculty
 - Current business model; admin running the university like a corporation
 - Need to consider role of faculty as “partners; like a law firm”
 - What to do about privatization of services; out-sourcing and losing the influence on institutional matters when duties are assigned to private business; consider how entering private contracts binds the institution to long-term commitments and in some cases hands over property rights;
 - consider how privatizing parking includes renting parking structures to private business which locks the property into the business and denies the use of the property for other possibilities
 - erosion of shared governance
 - Concern about academic affairs and perspective of academicians

- If we think of students and admin and their constant turnover, think of as transitional; major attention focuses on what student perspective and administrative position
- Faculty are the permanent element; shared governance is important however the institutional memory rests with the faculty
- Need to engage with the Regents; find a way to engage without being subordinate
- Faculty senate should insulate the institution; faculty longevity is merit-based (viz. tenure); their continuity depends on their commitment to the core mission of the university
- Power: The use of power fails to take into account the importance of faculty contributions that uphold the institution's purpose;
 - who has the power and how is it used; who benefits from the power differential between admin and faculty?
 - How do we mobilize the strength of the faculty
- Structures and protocols of faculty governance; are they sufficient and are they leading to shared governance?

Session 2: Freedom of Speech & Campus Safety: Engagement and Finding Common Ground

- The relationship between support and suppression
- When does civility become incivility – the case for freedom of expression in faculty meetings and elsewhere on campus
- Going beyond a faculty statement: What else is there for faculty governance to do?

NOTES:

Need to think of context

- Need to debate on the issue not on an identity
- As an institution of learning, this can be an opportunity to model and learn how to engage in difficult conversations that are race (identity) based
- Need to think out of the box; how to preserve your rights without violating the rights of others
- Need to think of transformational change;
 - how to think critically; how to solve problems in a scholarly way;
 - there's no one way to solve the complex social problems and the differential understanding that the public has of social problems;
 - faculty need to be viewed as mentors with a special responsibility to model and assist others (colleagues, students, public) in navigating difficult matters

Sometimes arguments are made based on logical fallacies (“some people”; “they say that...” etc.) and irrational thinking; What if you don't want to hear irrational voices?

- Beyond ignoring; we are often unable to hear voices of oppressed
- Students live in a world of terror and resistance protects students and vulnerable community members

Need to consider ways to hear the divergent voices / thoughts?

- Rather than deny, consider who could we invite as sources of discomfort?
 - o If trying to understand where campus discomfort comes from, information suggests that student discomfort with students very high; second highest is micro-aggressions of faculty against students
- Need to demonstrate ways to engage with opposition
- Question of how do you engage in a rational discussion with the irrational beliefs that bigots and racists have including the desire to hold on to their beliefs without critical analysis
 - o Consider the teachable moment; not everybody has to listen nor are they required to change their opinion; teach ways to be tolerant without denying their right to hold opposing views
- Consider implications for higher education and how receptive and responsive we are to the complexities involved in free speech
- Need for “wise leadership”

What are the acceptable responses

- Training insufficient; intellectual discussions is safe but low impact; need visible signs of resistance
 - o Actively protest
 - o Ask students who they would want faculty to talk to; what constitutes accountability
- Don't discount training or other ways to assist including learning from mistakes
- Keep resistance as a “non law-enforcement” issue; EMU example discussed in which students were cited for trespassing because they occupied a public space past closing; President acted on “policy” rather than connect with student concerns; results were oppressive to students

Regents and Trustees

- Discussed difference between elected and appointed with appointed accountable to the governor
- (Not clear if one preferred over the other)

Shared governance

- Shared governance; need to hold on to faculty autonomy; sometimes shared governance usurps the influence of faculty
- Consider the role of deans and directors (and executive committees)
- Shared governance thrives when there is a voice of faculty we are in it for the betterment of the institution; need to reach out in non-threatening and collaborative way; importance of different perspectives
- Importance of mutual trust; shared governance ins maximum participation with shared accountability
- As the voice of faculty, faculty leadership is charged with engaging with the institutional voice

- Definition (metric) of success has much to do with student credit hour so student enrollment becomes an important consideration for defining power
 - o Every thing is commerce and students are customers
 - o Priority is given to advertising
 - o Need to balance enrollment with retention
- Issue of retention:
 - o Assumption is that retention should be 100%
 - o Diverse student body should take the chance without looking for guarantees
- Need to consider how metrics are determined; what is faculty input?
- How engaged are faculty involved in budgetary matters?

Need to be involved in decision-making

- Need seat at the Regent's meeting
- Faculty governance needs to be seated at table with Deans and Directors

Session 3: Sexual Misconduct and Implications for Faculty: Being responsible (Mandated?)

Reporters

- Mandatory reporter vs. Mandatory supporter: What is / what should be the role of faculty?
- Unanticipated consequences for faculty governance: Grievances and OIE
- What safeguards must be in place for faculty complainants and respondents?
- Faculty are asking for training – what must be included?

NOTES:

- Important for faculty to “Stay in your lane”; be careful not to assume responsibility for something you’re not trained to handle or have no expertise in
- Need to know how to and to who we should refer
- Create a resource list; distribute to everyone
- OIE needs to be an ally
 - o once you contact OIE it’s out of your hands; need to consider the response time
- Need to have clear policies;
- Need triage center
- Each University should have sent a response to State legislators

Lessons learned

- Burn out among faculty; importance of the emergence of unreported assaults; consider healing; lack of trust
- How does compensation affect the ability to address the harm imposed on the institution – especially faculty who have made a long-term commitment to the institution
- Consider the impact of diversity and multiple perspectives and experiences with abuse
- Need to clean this up and faculty trying to consider how;
 - o look for transparency; need to take extra care to prove that faculty care; importance of trust
- What has been the role of the religious communities; “reclaim MSU”

- How can the groups be moved toward recovery together?; How to be effective without feeling like faculty time is being wasted
- Emphasis on the importance of communication;

OIE

- Protecting the institution
- Need to consider how faculty can facilitate transparency

Important to note that training does not indemnify the University from liability

Session 4: Relationship with Governing Boards: “Where’s Faculty at....?”

- Is there a place for faculty at the “Regent’s table”?
- What is the place for Regents at the “Faculty Governance table”?

NOTES:

Is there a place for faculty at the "Regents table?"

It was said it would take an amendment to the state constitution to add another member to the board of regents. The perception that Central Student Government (CSG) has a place at the regents table is not completely accurate. They have a specified chair near the table. SACUA has an annual opportunity to address the regents. SACUA has asked regents to meet for breakfast or SACUA meetings. Regents are willing to meet with SACUA but it would help to avoid Thursday meetings because of Thursday regents meetings

Is there a place for regents at the faculty governance table?

The committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of elected or appointed trustees or regents . It was suggested that the Summit committee consider forming a State of Michigan "legislative committee" to advance the interests of faculty.

Establishing and maintaining Intra Campus Relationships

Discussion followed concerned with the desirability of a second Summit meeting. The sentiment and agreement was to attempt annual meetings. Delegates from Western Michigan University and Eastern Michigan University volunteered their campus for the next meeting which was thought to be sometime in April of 2019.

Establishing and maintaining Intra Campus Relationships – Ideas?

Wrap Up/Next Steps