

Dec 17, 2013

From: D. Kenneth Brown, Philosophy, Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee
 To: Cal Poly Academic Senate
 Re: Faculty Affairs Committee Quarterly Report, Fall, 2013

The charges for the Faculty Affairs Committee from the Academic Senate were the following:

1. Discuss the number of required class evaluations and develop alternatives.
2. Discuss new RPT policies.
3. Consideration of Teacher-Scholar Model aspects in the RPT guidelines.
4. Discuss intellectual property policy for online education.
5. Discuss statement on Academic Freedom.
6. Discuss shared governance.
7. Review the process for removal of comments for deceased and retired faculty in Polyratings.

The FAC received these charges in the middle of the Fall quarter. We scheduled and held two meetings to start addressing them. The Senate assigned charge (7) just prior to our first scheduled meeting and asked us to address it first, which we did. We had quorum at both meetings, and all our decisions coming out of these meetings were unanimously approved.

Charge 7:

In response to the urgency with which this item was assigned to the FAC, the chair sent an email query to the staff at Polyratings asking if they had any policies for removing comments about verifiably retired or deceased faculty. (This was not an action of the committee as a whole.) No reply ever arrived. FAC discussions reached the following consensus: Polyratings.com has no official connection to Cal Poly, and appears to run without any active oversight from its nominal administrators. As Polyratings.com compiles statistically meaningless data in at best haphazard ways, it deserves no recognition from the faculty. Current or former faculty (or their agents) objecting to something posted on such social media and internet blogging websites could deploy on their own any reputation management resources. Nevertheless, in the unlikely event that the chair of the FAC receives a reply from the staff of Polyratings.com, that reply will be presented to the members of the FAC and included in a future report from the committee as a courtesy to those who requested this item be put on the FAC agenda.

Charges 1, 4, 5, 6:

Concerning class evaluations, the policies in the Provost's memo concerning implementation of new policies for class evaluations in Winter 2013 seem fine to the FAC.

Concerning intellectual property policies for online education, the Provost's clarification about intellectual property for online courses in a recent memo sent to the faculty in Fall 2013 seem fine to the FAC.

Concerning Academic Freedom, the FAC thinks the statement on academic freedom on the Cal Poly website is fine.

Concerning shared governance, the FAC thought the actions of the Provost concerning intellectual property for online classes and concerning policies about class evaluations seem to us to be examples of shared governance in action. These policies seemed informed by faculty concerns and framed with appropriate consultation with faculty.

Concerning any of the above discussion topics, if there is a particular matter of concern the FAC should consider, we await notice.

Charges 2, 3:

These charges comprise our agenda for Winter and Spring 2014. We will schedule 4 meetings in Winter, with more in Spring as necessary. We will review, discuss the University Faculty Personnel Actions document (which was last revised in 2009), especially in light of recent discussions of the adoption of the “teacher/scholar model.” We would then draft a resolution asking the Academic Senate to approve of any revisions we propose to the document. Our aim would be to deliver that package of materials ready for the Executive Committee early enough for the resolution to hit the Senate floor before the end of this academic year. We then expect that next academic year FAC should review all the college’s policies on RPT for conformity with the newly revised University policies.

Addendum:

At the end of Fall quarter another item landed on the FAC list of charges:

- Assist Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities Committee in drafting a resolution to approve the new policies for the establishment and review of Centers and Institutes.

This item is fast-tracked for completion in Winter quarter. Along with the project of reviewing University RPT policies, we will comment on whatever the RSCA committee forwards FAC concerning this item.

FAC Members:

D. Kenneth Brown, CLA (chair)

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