



Academic Senate Highlights May 22, 2007

Public Comments: A variety of faculty spoke to the Senate and submitted letters about the administration's decision to adopt Accuplacer as the assessment and placement instrument. Assessment and placement is a part of "Student Preparation and Success," one of the 11 items on which the Board must reach mutual agreement with the Academic Senate. There was no attempt to seek the agreement of the Academic Senate on the choice of assessment/placement instrument.

English faculty are concerned about the selection of Accuplacer and electronic assessment of writing. They want to allow the investigation of other products in a side-by-side comparison and to see the research on the reliability and validity of various instruments available.

ESL faculty are excited about the idea of electronic assessment, but want to closely examine and actually test the two most used products, Accuplacer and Compass. They are concerned about the haste and false sense of urgency that precipitated the decision by the Matriculation committee. The Matriculation committee should have used a process similar to the recommendation of CurricuNet by the Curriculum Committee to the Academic Senate.

Counseling and Math faculty also have concerns. Many are not happy with the current STAAR assessment and would like to be able to select a replacement with care. Being invited to a vendor presentation is not input in decision making. Academic Senate is required to be a part of the decision-making for assessment and placement instruments.

Chris Myers clarified that ESL assessment validation didn't fail, the Chancellor's Office just asked for additional information and it is being provided.

President Fellguth will send a letter to the Vice President of Student Services expressing concern about the lack of collegiality with the Senate and asking that the administration take time to build understanding and consensus before making the decision about which product to purchase for assessment/placement.

President's Report:

President Fellguth received a Response Plan that has been drafted to address the recommendations from the Accreditation visit. Although the recommendations have not yet been published by the Accreditation Commission, Valeau has asked management to draft a response. President Fellguth expressed concerns that this was developed without faculty. She proposed that rather than a draft developed unilaterally by the administration, the steering committees of the three senates should have been invited to develop the document. The Senate needs to go on record that we are concerned about process. The process for developing the Response Plan should be collegial and

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collaborative. We should come together as an academic community to develop the plan, rather than being asked to edit something that is already defined.

President Fellguth reported about some needed “clean-up” on the constitution. There are some disciplines that are listed in the wrong academic division and there will be the change to membership of Senate and committees so that Library and Counseling will not be combined for representation purposes. A small group has authorization to work on this. It will be distributed to faculty at convocation for a vote.

Committee Reports

Discussion Items:

A. Formation of task force to investigate and recommend minimum qualifications to determine diversity sensitivity in the hiring process.

There have been concerns from faculty members that “sensitivity to diversity” (one of the minimum qualifications for hire) is not being applied. HR agrees that there is no defined measure of what it means. Senate will form a task force to investigate (in fall) how we could define and measure this as a minimum qualification. Liz Estrella suggested that she will work on this with the Diversity Committee. Also, Jennifer, Tamberly and student senate should be involved. There is also a need to have administration who will act when the policy is not followed after being hired. An ethics statement of the college could address this and become a policy of the board that could be enforced. It is also important to respect academic freedom in the classroom and to respect individuals right to free speech outside the classroom. However, speech that demonstrates insensitivity is evidence of not meeting the minimum qualifications.

A related issue is the need for a conversation between union and administration about how to handle violations of the contractual issues. Faculty who don't meet their contractual obligations may be few, but they reflect badly on all of the faculty. Examples include, faculty late to class, missing classes without calling in, not holding office hours. Administrators are responsible for enforcing the contract.

B. Equity for All report

Lourdes and Chris presented the final results of the Equity for All data analysis. An important aspect of continuing is to find strategies for incorporating equity in all our departmental decisions. A sample of a departmental goals matrix was handed out. The idea is to look at data, determine who we want to target for intervention (not everyone) and then figure out what to do and how to measure it. For example, the English department made goals to examine data about the Eng. 253 course changes, ESL department is interested in looking at data on ESL student persistence.

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Lourdes will resign as chair, proposing reassigned time for faculty co-chair if committee is to continue. She proposes that the Senate take a stronger role in equity issues and the committee's role. There is a need for support from the top **and** faculty buy-in.

C. Update on shared governance committee evaluation process

Ignacio: Thanked Phil, Melissa, Liz, Jennifer, Ann for serving. Questionnaire has gone out to all committee chairs/co-chairs. Developed matrix to show results of the questionnaire and recommendations and implementation strategies. Goal is to have a report to the Senate in early fall and get approval and then present to admin and board.

Action Items: 5. Action Items

A. Approve Resolution 8.07 in Support of Hiring a Full-time Physics Instructor

MSU Ignacio, Susie

B. Approve Technology Master Plan, Resolution 9.07

MSU Joe, Sharon

C. Approve Emergency Resolution 10.07 in Support of Hiring a Full-time Spanish Instructor

MSU Locke, Liz

D. Approve screening committee for Agriculture position

Neil Ledford Ag. instructor

Bob Perkins adjunct Ag. instructor

Leti Contreras math instructor