



Faculty Senate

November 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved at the 12/5/2023 Regular Senate Meeting

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Curriss Center Barkley Room

Public Access Zoom link: <https://murraystate.zoom.us/j/83844364068>

Senators in attendance: Oliver Beckers, Michael Bordieri, Brian Bourke, Michael Busby, Whitney Cassidy-Caywood, Paul Foote, Stephanie Ford, Nikki Gaylord, Eran Guse, Jeff Henry, Ray Horton, Amanda Joyce, Samer Khalil, Naveen Musunuru, Braun Oldenkamp, Heidi Ortega, Michelle Panchuk, Barbie Papajeski, Jeremy Phillips, Ben Post, Thomas Powell, Brenda Reeves, Selise Ridolfi, David Roach, Jenny Rogers, Faris Sahawneh, Cintia Segovia Figueroa, Shri Singh, Jan Super, Ken Sutrick, Justin Taylor, Carol Terracina-Hartman, David Wilbanks, Jenilee Williams, Andrea Willson, and Abdul Yarali.

Guests in attendance: Faculty Regent Melony Shemberger and Associate Provost Renee Fister.

- I. Call to Order at 3:31pm
 - A. President Roach announced a University Communities Happy Hour on Friday, November 10 at 3:30pm at Tap 216.
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Motion to accept made by Senator Terracina-Hartman and seconded by Senator Henry. Minutes were approved.
- III. Welcome and Sign-in
- IV. Agenda Discussion --- Faculty Senate President, David Roach
 - A. President Roach announced a ruling by the chair that advocacy for a specific political candidate was not appropriate during official senate meetings. He noted that advocacy on specific issues is within the purview of the Senate.
 - B. President Roach announced that the 2023 faculty handbook is being updated with a plan to have it published as soon as possible.
 - C. Senior Instructor Definition in Faculty Handbook. President Roach shared how instructor is currently defined in the handbook (Section 2.1.2.1). President Roach shared a brief history regarding previous attempts to address instructor promotion. He then requested feedback from the Senate via an informal and non-binding straw poll. Senator Foote spoke in favor of a promotion policy. Senator Bourke asked why the straw poll was being conducted given that academic policies is already exploring the issue. President Roach responded that the purpose of the straw poll was to provide feedback to the subcommittee. Senator Guse asked a question regarding the duration of employment of instructors. Senator Bourke provided additional context regarding why the instructor rank was included as special appointment faculty in the handbook. He also noted concern regarding treating instructors as less deserving of recognition. Senator Post noted that instructors are described in multiple sections of the handbook and that the faculty senate is charged with representing all faculty, and not just tenured/tenure-track faculty. Senator Busby noted that there are multiple instructors in his

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department and that they have served for a long time. He stated that instructor lines are often first cut during budget cuts. President Roach clarified that there are different types of instructors with regard to budget planning. Senator Busby also noted that he would like more information about how many faculty this policy might impact. President Roach noted that additional information was forthcoming. Senator Willson asked about qualifications for instructors. President Roach noted that instructors often require a master's degree or 18 hours of graduate credit. Senator Oldenkamp stated a concern that an instructor raise could encourage the administration to create more instructor lines. President Roach provided information that our handbook sets a target ratio of at most 20% instructors (80% tenure/tenure-track). Senator Henry made a motion to call the question. Senator Taylor asked President Roach to provide the strongest argument against the promotion. President Roach stated that it could lead to more faculty with non-terminal degrees. Senator Panchuk asked how giving a raise to instructors who are already teaching would lead to lower quality instruction or more instructors. President Roach clarified that he was offering a counter argument as requested by senator Taylor. Senator Guse responded that an instructor promotion policy might lead to attracting more instructors. Several Senators engaged in a lively back and forth discussion. Senator Horton shared that there is a broader trend in higher education towards more courses being taught by part time adjunct instructors, and that a promotion path for full time instructors could serve as a valuable alternative to this trend. Senator Taylor again asked for the strongest argument against the straw poll question and President Roach responded that it could encourage more instructors and less tenure-track faculty. Senator Busby shared that SACS accreditation and department hiring procedures provide safeguards against over-hiring instructor lines relative to tenure-track lines. Senator Henry agreed that SACS accreditation would protect against over hiring and also noted that research productivity and grant funding is important to the long-term health of the university. President Roach called the straw poll question with unanimous consent.

- D. Straw poll:
- i. Should instructors be eligible for a promotional advancement to senior instructor with a monetary increase in salary with excellent teaching and service after a certain number of years?
 - ii. Senator Yarali raised a concern regarding multiple votes being recorded. President Roach noted that the software should prevent that and also requested that senators only vote once. The Vote tally was 86% yes, 14% no in the anonymous, non-binding straw poll with 29 responses.

V. Senator Spotlight

- A. Senator Jeremy Phillips, Department of Political Science and Sociology. Senator Phillips shared that this is his second year at Murray State and that he looks forward to working with the Senate. He stated that his research emphasis is in state and local government savings.

VI. Distinguished Guests

- Faculty Regent-Dr. Melony Shemberger
 - i. Regent Shemberger opened the floor to question and comments. Senator Powell asked about accreditation. Dr. Shemberger noted that the SACS reaffirmation process is ongoing and that she receives regular updates at board meetings. Senator Beckers asked about the status of the salary study. Dr. Shemberger noted that we are still awaiting the final report.

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- VII. Reports --- Faculty Senate Standing Committees
- A. Academic Policies – Senator Brian Bourke
 - i. Senator Bourke noted that the committee will continue to work on the instructor promotion policy. He also noted that the committee plans to have an update on the post-tenure review policy within the next month with a proposal developed by early next year. Senator Bourke noted the importance of crafting careful policy language to increase the likelihood that an instructor promotion policy is supported.
 - B. Finance – Senator Jan Super
 - i. Senator Super reported that the committee continues to explore possibilities for a faculty support fund and is working on a policy revision to the salary policy in the faculty handbook. Senator Super announced the employment engaged survey will begin next Monday (11/13) and requested that senators encourage faculty in their department to complete the survey. She noted that this year’s survey will include an optional gift card drawing to incentivize participation.
 - C. Governmental Affairs – Secretary of Senate, Michael Bordieri
 - i. Senator Bordieri encouraged Senators to vote in today’s election for statewide constitutional officers if they have not already done so. He noted that polls close at 6pm. Senator Bordieri reported that there has not been much activity with regard to the upcoming legislative session but that he anticipates that we will start seeing pre-filled bills soon. Senator Bordieri provided a brief overview of the university’s budget request to the general assembly as well as proposed changes to the performance funding model. He reported that the subcommittee will meet with Jordan Smith, Executive Director of Government and Institutional Relations, later this month to discuss the administration’s priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Senator Bordieri also reported that the committee is preparing to conduct confidential faculty evaluations of administrators in the Spring. Senator Foote asked when the evaluations would be sent to faculty. Senator Bordieri replied that details were still being worked out but the evaluation window would likely be towards the end of the Spring semester.
 - D. Handbook and Personnel – Senator Ben Post
 - i. Senator Post reported that the committee explored the definition of instructor in the handbook but have decided to postpone any changes to allow for the academic policies subcommittee to explore broader policy changes. Senator Post noted that the committee is preparing to update the handbook in consultation with Senate officers.
 - E. Rules, Elections and Bylaws – Faculty Senate Vice President, Heidi Ortega
 - i. No report.
 - F. Executive – Faculty Senate President, David Roach
 - i. President Roach thanked the executive committee for their recent feedback on the instructor promotion policy.
- VIII. Other University Committees
- A. Insurance and Benefits
 - i. Regent Shemberger noted that the next meeting will be in late November.
 - B. Parking committee
 - i. Senator Powell reported that the faculty hall parking lot is going away (net loss of 100 parking spaces) due to the new nursing building. He noted that disruptions are likely to begin in summer of 2024 and that there are plans to reclaim some faculty parking.

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Senator Powell also reported that he is advocating for early communication and transparency. Senator Foote asked about how student and faculty spaces might be reallocated. Senator Post asked for clarification regarding the loss of parking. Senator Powell reported that approximately 130 faculty spaces will be lost with approximately 30 rebuilt elsewhere. Senator Powell also reported that parking is exploring the feasibility of electric vehicle charging stations.

- C. Presidential Advisory: Faculty and Staff Leadership Committee
 - i. President Roach noted that faculty and staff leadership meet with the president twice a semester. He reported that our enrollment trends are up, and that this is in contrast to national trends of flat or declining enrollment. President Roach stated that this is due to the hard work of faculty and administrators.
- IX. Old Business
- X. New Business
 - A. Senator Williams announced that the department of organization communication and leadership is offering a faculty innovation grant through the giving back endowment. The application deadline is February 12, 2024, and interested faculty can apply at murraystate.edu/innovationgrant
 - B. President Roach reminded the faculty of the university community happy hour on Friday. Senator Henry announced that there is also an art auction that evening, and Senator Segovia Figueroa invited faculty to attend a reception starting from 4:30-6:00 in the university galleries.
- XI. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn made by Senator Terracina-Hartman and seconded by Senator Foote. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 4:55.