

Faculty Senate Minutes
Thursday, November 7, 2019, Alumni House, 2:30 PM

I. Attendance

B. Lynch, K. Armbruster, J. Bohus, L. Cuille, P. Davis, G. Glasgow, S. Jensen, J. Lassetter, D. MacCartney, J. Palmer, KK Pease, T. Reilly, L. Risik, D. Smith, D. Stiles.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. *Upon motion by J. Lassetter, seconded by D. MacCartney, the Senate unanimously approved, with two abstentions, the minutes of the October 10, 2019 Faculty Senate meeting pursuant to the following amendment by replacing the first paragraph of section IV. **Re-envisioning Webster Report** with the following two sentences, in **BOLD**:*

IV. Re-envisioning Webster Report

Senator Armbruster reviewed the history of the re-envisioning process, which began at a meeting of the Senate in Spring 2019.

Currently, she wants to continue be part of the process and open to an innovative vision of change across all Webster campuses.

- b. *Upon motion by S. Jensen, seconded by E. Risik, the Senate unanimously approved the minutes of the October 29, 2019 Faculty Assembly meeting.*

III. Question/Answer with President Schuster

(Prior to the arrival of President Schuster (JS), President Lynch began by telling the Senate that he had attended the President's Council meeting on the morning of November 7, 2019 wherein President Schuster announced that he would attend today's Senate meeting. B. Lynch also made the following two announcements at the meeting:

1. That the changes in titles of Elizabeth Stroble and Julian Schuster have raised grave concerns among faculty and that he had invited Board President Reeg to address the Senate, to which he agreed, but there are problems with dates due to traveling; and
2. The faculty are working on a document regarding new guidelines concerning faculty including professional development and teaching.)

Pres. Schuster opened by stating that he had spoken with Pres. Lynch under full transparency and that he wanted to come to the meeting to address one large issue. There are rumors that he was not following the correct process of filling open positions and that he was filling open positions with his friends. He does not think that is the case as there are quite a few open positions, which have not been filled, and two of the people he has hired he did not previously know.

President Schuster also stated that there is a difficult decision to be made concerning the School of Education (SOE). He does not know what the future holds for the SOE. Some believe SOE should merge with the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). He stated that launching a national search for a new Dean of SOE would not be fair to that person if a merger did take place. He does not want to dissolve the SOE, but the issue does need to be addressed and he will definitely make sure that shared governance is a part of that process. If it is decided that the SOE will remain in existence, a search will be launched immediately with the help of faculty, staff and administration.

A Senator from the SOE stated that Pres. Schuster had spent time in the past when there were struggles within the SOE talking with SOE faculty and shared his vision with them. The Senator would like him to come and meet with the current SOE faculty and talk about what his vision and mission is currently. Pres. Schuster told the Senator that he would like to do that and is eager to learn why faculty want to leave.

Pres. Schuster went on to explain that Beth Russell is now the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and that Nancy Hellerud is now the President of Academic Affairs. As President, he explained that he is the Chief Academic Officer. He said there are two open positions that need filling: Chief Financial Officer and Dean of Students. These positions are both non-academic positions. Therefore, he is not required to launch a search for either position. He could simply appoint or hire anyone of his choosing to them. However, he would like to invoke shared governance by asking President Lynch to pick one additional faculty member, besides himself, to be on the selection committee for the CFO position as representatives of the faculty. In the case of the Dean of Students seat, Pres. Schuster would like a wide representation of faculty, staff and students to participate in the selection process. It will be an internal search only at this time for both positions. We must find someone who is capable to stabilize the finances of the university. Pres. Schuster went on to explain that the CFO and Dean of Students positions are not tenured and will work on a contract basis. The floor was then opened for questions.

Senator: It is my understanding of shared governance that we have guidelines and procedures to provide legitimacy to roles and positions and gives faculty the ability to sit in on the procedure. The roles of President and Vice President are in the Handbook and you are retitling Nancy to be in that position. When it comes to the CFO and Dean of Students, asking faculty for input in choosing non-academic positions seems like not the kind of governance the faculty should have a role in. We should not just be reviewing internal candidates for non-academic positions. Why didn't you come and explain the new roles and titles of yourself and B. Stroble before it happened?

Senator: The way the change of the positions occurred is not good for anyone as everyone is upset. We want to try to fix this. We want to feel that shared governance exists and that it is practiced. We feel there is a problem and we can't just move on and pretend it didn't happen. We have a shared investment in the university and we want to talk about this in a larger sense.

JS: I can fully understand that the faculty believe that more elaborate communication could have happened. No Chancellor or President will be successful if they are not fully vetted by faculty, students and staff. However, Beth and I were already here, doing the same jobs. All that has changed is our title.

BLynch: Please know that these are not just the concerns of those at this table today. This is a representation of faculty concerns from across the campus. There is a larger concern that the optics and communication of how the Board made this decision was less than optimal.

JS: The Board thought this was a win-win situation. Nothing changed but the titles – not the jobs.

BLynch: We can agree to disagree. I committed to redoing the Handbook before we knew about the new job descriptions that are needed. Will we be able to work with the Board to codify language in the Handbook concerning position descriptions?

JS: The Chancellor is the CEO and has all the rights that the President has. Look, how Boards do business is their business. They did not intentionally mean to put down the faculty. The Board thought it was a good idea to follow the path of other universities and would define us as a global university. The By-Laws of the institution say how the organization of the university is incorporated. They were rewritten two years ago and were just amended to reflect the new position titles.

Senator: However, there is a culture clash between faculty and administration as they see this process differently than just cosmetic. It's a substantive change. The faculty are very interested in the process more than the outcome. Now we have a problem of process. The letter from the Board addressing the changes did not explain the process. What do we do now? There are hard feelings and confusion and it undermines trust.

Senator: Where do we go from here? How can we have more input in the future?

JS: I think R. Reeg (Chair of the Board) will come and listen to you. That is a defining moment so use the opportunity. Board members are not impressed in their past dealings with the faculty. Reeg is a nice man but not an academic. Where do you see the role of faculty leadership at this institution?

Senator: You are proving our point that these other things happened in the past and no one cared. That is why we are concerned now.

JS: This is a profoundly different situation than in the past. I agree this is an opportunity to bring attention to the Board that faculty do not want to be left out. Putting people on defensive is not the best way to approach someone. It is in my interests that the faculty have a voice. The Handbook needs to be proactive.

Senator: The Board president is new. He didn't just come in and decide to create new positions.

JS: The Board has been talking about the idea of these changes for a number of years and I am disappointed that people would think that I would accept a change of position as a faculty member without faculty input.

BLynch: There were two big questions from the faculty: 1) What are the monetary changes in these positions; and 2) Was this intended as a plan for succession? Let me understand that you are saying that this is not a plan for your succession and that you would not take the position of chancellor without faculty input?

JS: Yes. I don't know how the next chancellor will be chosen. The Board will not set up anyone for failure.

BLynch: I will ensure we communicate with the Board that if they install a chancellor without faculty representation in the process, that it would be a dangerous situation for this institution.

JS: You need to share your expectations with President Reeg. And as far as wanting your input on non-academic positions, I am not doing that for rubberstamping my decisions.

Senator: That's not what was meant. We just want more input on important positions.

Senator: Do you have an idea of funding for replacement faculty?

JS: We are going to replace as many areas as we can that are vital for the university.

Senator: I've been at Webster during hard times and you should reach out to other units besides SOE so that rebuilding can begin.

JS: I will do that. I encourage deans to reach out to me as well. By the way, online enrollment is 8% above the budget for next fall.

BLynch: And what is happening in Tashkent? How are the numbers?

JS: Right now there are 500 students and another 100 to come in the spring. If it continues to grow, the campus will be larger than the Webster Groves campus. However, we will not grow for the sake of growth. Quality is very important. We are planning to show videos made of the Tashkent students and professors in the near future on campus.

IV. Old Business

1. The Senate unanimously approved a motion by Jacob Lassetter, seconded by K. Armbruster, to appoint *Matt Pickert* as the LGCFA representative on the International Studies Committee to fulfill Jeff Carter's term through May 2020.

2. The Senate unanimously approved a motion by S. Jensen, seconded by T. Reilly to appoint *Dustin Smith* as the Walker School of Business & Technology representative on the International Studies Committee to fulfill Ben Brink's term through May 2022.

The Senate unanimously approved a motion by E. Risik, J. Bohus, to adjourn the Faculty Senate meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:56 P.M.