

# Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs

## November 17, 2020

### Attendees:

- Serena Young, Chair
- Curtis Mabry, ex officio
- Rajesh Bagchi, Executive Vice President and Provost representative
- Patricia Donovan, Staff Senate
- Tami Foutz, Staff Senate
- Bruce Harper, Staff Senate
- Nicole Akers, Staff Senate
- Lisa Boothe, Staff Senate
- Sue Teel, Staff Senate
- Joseph Baker, Faculty Senate
- Margaret Radcliffe, Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA) representative
- Dryden Epstein, Graduate Student Assembly representative
- Dani Chowen, Student Government Association representative
- April Myers, Associate Director, Governance Administration
- Debra Stoudt, Associate Dean, Academic Policies and Procedures
- Kim O'Rourke, Vice President for Policy and Governance & Secretary to BOV
- Bob Hicok, Professor
- Cheri Meador, Financial Database Manager

### Opening:

The regular meeting of the Commission on Staff Policy and Affairs was called to order at 2:03 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 by Chair Serena Young. Judy Alford and Mary Helmick were absent with notice.

### Discussion

With no new subcommittee updates, Kim O'Rourke and Bob Hicok presented the first reading of the proposed new governance structure (CSPA 2020-A).

Kim O'Rourke began the presentation by stating that the last review of governance structure over 25 years ago, and in the Spring of 2019, President Tim Sands created the President's Commission on Governance, composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators, to facilitate a review. There was no formal avenue for certain groups to have a voice in the governance process and no way to capture the collective voice of constituent groups.

The first phase of the process proposes ways for that voice to be heard and to make University Council a more collaborative body for initiatives. The proposed structure allows senates to have a chance to vote on what is coming to them from commissions reporting to them. Some of these details still need to be worked out to address various scenarios, but basically this will give everyone a path to be part of the governance system.

The new structure has University Cabinet that involves senior leaders but is intended to be small so that it can address routine matters quickly and determine where issues should be directed while considering how best to handle academic initiatives before they go to University Council.

Bob Hicok mostly authored this resolution document, and the first step will be approval of this resolution. Future steps include determining the compositions of the University Council and Cabinet, determining accountability and responsibility of groups, determining whose voice carries what weight depending on specific matters, review committees and commissions, and defining the scope of Senates in the new structure.

Rajesh Bagchi likes the structure and feels it is a good idea to have a cabinet to help facilitate discussions as another layer. Bob offered that the changes to the structure will attach work to governance and require committees route work through governance. Rajesh asked if timelines would be affected, and Bob stated he believes the process of voting should take place within 4 week timeframe. University Council now has electronic voting, and Bob believes a consistent voting process should be adopted. Rajesh suggested using best practices from senates that do things well, and Bob agreed.

Bruce Harper volunteered that he found a memo from 1995 when the current structure was defined, and the biggest change was to involve staff in governance. Several committees were set up with great ideas for their purpose and some do not really exist/function, so Bruce suggested evaluating committees to be sure they are productive. Bob stated that part of the process will be consolidating and retiring commissions/committees and look at their history. Specifically, what have they done? Do they meet regularly? To what end? Margaret asked if Bruce had any specific ideas of which committees should be addressed. Bruce shared that when he was part of the Parking and Transportation Committee, it was mostly information sharing instead of action-based.

Kim also pondered whether the current reporting line for committees is appropriate. What if committees reported to senates instead of commissions, for instance? Right now is a brainstorming phase. Rajesh asked what commissions would be doing if they were to be bypassed? Bob stated that commissions are effective. For example, when considering governance as a conversation, more than 8 people make it difficult to have a productive conversation. Elements from every component of the university are typically represented in commissions and make it easier to get things done. Margaret Radcliffe shared that she chaired the Employee Benefits Committee last year and was surprised it reported to two commissions but did not report to CAPFA and is curious how a committee is situated in the new structure. Bob replied that has not been determined at this point, but that each senate will have at least one commission with further discussions needed to assess the rest. Margaret offered that what was useful about EBC is it was a place for people to bring questions and issues from their areas to the subject matter experts and the small setting allowed for better discussions. Bob stated that the University Council and University Cabinet will allow issues to get to leaders and experts on a regular basis.

Pat Donovan inquired about the size and makeup of University Cabinet and Council components, and Bob replied that while that determination is ongoing and the discussion is in early stages, he is hopeful to get Council down to 40-50 and Cabinet less than 20. Debra Stoudt asked if the Cabinet is next to the Council in diagram, and Bob responded that it should probably connect.

Kim stated that the success of new structure is dependent on communication and representation. Bruce offered that some employees are unable to participate because of lack of permission from supervisors.

Bob stated that there is a favorable response to this proposal from the president's office, which may encourage people to free up time to participate. Sue Teel went back to what Kim said about communication and representation and shared that it is beneficial for regular education about shared governance and an opportunity to express expectations for those who participate. Rajesh agreed that this should come from all levels of the university. Sue shared that often it is individual supervisors creating roadblocks for participation. Bob stressed the importance of leaders recognizing change in perspective on governance. Margaret said it is important to emphasize to faculty and staff in particular: this is a contribution to your professional development and participate in decision-making. Sue stated this is also a great opportunity to change the culture surrounding governance.

Serena asked if there is a timeline attached to this work. Bob said that completing this by the end of this academic year is aspirational, but not likely to happen. As there is lots of work to do and conversations to be had, next year is more likely, but did say there is a sense of urgency in this opportunity.

Serena thanked Kim and Bob for their presentation and asked the commission members to email recommendations or changes to her by December 15, 2020. The next reading of the proposal will be held at the January regular meeting.

Minutes from October's meeting and this meeting will be sent together for review.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m. by Chair Serena Young. The next general meeting will be at 2:00 p.m. on December 15, 2020.