

## **Senate President's remarks to Senate regarding Strategic Planning Directives February 22, 2013**

At our last meeting, with a series of motions and votes, you instructed the faculty senate executive team to formulate recommendations to bring back to you about possible paths of action for addressing the following issues:

- The evaluations of supervisors and leadership up to and including the President and Provost
- The Faculty role in the process for chairs and deans selections
- Addressing the impact of class size and enrollment growth
- Role of adjuncts, and role of faculty in relation to adjuncts.
- Addressing and clarifying the role and workload of instructors.
- Addressing the dissatisfaction among faculty about how faculty voice is received in decision making, what shared governance actually means, and how it can be better implemented to the satisfaction of all

Accordingly the Senate Executive Team deliberated on these directives and is bringing to you the following responses and recommendations. This may take a moment, you all were very comprehensive in your charges, so I would request unanimous consent to suspend time on this item so that I may complete a discussion of all six items without interruption.

1. Regarding the issue of evaluating supervisors and leadership up to and including the president and the provost: It is the judgment of the Executive Team that the current system by which faculty provide feedback on the performance of chairs and deans shows signs of promise and potential as a model to inform any potential expansion of the survey to include senior leadership – we think the current model is useful both in terms of the structure and conceptualization of the instrument itself but also the collaborative process by which this instrument and survey approach was achieved.

However, we also recognize that we haven't yet completed two full cycles of the new model after nearly six years of no formal faculty input on the performance of academic supervision. Before recommending any formal move to expand the survey beyond its current scope, it is the position of the executive team that the current faculty survey of academic supervision establish itself for at least two full cycles, including both the delivery of the instrument and the time period immediately following the publication of survey day, a period in which deans and the provost's office have the opportunity to formally and uniformly incorporate this data into the professional development of chairs and deans.

Until the culture of 360 evaluation of academic supervisors is more robustly developed and established, the senate executive team is not prepared to

recommend expansion of the current model, since there is not sufficient evidence or data to indicate such an expansion would achieve the intended results. The question here, is, in essence: if you provide feedback and the status quo prevails, what does that mean about the quality of the feedback and the meaningfulness with which it is received? There is not yet enough evidence to answer these questions, in our judgment.

It IS our recommendation that in the Fall of 2013, the FAT, the team in which the faculty impetus for evaluation of academic supervisors originated from on the faculty side, formally undertake a review of the past two years of surveys of faculty perceptions of chairs and deans and the response to this survey, from a faculty perspective, and report back to the Senate on the effectiveness of this survey and the ways that the data appear to be used or not in the professional development of academic supervisors and leadership in the units. Such a report should provide the Senate with more concrete information on which to make a decision about how it may wish to proceed on this score in the future.

2. Regarding the faculty role in and process for selection and roles of chairs and deans. The Senate Executive Team deliberated at length on this issue, both the matter itself and the reality that the underlying issue has to do with, what core or basic set of practices and norms should exist in the governance of each college to guarantee a common threshold of rights and responsibilities and access to equal faculty participation in unit governance. To the degree that there is variability across the colleges in how faculty participate selecting chairs and deans, this variability measures a wider divergence of practices and policies that can vary pretty substantially from college to college. I will return to this larger issue in my discussion of the final point about shared governance.

For now, with respect to faculty roles in the selection of chairs and deans, the Executive Team takes the position that is the primary responsibility of the administration, as the hiring authority for chairs and deans, to articulate a common vision and process for how to involve the faculty in the units in the selection of academic leaders. Therefore, I have recently spoken with the Provost, as the administration's representative, and formally requested that the administration develop and communicate to the faculty the administration's vision and plan for how all faculty can expect to be involved in the selection of chairs and deans across the institution. The Provost received this request and indicated his willingness to respond accordingly. Stay tuned for more on this front.

The Executive Team elected to take this approach because while faculty can make any number of unilateral statements or take positions about what faculty should do or how they should be involved, the administration controls the hiring processes of other administrators. The Team's position is

that it is better to lean forward coming out the successful conclusion of the shared governance initiative and use that document as a basis to line up processes such as the hiring of chairs and deans with the principles outlined in the statement. This approach seems superior to putting faculty in the suboptimal position of being reactive or defensive in its response to future actions or decisions.

3. Regarding the charge to address impact of class size and enrollment growth: you will have seen the notice yesterday of the intent to introduce the first reading of the report by the faculty select panel on growth and quality today. The SET's position is that this report and its recommendations, which you will be asked to approve or reject, covers a deep and wide scope of issues related to growth and academic quality and amply covers your directive on this issue. How you decide as a body, if at all, to dispose of the report and its recommendations will constitute a significant engagement with the realities and possible actions we as a faculty face regarding the dynamics growth, class size, and funding.
4. Regarding the role of adjuncts, and role of faculty in relation to adjuncts. The SET's position is that in order for this issue to be treated fully and responsibly requires an ad hoc panel. We request that you give us some time to think through the nature and structure of that group, and we will return before the end of the academic year with a specific proposal for you to consider.
5. Regarding the role of instructors. This item arose in discussion subsequent to the regular strategic planning process and did not receive as much resolution or focus as the previous items. Consequently, the SET was not sufficiently clear about the precise intent of the senate in this regard. Accordingly, I am seeing your charge and raising it by charging senators from each college to go back to your faculty and particularly your instructors and ask them for feedback about any concerns or opportunities for greater clarification that exist with respect to the faculty role and workload of instructors. Please collect all responses and send them to me no later than March 15. At that point, the SET will review the feedback and be able to provide a more responsive response to your charge.
6. Finally regarding the charge to propose ways to address, and I quote, the "dissatisfaction among faculty about how faculty voice is received in decision making, what shared governance actually means, and how it can be better implemented to the satisfaction of all." There are at least three different parts to this directive. So let me take them one at a time. To the question of what shared governance actually means, let me be frank: there was a bit of dismay among the SET that the Faculty Senate would formally take such a position that we need to clarify what the definition of the shared actually is –

particularly given that the taking of this formal official position came literally days after a campus wide agreement was announced regarding a university definition of shared governance and key principles. This document, which was circulated across campus, has been the focus of a year's worth of work and updates by me to you regarding work that leadership has been doing on the behalf faculty. And the final product of that work was agreed to by President Bradshaw and his principles, as well as leaders of SAC, SG, and Faculty Senate.

As I noted in an email to all faculty earlier this week, I am under no illusion that this document will automatically address or correct those areas of governance and decision making in which the institution still has room to improve. But it can hardly be said that there is official unclarity about what the definition of shared governance is at FGCU, and the SET considers this portion of the issue of defining shared governance settled, if not entirely closed, for the moment.

Now, regarding the dimension of the charge to address how faculty voice is received and how shared governance may better be implemented to the satisfaction of all. A few words here: shared governance doesn't work only when faculty or any other stakeholder always gets their way. At the same time, it is also true that it's not enough for processes to simply solicit and listen to stakeholder voices, if the decisions that follow from this solicitation and listening don't demonstrably indicate a willingness on the part of the stakeholders with most power in any given decision to surrender any power or prerogative ... this state of affairs can undermine the validity and integrity of – and trust in – the overall system. If and when this happens, shared governance is reduced to the entity with the most power listening to all sides and then sharing the final governance decision.

Faculty Senate leadership invested time and energy in the effort to define shared governance precisely as a way to help clarify how and when meaningful shared governance happens and to give everyone on campus a common foundation from which to work when clarifying how to improve those things we don't get as right as we might. So while we as an executive team have done what we can to help resolve local disputes and conflicts of governance in the units low these many semesters now, we elected early on in my tenure as president to take a longer view with respect to shared governance. The result is that, for the first time in its history, FGCU has a commonly agreed upon statement of what shared governance means and looks like in principle.

This is singularly important, because with this agreement, faculty (indeed, all stakeholders) can – and Senate Leadership encourages faculty to – now revisit the governance processes at the unit, department, and program level to do two things: reaffirm those places where things are working, and

identify where there are opportunities and needs for improvement based on the document's vision of meaningful shared governance. So the SET's position on how to better implement shared governance is that the table is now set and faculty at the rank and file level must take responsibility for the fate of the processes in their units and departments and programs. The Faculty Senate Leadership cannot effect or bring about outcomes that regular faculty aren't themselves willing to model and invest in on the ground of everyday university life.

What Senate Leadership CAN do is help support the faculty in the units in this process. To that end, and in response to your charge, I will be personally meeting with the faculty governance leaders of each unit between now and the end of the semester to discuss the shared governance document and how we as a faculty can lean forward on the basis of this commonly adopted statement and improve the exercise of our rights and fulfillment of our responsibilities in the governance of the institution.