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Consultative minutes 11/19/2014

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Consultative Committee
November 19, 2014
Prairie Lounge
8:15 AM

Present: Michelle Page, LeAnn Dean, Megan Jacobson, Lisa Harris, Nancy Helsper, Rita Bolluyt, Jayne Blodgett, Julie Eckerle

Absent: Leslie Meek, Allison Wolf, Sam Daniewicz, Jean Rohloff

Minutes for October 22 were approved with amendment; Minutes for November 12 were approved with minor changes.

Review of UMM Constitution

- The committee began by discussing the sections of the constitution that referred to committee procedures and where Consultative Committee was referred to or fully discussed: Constitution Article V and Article VII and bylaws Article IV.
- It was discovered that there may be a misunderstanding of how the rule in bylaws Article IV Section 1 applies to staff and students. The understanding of many committee members was that when students and staff elect representatives to constitutional committees like the Consultative Committee, the constituents elect these individuals and that for the purposes of this election there must be one more nominee than positions open. Then the names of the elected individuals are forwarded to the Campus Assembly. However, some committee members believed that extra nominees were being forwarded to the Campus Assembly even after the constituent group had chosen their desired candidate(s). It is clear that P&A and faculty members of the Consultative Committee are elected by the Assembly; however, it is less clear how the process works for students and staff. In many cases, the constituent groups elect or appoint individuals (depending on the committee) and the Assembly approves the slate (without voting on specific individuals). The Consultative Committee may ask the Steering Committee and/or Membership Committee to interpret the language and process of this section and clarify, if needed, during the review of the constitution and bylaws.
- There was further discussion related to bylaws Article IV on election procedures. Some individuals felt that the system of having an extra nominee was not effective and was leading to artificial elections. (Examples from Campus Assembly where people have been nominated and told the Assembly not to vote for them were cited). If people are only accepting nomination in order to just make things run, is the process working? It was suggested that the Steering Committee review this process and language, possibly removing or modifying it. However, other committee members felt that having an extra nomination might reduce instances where an individual avoided running for election because they did not want to appear to challenge another nominee — they wondered if removing or changing the language might discourage broad participation and lead to a situation where one group of people were always nominated and filling elected positions.

- It was decided that there was no clear consensus within the Consultative Committee at this time but that these topics of discussion would be forwarded to the Steering Committee for their deliberation.
- Article VII Section 2 Part B was referred to. This section states that Consultative Committee may “submit recommendations or proposals to the Steering Committee.” This may be comparable to when other groups bring resolutions to the Steering Committee and Campus Assembly for endorsement. The Consultative Committee should keep this option in mind as we discuss various issues related to campus affairs. The topic of civility issues was cited as an example of when the Consultative Committee might want to forward a proposal or resolution or recommendation.
- The committee noticed that the representative on the Faculty Consultative Committee (for the university system) is a member of the Steering Committee. Why is this so? Shouldn't this person be on the Consultative Committee? This is a question to ask in the constitution review process.
- The committee will return to the constitution as a topic of discussion in a future meeting to ensure that all views have been heard.

Additional Discussion

The discussion about the nomination and election process spurred additional conversation and questions related to governance more generally. Some individuals were concerned at the inequity of participation in governance and other service activities—it seems that some individuals do a large amount of this work while others do hardly any. Some job descriptions require participation while other job descriptions (or unit supervisors) discourage participation. For faculty, there is no clear job description that lays out the expectations of faculty work, in particular, participation in governance—there is no penalty for non-participation since service, administrative, and governance tasks are not highly valued in tenure and promotion statements (7.12 statements). In many units, service is largely defined as service to profession or academic field rather than as campus/program/unit service and participation in governance. There is no other written list of minimum expectations of faculty. One member asked how we can ensure that people (faculty, in particular) are serving on committees and participating in governance—should there be a job description? Should there be a requirement to serve a minimum number of times over a particular time span? Has the governance system at UMM changed to a more administrative model that should be named as such? Committee members may want to continue to discuss these issues in the future.

The committee decided to meet Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:30. LeAnn will arrange for Prairie Lounge.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 AM

Submitted by Michelle Page