Academic Senate Motion

Motion
To revise sections 1.4.3.2.10 and 1.3.2.2.1 of the Faculty Handbook in order to strengthen the Academic Senate’s role as the hub of the academic program.

Background
Two parts of our history provide context for this motion. The first is the reconfiguration of the Academic Senate undertaken by the faculty in 2009-11. One of the aims of this process was to create a body that was better able to provide effective leadership for the academic program. The key change was a move from a Senate composed of all department chairs to a smaller body elected by the faculty. Faculty Council and the Academic Senate see the current motion as a continuation of that process as it tweaks the handbook language on Senate, for the second year in a row, in order to clarify its role within the institution.

The second relates to the question of who chairs Senate. For all of the college’s history prior to 2011, the provost or representative chaired the Academic Senate (or equivalent). The motion presented here, which comes from Faculty Council and the Academic Senate, proposes a return to that model.

Rationale
When Gayle Beebe arrived as president in 2007, one of the first things he did was to implement a robust, ongoing program of strategic planning. This led to the formation of a strategic planning committee, with subcommittees (“tracks of work”) to foster progress towards the various elements of the plan. One of the primary objectives of our new Provost has been to bring about greater alignment between the world of strategic planning and our faculty committee structures. Pursuing that goal offers a major prize now that strategic planning is central to determining college priorities and budgets, namely, a greater ability for faculty to ensure that academic priorities are central to the strategic plan. But we also need the right mechanisms for ensuring that we implement what we want and plan.

The Senate has therefore been moving towards becoming the key decision making and agenda setting body for the academic side of the college, as seen for example in its central role this semester in setting priorities for the new strategic map. This has always been the case on many levels, but together Faculty Council, the Senate, and the Provost believe that Senate should play an increasingly important role as a body that sets vision for the academic program and then ensures that the relevant work gets done. Senate is becoming more of a forward looking committee that generates ideas, while continuing the oversight role that has sometimes seemed to be the core of its self-understanding.

The current motion thus proposes an alteration of the Senate’s job description to reflect this shift. It also returns the chairing of Senate to the Provost, with an elected faculty vice-chair of the Senate who will work with the Provost to determine the Senate’s agenda. The Provost, according to the Faculty Handbook, has “primary responsibility for the academic program”, and the current Senate and Faculty Council believe that it is therefore appropriate that the Provost should steer this crucial committee. It should be noted that unlike the eight elected faculty senators the Provost cannot vote on Senate, so we are not too concerned that faculty are ceding undue power with this motion. It should also be noted that the language does not allow the Provost to designate a representative as chair.
Proposed Language (additions in bold, deletions struck)

1.4.3.2.10 Academic Senate

a) Membership:
   1) Eight elected faculty, two from each division plus two additional faculty at large
      (a) Only faculty who have served at the college for a minimum of 6 years are eligible for
election to Academic Senate.
      (b) For divisional representatives, only faculty who currently serve or have previously
served as department chair are eligible for election to Academic Senate.
      (c) Faculty are typically elected to 3 year terms, such that a maximum of one new senator is
elected each year within each division.
   2) Provost and Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness (both ex officio without
vote)
   3) Registrar
   4) W.C.S.A. President (or representative) (voice without vote)

b) Observers: Additional ex officio personnel including the Director of Off-Campus Programs, the
Associate Provost for Planning and Research, and the Director of the Library and Information
Services are welcome as regular participants in Academic Senate meetings. Academic Senate
meetings are also open to other faculty. All such participants have voice without vote.

c) Officers:
   1) The Provost shall serve as chair.
   2) Each spring, the voting members of the following year’s senate shall elect a vice-chair from
among its faculty members. The vice-chair shall meet regularly with the Provost to set
agendas and will chair Academic Senate in the Provost’s absence.
   3) The Registrar shall serve as secretary.

d) Responsibilities:
   1) To steward and maintain the integrity of the academic program, including curriculum,
general education, majors, support programs, and off-campus and special programs.
      (a) To engage in academic planning, to assist the Provost with the crafting and
implementation of the strategic plan for the academic programs, to assure that
academic evaluation effectively takes place, and to recommend changes in academic
staffing and resources.
(b) To review, approve, and instate changes in academic programs, and to submit these changes through Faculty Council for action by the full faculty in cases where said changes are designated in section 1.3.3.2.b as requiring a vote of the full faculty.

(c) **To read and discuss annual reports from the Program Review, General Education, Academic Resources, and Off-Campus Programs committees, and to ensure that academic evaluation effectively takes place.**

(d) To accept and consider proposals from students, faculty, staff, or other constituencies and respond with recommendations.

(e) To recommend changes in admissions policies and practices.

(f) To recommend changes in the area of learning resources, including the library and educational media.

(g) To initiate changes in grading practices and student evaluations.

(h) **To read and discuss yearly summary reports from the Program Review Committee, the General Education Committee, and the Off-Campus Programs Committee.**

(i) **To read and discuss regular summary reports from the Strategic Planning Committee.**

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**Current Language**

1.4.3.2.10 **Academic Senate**

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(c) Faculty are typically elected to 3 year terms, such that a maximum of one new senator is elected each year within each division.

2) Provost and Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness *(ex officio* without vote)

3) Registrar

4) W.C.S.A. President (or representative) (voice without vote)

b) **Observers:** Additional *ex officio* personnel including the Director of Off-Campus Programs, the Associate Provost for Planning and Research, and the Director of the Library and Information
Services are welcome as regular participants in Academic Senate meetings. Academic Senate meetings are also open to other faculty. All such participants have voice without vote.

c) **Officers:** Each spring, the voting members of the following year’s senate shall elect a chair from among its faculty members. The Registrar shall serve as secretary.

d) **Responsibilities:**

1) To steward and maintain the integrity of the academic program, including curriculum, general education, majors, support programs, and off-campus and special programs.

   a) To review, approve, and instate changes in academic programs, and to submit these changes through faculty council for action by the full faculty in cases where said changes are designated in section 1.3.3.2.b as requiring a vote of the full faculty.

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   f) To accept and consider proposals from students, faculty, staff, or other constituencies and respond with recommendations.

   g) To read and discuss yearly summary reports from the Program Review Committee, the General Education Committee, and the Off-Campus Programs Committee.

   h) To read and discuss regular summary reports from the Strategic Planning Committee.

**Proposed Language (additions in bold)**

1.3.2.2.1 **Provost**

a) **Function:** To coordinate the entire educational program of the College to achieve the college mission and goals; to build a strong and comprehensive liberal arts curriculum, and to ensure that all academic instruction, student development activities, and spiritual life programs, are effective means to nurture a strong and mature Christian commitment, consistent with the values and beliefs of the evangelical Christian community; to articulate the vision of Christian liberal arts in a manner that is compelling both internally and to the various constituencies of the college.
e) **Responsibilities and Duties:** The Provost is the number two administrative officer of the college and senior administrator of the educational program. The Provost is the dean of faculty, with primary responsibility for the academic program.

2) Related to Supervision, Guidance, and Advisory Roles:

   (c) To serve ex officio on College committees and to chair, or to designate a chair for, the following:
   
   (1) Faculty meeting as a committee of the whole
   
   (2) **Academic Senate**
   
   (3) and to establish ad hoc committees as may be appropriate

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