



Faculty Senate

*Meeting No. 2, Fall Semester 2023
(Plenary Session)
13 Oct 2023, 2:00pm
Room A402*

1. Call to order and roll call

Prof Omondi called to order the meeting at 2:04pm.
All faculty senators were present.

2. Acceptance of agenda

Approved by all.

3. Acceptance of prior meeting's minutes

Approved by all.

4. Committee reports

a. Executive Committee

Prof Omondi reported that committee reports and actions are usually reviewed in the Executive Committee meetings, but there was nothing to review after only the 1st meeting of the year.

The committee briefly addressed the kinds of possibilities regarding the CELT and IDA initiatives.

Prof Omondi mentioned his meeting on September 18th with VP Minkoo Han, Dean Johng-il Lee, and also the Team Leader for the Research Foundation Office. Those leaders have been working on the Research News/Info website. And they will furnish an update at the end of October to Prof Omondi, and Prof Omondi will report back to the Senate at our November meeting.

b. Academic Personnel Policy

Prof Tran indicated that their committee would like to make some additions or edits to the SUNY Korea Faculty Handbook, esp. re: FIT policies and differentiating between departments within FIT and then also more generally between FIT and SBU sides of SUNY Korea. They would like to assess esp. the evaluation policies in Chapter 4. Prof Omondi pointed out that main issues remaining in the Handbook appear to have to do with Qualified Track Faculty.

c. Education Council

Prof Cabuay and his committee wishes to develop their Center for Academic Research and Learning (CARL) center, via test piloting some programs related to specific components of its framework.

Prof Houghton asked how the role or services of the committee's proposed Office of Research Excellence would differ substantively from the current Research Support office. Prof Cabuay said the quality of implementation would differ. He mentioned the need for Executive Buy-in, availability of resources, and the discipline of the implementation personnel. He also emphasized our having a balance between institutionalized support between both research and teaching.

Last semester's CELT initiative is 'dead'.

Prof Omondi asked how the committee's proposed Office of Teaching & Learning (OTL) would differ from last year's CELT idea. Prof Cabuay responded that the key difference would be that it would actually happen, via test piloting (and then refining) separate 'modules'.

Prof Omondi asked prof Lee to elaborate on what he wrote in committee notes regarding how CARL would offer "programs that bolster the students' research skills through customized research projects". Prof Lee mentioned that this would be designed to serve mainly undergraduate students, promoting their interest in research.

Prof Omondi highlighted that MEC had an undergraduate 'lab day' (what Prof Han referred to as a 'workshop'). This past semester, CS also had a research session for undergraduate students and will have another one this semester, adopting aspects of the MEC one.

Prof Omondi highlighted the broader objective of undergraduate research projects and the importance of research skills and research writing. Prof Houghton mentioned that WRT-102 does not really address “research writing” skills per se.

Prof Omondi suggested that Mason Korea’s two “Research Writing Skills” courses for undergraduates might be useful for us to consider offering at SUNY Korea. Prof Houghton mentioned that he could speak to his department’s director about that.

Prof Cabuay mentioned that the budget and administrative authority are critical for their committee to get their initiatives through.

Prof Han asked for some illustration of CARL, and Prof Cabuay’s response was that the ORE and OTL of CARL would offer functional expertise to our faculty, after mapping out important ‘subunits’ of ORE and OTL and their specific ‘missions’. Prof Cabuay mentioned that other universities can offer models that we could benchmark.

Prof Omondi indicated that the committee will need to make a convincing case for CARL, and asked for a description of the next step. Prof Cabuay responded that in their next committee meeting, the committee will outline a framework that all committee members can agree on, and then articulate the value and purpose of each subunit under each of the two offices (ORE and OTL).

Prof Omondi asked about the relationship between ORE and the Research Support office. Also, he wanted to know what the committee’s proposed Office of International Affairs (OIA) would do. Prof Cabuay mentioned that, in his experience, an OIA would be based on (supporting) multicultural communication and multicultural outreach; and would require cross-cultural management competencies.

Prof Omondi stressed the importance of delivering CARL pilot programs that will be convincing enough to attract leadership’s willingness to spend money on it.

d. Campus Environment and Faculty Welfare

Prof Lenz indicated that their committee will re-review and re-assess the SIDA, and will recommend next steps (i.e. keep going, drop it) at the next Senate meeting.

The new International Faculty Guide is being worked on by SUNYK staff, and the committee will continue contacting him for updates.

However, the committee is also working on new initiatives. First, there’s the Beneficial Faculty Welfare policies. The committee would like to see SUNY Korea have a kind of corporate membership in a resort. Also, the committee would like to see SUNY Korea become a member of a kind of funeral association.

Furthermore, Prof Houghton mentioned that the National Health Insurance doesn't cover a lot (e.g. for illness such as cancer, or dental coverage) and he would like to see SUNY Korea consider offering (access to) university-wide-pricing private supplemental health insurance.

Prof Houghton mentioned that the SUNYK employee discounts for booking local hotels seems to have gone away.

Prof Han indicated interest in getting some input to help identify which 1-2 benefits the faculty wishes to prioritize first, such that later this/next semester we would then be able to implement those selected benefits.

Regarding health insurance, Prof Omondi mentioned that University of Utah Asia Campus offers American health insurance ("Blue Cross Blue Shield"). Prof Lenz mentioned that UAC international faculty must choose either the Korean National Health Insurance or the American health insurance. Prof Houghton indicated that apparently Mason Korea faculty are offered both Korean National Health Insurance and a supplemental Korean insurance.

Prof Lenz mentioned that if faculty have any other requests for faculty benefits, they can let their committee know.

Prof Cabuay wants to know whether portable air conditioners can be institutionally subsidized for faculty office rooms, because it gets very warm in the offices during the Summer months. Prof Lenz mentioned that the committee will add this to their list.

Prof Lenz mentioned that their committee also discussed issues of smoking on campus. Signs may be an initial kind of solution, but alternative solutions could include investing in covered smoking areas or asking IGC security guards to come by and shoo students away.

Prof Herold mentioned that outside between Building A and Building B, there are student smokers there, and one idea could be to install an industrial-sized ashtray receptacle where students can dispose their cigarette butts. Prof Lenz would like to "not give students permission to smoke there", and instead see students smoke at other designated locations on campus. Prof Herold indicated that the students are not likely to change their behavior. A solution mentioned during this Senate discussion was to add a smoking booth/box closer to our SUNY Korea building.

Prof Omondi mentioned that this smoking issue has been raised this past year, and the CEFW should consider formulating and sharing a strong message with Admin so that Admin can talk to the IGC staff about this. The discussion emphasized that a covered booth is likely a best kind of solution.

Prof Lenz also mentioned that another issue is accommodations and faculty spaces. Any faculty with concerns about faculty housing (and faculty office) accommodations should contact their Senate representative, who would then forward all feedback to Prof Houghton.

e. Academic Planning and Education Services

Prof Ryoo mentioned that we currently pay Master's RA's 1.5m KRW per month, and their committee would like SUNY Korea to match the Ministry of Education's guidelines for 1.8m KRW per month. The same goes for bumping up the PhD RA salary from 2.5m KRW per month to 3.0m KRW per month.

Also, starting January 2024, from the committee's efforts during the last academic year, a 100% tuition waiver (currently 70%) will now be provided for Graduate Research Assistants in SUNY Korea who have been paid $\geq 60\%$ of their stipend/salary from their advisor and have a previous GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Prof Ryoo asked our Research Support team whether SUNY Korea is following through with these government guidelines, and that team responded this kind of policy change should be initiated via a proposal from the faculty (Senate?) or an (ad hoc?) committee.

Prof Han mentioned that this matter is important for PI's. He indicated that he was skeptical that all other Korean universities have followed this government guideline, and that we should collect more data to make a decision. He would like to see a statistic representing the percentage of Korean universities that followed this new guideline. Before a Senate vote, Prof Han would like to see a survey distributed to PI's here at SUNY Korea.

Prof Houghton mentioned that when he spoke with Admin in the past about salaries, they wanted 'official' documentation regarding 'the numbers' at those universities (i.e. hearsay from employees at other universities was not enough).

Prof Ryoo mentioned that increasing the RA salary cap is important to help prevent students (i.e. who receive offers from us) from choosing to matriculate at other institutions for graduate school. Basically, the "Top 20" schools are following the new government guideline.

Prof Ryoo indicated that his next step would be to talk to Admin and the Research Support team and run the survey for PI's, and then submit a report to the Senate.

According to the discussion, the university will have the say on whether the RA salary cap will be increased.

5. Any other business

No other business.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned around 3:19pm.