



# Faculty Senate Archives

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Faculty Senate

Academic year 1989-1990

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## Volume III

### **Caucus of the Faculty Senate: Results of Survey to Determine Attitudes Discussion of April 2, 1990**

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CAUCUS

FACULTY SENATE

April 2, 1990

Topics for Discussion

1. Discussion on having a "voice" and the selection, if desired
2. Discussion of Senate survey results
3. Suggestions for Senate Executive Committee
4. What issues should the Senate take up next year?
5. As may arise.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY TO DETERMINE  
ATTITUDES RELATING TO THE POTENTIAL FOR OPEN  
DISCUSSIONS OF SENATE ISSUES

A total of 28 surveys were returned to the Senate Executive Committee. The following represent a summarization of results for each question. Percentages given represent the percent of members who responded to the survey.

Section A: Perceived Effectiveness of Senate Discussions

Question	% Agree	% Ambivalent	% Disagree
Lack information needed to discuss issues before the Senate	50	14	36
Lack information needed to prepare for a vote	46	11	43
Committee reports too infrequent	43	26	29
More information provided by Executive Committee prior to discussion	57	18	25
Comfortable expressing opinions given present structure of Senate	48	19	33
Presence of reporters inhibits willingness to discuss issues	14	14	71
Presence of SGA members inhibits willingness to discuss issues	0	14	86
Presence of administrators inhibits willingness to discuss issues	50	14	36
Would feel freer to vote if written ballots used	64	14	21

## General Comments Pertaining to Section A

Note that in the following section, each paragraph represents the comments of an individual senator.

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(Regarding the presence of administrators at senate meetings), certainly in the presence of an aggressive VP. But that doesn't mean I think the VP shouldn't be at senate meetings. But since the faculty senate is a representative body we must retain open ballots on issues. Closed ballots are appropriate for the election of senate officers. That is not policy on which I represent a constituency.

The senate should discuss and vote on major issues only after the appropriate committee explains the pertinent points. The executive committee should discuss more faculty issues rather than administrative issues and they should report more non-biased facts to the senate, rather than administrative reasons. The senate should make more of its own beliefs for administrative evaluation rather than working out solutions that the administrative approves. Let the administration disapprove those issues it does not agree with.

As a tenured faculty member, I feel more free to express my opinions than if I were untenured. I do feel uneasy, however, with items such as: Should the EVPAA attend the university T&P committee with discussion/presentation privileges when she/he is the next step in the decision chain.

Sufficient information is available on those items brought before the senate if the senators are doing their jobs and asking questions. There is more to being a senator than simply showing up to cast a vote.

People elected to office must speak their views and not be intimidated by others.

I get so damn tired of listening to the same persons pontificate on any issue that it is hard for me to even attend the senate meetings.

Senators need much more information, especially from committees, before they can be effective voters.

I think many senators lack information, but I suspect that it's because they aren't real familiar with the university, and don't find out things they should. I rather doubt that orientation would help much, or more information from executive committee, in general. Getting more experienced people as senators would help. I think that many senators are inhibited by presence of non-faculty at times.

I do not appreciate administrators "parent role" that is evident on some issues.

As long as the current administration is in power, the presence of administrators will inhibit free exchange among faculty in the senate. Whether true or not, there is a perception that faculty's opinions could be used

against them in a vindictive or punitive manner. Such a perception is quite inhibiting of open debate.

Presence of president and vice president causes me to measure comments carefully and refrain from participating unless I am strongly motivated by the issue discussed.

I have in the past felt intimidated by having the president and vice president of the university present when certain issues were being discussed.

#### Section B: Facilitation of Senate Discussions

Question	% Agree	% Ambivalent	% Disagree
* Executive Committee provides members with agenda of their meetings	81	15	4
* Executive Committee provides members with summary of meeting activities	85	19	0
** Executive Committee meetings should be open to any faculty member	24	24	55
** Executive Committee meetings should be open to any senate member	48	22	30
* Senate committees provide interim progress reports to senate	61	18	21
* Senate president conducts orientation for new senate members	69	17	15
A faculty caucus should be established	78	7	15
Caucuses should be established within colleges and convened by senators	62	19	19
Some senate meetings should be closed to non-voting members	57	18	25
** Rules of the senate should be altered to change attendance of non-voting members	19	48	33
Constitution should be altered to change composition of senate	22	57	22

\* Those suggestions favored by 25% or more of all respondents.

\*\* A minimum of 25% of respondents indicated they would be least likely to support these suggestions.

## General Comments Pertaining to Section B

It would be helpful if the executive committee were to provide a list of topics discussed, with the understanding that items may be deliberately left off the list which...inquiry underway. The ex. committee must be able to consider some matters in a confidential way. Interim reports are necessary for consideration of big policy changes, to help the committee with political consensus and to prevent it from isolating itself from faculty opinion. We do not need more routine committee reports.

Get rid of non-voting membership and/or attendance at senate meetings by administrators. These people do not have the interest of the faculty as a major priority. By necessity, they look at issues from the perspective of budgetary constraints or regent's views and they too often minimize the needs and desires of the faculty. Have the senate president spend less time with the EVP and more time discussing things with senators and other faculty.

More discussion by more people would encourage greater ownership and sense of purpose for a faculty senate.

Senators and faculty in general need to know what issues the exec. committee is discussing, but the exec. committee needs some privacy for frank discussions. Such privacy is impossible for a body the size of the senate.

There needs to be a general airing of complaints including faculty and central administration. We must reestablish an atmosphere of trust and professionalism.

Clarify the extent to which the president of the senate can ask that a committee be formed to consider an issue. For example, no discussion or affirmation was sought from the full senate when the current president requested that a committee be established to consider the need for post-tenure review.

Probably what I'm most concerned about is the present senate president is not very good about scanning the gallery for persons on the edges who might want the floor, nor in limiting individuals who talk all the time and beyond their share of time. People on the fringes often give up or are cut off because debate is shut down by the presiding officer. Obviously not all presidents have been the same over the years.

There is a general perception among senators and faculty alike that the senate is a 'do nothing, debating society' that largely reacts to the initiatives and agenda established by others, particularly VP Scott. Too many times reports by committees and proposals for change are picked apart on the floor of the senate, frequently negating the painstaking effort of the committees. Indeed, we are frequently left with nothing to show for the extended debate undertaken, for frequently issues are simply returned to committee. This is demoralizing to the committees and frequently a waste of time for the senators. More needs to be done to reach closure on such items. It has become painfully clear that too many senators are intimidated by VP Scott's presence, though they should not be. Her role

should be to provide information and to receive faculty input. If neither she nor the senate cannot do better on both counts we might as well close shop and slink off into the night. As it is now constituted, neither the senate nor its committees appeal to the desire of senior faculty to undertake service commitments. Why should they? Service is woefully unrewarded anyway, and if the perception is that the senate really accomplishes very little of faculty interest, then there is little real incentive to serve in it or on its committees. Senior faculty have other things to do. The result is that junior faculty frequently are left to carry the load, and frankly it is too much to expect them to play hard ball with the administration or to stand up and be counted on tough issues when matters of T&P are on their minds. So, we have a downward spiral into "do nothingness."