

June 30, 2017

Dear Faculty Members, and President Wyatt,

According to the Faculty Senate Constitution Article 4, section 5, "The President of the Senate shall make an annual written report to the President of the University and the University Faculty." Since this is the last day of the fiscal year, it looks like I had better get this out before my tenure as Faculty Senate President for the 2016-17 year officially expires.

### **Faculty Senate Annual Report 2016-17**

All in all, I think it has been a fairly productive year. First, I'd like to thank all of you for all of the explicit and implicit support that I have received over my presidency. It has been a pleasure, although with some level of stress, to lead the Faculty Senate this past year. I spend much of my time professionally focused on the atomic and molecular world of living creatures, so dealing with campus politics has been a valuable learning experience that has helped me to grow in new ways. I am grateful for the opportunity to represent such a wonderful group of colleagues, and to be able to help faculty with individual issues that they have faced over this past year. And I am particularly grateful for the help of my executive committee. Abby Larson has done a fantastic job of keeping track of, and posting of senate minutes, and also keeping the faculty web page updated. Thanks Abby! Nathan Barker has been a great help in discussions of ideas and faculty business as president-elect. Angela Pool-Funai did a great job as our Parliamentarian and keeping us on track during senate meetings. Chad Gasser has done fine job of keeping track of the books, ordering refreshments for our meetings, and dealing with our bills. We were able to offer 3 scholarships for \$1,000 each from our Faculty Senate Scholarship Fund. (If every faculty member contributed just \$1 each pay period, we could easily double this, so please consider donating \$1 or more each pay period to this worthy cause.) Thank you, Executive Committee! I really have appreciated and benefited from your assistance over the year.

It has been a real pleasure to attend Deans Council, led by Provost Cook, to experience the extensive deliberations regarding academic policies, and programs across campus, among other important issues affecting the entire campus. I have also deeply enjoyed attending President's Council meetings over the past year, and have been struck by the thoughtful, open, and honest consideration given to wide-ranging issues of campus management. I have been truly heartened with the way this advisory body, and the Deans Council have listened to the voice of the faculty senate, and with the way they have honestly sought faculty input on all issues affecting faculty.

I am convinced that President Wyatt, Vice President Dodge, Provost Cook, and Associate Provost Sage have our best interest at heart. And I am grateful for the opportunity to have gotten to know them better, and to see more clearly how the University functions. Looking back, it is difficult to see how small my perspective was before taking on this challenge. It is an experience I would recommend to any tenured faculty in order to put things throughout the University into perspective. Of course, it was a HUGE time commitment, and I am so grateful for the 6-credit release per semester that helped to offset this burden. But it has been truly worth it!

One of the central issues in the senate is the ongoing revision of the LRT policy. We made significant progress, and have made many positive changes that you saw last December when I mailed out a draft

version. This past spring we attempted to incorporate our newly adopted mission statement, and core themes so that it was aligned with what we value as a faculty. My idea of adding a fourth pillar (since we had proposed dropping collegiality) of “Engagement” met an overwhelmingly negative response by the Faculty Senate. So our current plan over the coming year is to incorporate wording that expresses the value of engaging students in our Teaching, Scholarly, and Service pillars... I’m crossing my fingers that we can finalize a draft that the Faculty Senate approves and can start its way through the approval process.

One incredibly important development over the past year is the inclusion in the new policy on making policies (yes it makes sense), policy 5.56, states that, “In particular, all academic policies shall be reviewed by the Faculty Senate and the Deans Council, with any proposed amendments thereto by the one body to be reviewed by the other body.” Requiring all academic policies to go through the Faculty Senate for review has been a long-standing goal of the faculty since I was first in the senate in 2009, and it is gratifying to have it embedded explicitly in policy.

Of course, the salary issue is another central issue within the Faculty Senate, and we all saw the letter from President Wyatt that was emailed with our latest payroll notice describing the process that has been put in place to address this important issue across campus. I am grateful to Vice President Dodge for his active role in bringing the Faculty Senate and Staff Association together with representatives of the central administration to foster this important conversation. The fact that the University found funding from campus resources to address this issue in addition to the compensation increase received from the Utah Legislature speaks to the commitment from President Wyatt to address this issue, and I look forward to following the continuing conversation about how best to determine the fair market value for various faculty and staff positions.

We are working on modifications to the Family Medical Leave Policy 9.7 to clarify the roles of department chairs in finding replacements to cover those on leave, and where the funding for such positions will come from. We are currently proposing funding to come from the Provost’s office (with the Provost’s approval as I understand it) and these revisions are currently being considered by the Human Resources office for feedback. This is in response to two different requests I received about problems with this policy during welcome week last year. Hopefully this will come to fruition this coming year to help those faculty in difficult situations.

Another important issue that was addressed by the faculty senate this past year involves the potential creation of an ombuds office on campus. As you will remember, we brought a candidate to campus last fall who had offered his pro bono services for such an office. Interest in an ombuds had been expressed several times from different people on campus. In response, I constructed a survey to assess faculty interest. This initial survey showed a fairly high level of interest among faculty, but concerns were raised that faculty may have had an inaccurate picture of what services an ombuds office could really provide. So, with input from some experienced individuals familiar with the roll of an ombuds, I modified the survey questions as you probably remember, to more accurately describe the limitations of such services. The responses showed a diminished level of interest and support. And when the question asked for the level of support if a new ombuds office would be created at the expense of a single faculty line, the responses revealed very low levels of support. This last question was really getting at the heart of the issue that even if we had a pro bono offer for a few years, the continuation of this office would

require a salaried position. With such limited support among faculty when given an accurate picture, the pursuit of an ombuds office was abandoned.

I know I'm leaving out a lot of things we addressed throughout this past year in the senate. The discussion of a fair summer compensation model is ongoing for example. But hopefully this report puts the biggest issues we faced into view so we can look to their future development over the next year as Dr. Nathan Barker takes the helm.

I will continue to work with the Faculty Senate over the coming year in my official post as Faculty Senate Past President. This is mostly an advisory role as a member of the executive committee, although the Senate Constitution describes it as a voting member of the senate, and an official member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. I am grateful to Dr. Barker who will be leading the charge, and also very grateful for Dr. Dave Berri, who was recently elected to the position of President-Elect, and I look forward to another very productive year.

Thanks again for all your efforts to make Southern Utah University such a wonderful place to work, and such a powerful learning atmosphere for everyone on campus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce R. Howard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce R. Howard  
SUU Faculty Senate President 2016-17