


ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

To: Thomas Schildgen
President, University Senate &
Chair, University Academic Council

From: Robert E. Page, Jr
University Provost



Date: April 16, 2014

Re: Senate Motion 2013-42, "Amending University Senate Bylaw II to Reflect the Newly-Formed Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Committee as A Senate Standing Committee"

Based on my review, I have the following concerns with the Senate Motion 2013-42:

1. Committee purview: It would be unwise to have two standing committees with overlapping or parallel functions in personnel matters differing solely on tenure eligibility. The purview of this new standing committee would directly parallel many of the functions of the existing Personnel Committee, with the only distinction being tenure eligibility. Such division and parallelism present the possibility of placing the interests of one standing committee (and one portion of the faculty) opposite the interests of another standing committee (and another portion of the faculty). A single committee should simultaneously consider and discuss the issues for the entire faculty.
2. Terms of office: According to the motion, members of this new standing committee would have two-year terms. Elections and appointments for committees typically occur at a single time during the academic-year. However, the motion calls for four of the members of the new standing committee to be non-tenure-track faculty members. Most non-tenure-track faculty members are on year-to-year or one-semester appointments, contracted at various times throughout the calendar year. Thus, most non-tenure-track faculty members would never be eligible to serve a full term on this committee, and most might not even be able to serve a one-year term. Service on this new committee would not be permitted to be a factor in any decision to reappoint a non-tenure-track faculty member.

The Senate should consider alternate approaches that address the purposes of the motion and that deal with the concerns I have noted above. For example, the matters that might have fallen under the purview of the new standing committee could instead be addressed by either a subcommittee of the Personnel Committee (made up of senators) or a task force (which might have non-senators) appointed by the Personnel Committee, either on a continuing basis or as the matters arise. This subcommittee or task force then would review and recommend action on those matters to the Personnel Committee which could then act on or recommend as it saw fit.

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