

4-4-2012

## **Resolution 20120404.2**

Faculty Senate

## **Resolutions**

Resolution 20120404.1

### **First Consideration to Internal Candidates for Administrative Positions:**

For all administrative positions within the academic division, internal candidates shall be given first consideration before external candidates are invited.

### **Discussion**

As a newly appointed Provost coming from UM-Dearborn, Dr. Schatzel is wise to desire that her associate appointments not be chosen from external candidates or strangers to EMU. An internal candidate would be invaluable in providing her with continued institutional memory and informed insights into EMU issues and concerns.

Our ranks for the top leadership positions seem to be continually filled with external candidates. Promotion from within has been sparse, and does not seem to be our default mode. This implies a belief that an exceptional leader can only be recruited from non-EMU candidates and that they will better guide us than internal candidates.

Our last two presidents, both external hires, had short, disappointing tenures. The previous provost was also an external hire and did not fare any better. Obviously a national search is no guarantee of a successful hire.

Most would agree that our current provost is highly qualified, and has succeeded so far. Her career advanced quickly after joining UM-Dearborn as a tenure track faculty. Our previous provost also enjoyed remarkable career advances within UM- Flint. Their success stories would be highly unlikely had they joined EMU at the entry level. It is not a reflection of their qualifications, but our own inability to recognize outstanding internal candidates and promote from within. Those two campuses recognized that qualified internal candidates do not have to go to different institutions in order to advance their careers.

Our current president and provost are both from UM-Dearborn. Most of our high- level appointments have come not from a national pool, but instead from regional neighbors like Grand Valley, UM-Flint, and UM-Dearborn. Are we to concede, then, that these institutions better create top leadership than does EMU?

If we continue to recruit from outside, to the exclusion of internal candidates, we will weaken Eastern in two ways:

- One: Stunting the growth of leadership from within. The best places to work for are usually the ones that afford opportunities for career advances to their most qualified employees. The best leaders are the ones who foster the growth of their own replacements—and are not threatened by it. Eastern's future success rests not just in the career advancement of our students, but also in that of our faculty.

- Two: EMU will be unable to contribute top leadership to the larger world of academia. Because we are not providing ample opportunity for internal candidates to gain leadership experience, we will forever remain a debtor in the economy of leadership, not a provider.

Advocates for a national search over internal candidates have meritorious arguments as well. Let us consider two:

- One: internal candidates perpetuate the existing culture (or politics). This centers on the negative aspects of EMU culture and dismisses the positive. Why might better argue that those who are vested in our community can propagate a sense of pride, history, and tradition. Discounting internal candidates because they might perpetuate the negative aspects of Eastern's culture is akin to throwing out the baby with the bath water.
- Two: Eastern benefits from bringing in outside talent. This is a good argument, but must be made within a context. We are a regional university and so our focus should be to excel in serving southeast Michigan. To do this our leaders should have vested interests and commitments to this area. A pool of 700+ tenured or tenure seeking faculty members, many of whom are also nationally recognized, and who call this region home, is where the talent search should begin.

Resolution 20120404.2

### **Department Heads to Be Filled Internally Where Possible**

Department Head (DH) positions are to be filled primarily with internal candidates. Only if an internal search fails should an external search be authorized.

#### **Discussion:**

There are at least four arguments for promoting internal candidates to the DH level:

- One: DH positions are the entry level administrative positions. This is the first step into the administrative ranks. Without this experience, the remainder of the administrative ladder remains inaccessible and we do not create a rich pool of internal candidates for higher level appointments.
- Two: The two most important missions of the university are executed at the departmental level: learning and scholarship. Faculty members are the ones primarily responsible for these. Consequently none are better qualified for leading those missions than the faculty who are already vested with an indefinite tenure in their departments.
- Three: If DHs are hired from outside, they are usually appointed at the full professor rank with tenure. However, soon after the appointment, they may step down to assume faculty status. That has happened many times at Eastern. We are then stuck with an expensive faculty position that might have been filled with a different candidate had we been hiring a faculty member rather than an administrator.
- Four: Promoting from within and filling the vacancy with a new tenure track position provides the best of both the worlds. We oxygenate our faculty talent pool with the latest

graduates and in the area of specialization that we most need. Entry level candidates offer high productivity as they work through the tenure and promotion process. As an institution focused on teaching, this offers the best bang for our buck, and, in the process, we create a new academic leader amongst us.

Resolution 20120404.3

### **Against Changing the University Committee Appointment Process**

The College of Arts and Sciences' College Advisory Council has introduced a proposal to the AAUP Bargaining Council to change the way faculty members are appointed to some university committees. The current Contract language is, "[the] Faculty Senate shall have the right to select or appoint Faculty representatives on all university-wide committees, commissions, councils, or task forces." The CAC proposal would change this to, "when representation from a particular College is required, the appropriate College Council shall select or appoint the representative." (For the rest of this letter the term "college" will refer to the five colleges as well as the library.)

The Senate respects and appreciates the work of the college councils. Many Senate members have previously served on college councils, and council resolutions often serve as the basis for Senate resolutions and actions. But the CAC proposal would constitute a significant change to the faculty governance and input system and so should be considered carefully, especially when this change is being evaluated in the context of contract negotiations. Below, we outline reasons why we do not support the proposal at this time.

Currently the Faculty Senate appoints all faculty members to university committees except the EPEO Advisory Committee. The administration is free to invite other faculty members to participate on committees, but only those appointed by the Senate constitute input according to the EMU-AAUP Contract. The number of faculty members on each committee varies and is defined by that committee's charter or charge. Some have only one faculty member, while others have six or more. For most of the committees having six or more faculty members, the Senate negotiated with the administration to obtain such a high level of faculty participation by arguing that such numbers would allow the Senate to provide broader perspectives by reserving one slot for each of the colleges. It has not been the intent of the Senate that committee appointees advocate for or represent a particular college. Faculty members are expected to advocate on behalf of *all* faculty. The purpose of having members from different colleges on a committee is rather to provide a more fully informed faculty voice.

The proposal's primary argument in favor of having the college councils appoint committee members is that the existing system is "undemocratic" in that the full Senate membership may vote on whom to appoint to a position reserved for a particular college. Thus, for example, senators from all the colleges may decide on which of two candidates to name from the College of Business to a committee.

Every representative system can be said to be "undemocratic" to some extent. Each is an approximation of a direct democracy (i.e. every person gets one vote). Our local, state, or federal representatives often do not vote the way we would. Famously, a U.S. senator from North

Dakota (pop. 683,932) has just as strong a vote as does a senator from California (pop. 37,691,912). Here at Eastern, on the CAS's College Advisory Council, the English Department (52 tenure-track faculty) has the same number of representatives (1) as does the Department of African American Studies (4 tenure-track faculty). We accept something less than direct democracy because there are advantages to the representative form, and the direct form may be unwieldy or untenable.

The question, then, is whether the benefits of having the college councils name representatives to university committees outweighs the additional costs of distributing that responsibility among six colleges, rather than keeping it centralized at the University Faculty Senate.

Here are some of the costs:

First and foremost, this will lessen the perceived power of the Senate in the eyes of the administration. The Faculty Senate has worked for more than thirty years to strengthen the faculty's position vis-à-vis the administration. Over and over again the administration has claimed that they received "input" from committees because they included faculty members who were not named by the Senate. Many of these situations have resulted in grievances filed through the AAUP.

After many years it finally seems that the administration has learned (though continued vigilance is necessary!) The Senate president regularly receives requests for the creation of committees and for appointments to committees from all levels of the administration. In the eyes of the administration the Senate is a crucial partner in the workings of the university. If we make the change suggested by the proposal, the various branches of the administration will now have to look to six different administrative bodies when managing committees. In their eyes this can only lessen the importance of the Senate and decrease its voice in our discussions with the administration. We will be speaking with a divided, rather than a united voice.

Second, the responsibility of determining which committee positions are open, and of advertising and making assignments to those positions is currently centralized in the Senate. The Senate currently appoints members to more than twenty committees. This results in a significant amount of work (*many* hours) that would now be duplicated across every college. The university already struggles with inefficiencies. The proposed change would move us in the wrong direction.

Third, adopting this change as part of contract negotiations puts the faculty at a disadvantage. The proposed change will increase the burden on the administration. When naming members to a committee, the administration will have to contact six college councils, instead of one Senate. The timeliness of appointments will be constrained by six meeting schedules. This will inevitably lead to more miscommunications, and possible grievances. This proposal is being brought up at the Bargaining Council. If we put this item on the table, the administration will see the potential new governance structure as being more work for them. They will want a quid pro quo. Are we willing to give ground somewhere else to see this change made to the Contract?

Lastly, what problem is addressed by the proposal? Is there a perceived weakness with the committee structure that this proposal would redress? All other proposals in the Bargaining

Council are aiming to strengthen the position of the faculty or faculty benefits. This proposal seems to do neither.

If we are to change the way committee appointments are made, it would be better to make that change through the Senate's by-laws, rather than through the cumbersome mechanics of the faculty contract. If departments are unhappy with the committee appointment process, their senators should bring this matter for discussion to the Senate. We suggest that as soon as is feasible the Senate conduct a survey of the entire faculty as a first step toward holding a deeper discussion as to ways to improve the shared governance structure.

In the meanwhile, if the college councils want to have a stronger voice in appointments to committees, please consider that they are welcome to nominate candidates for any committee position. Such an endorsement would *significantly* improve a candidate's election prospects within the Senate.

In closing, it is not right to characterize Senate appointments as "undemocratic". The Senate members always strive to act in the best interest of the whole faculty, and this includes, by definition, the faculty of all colleges. Devolving the committee appointment process to the college councils would materially weaken the Senate's power in the eyes of the administration. It would yield a more complicated, less efficient appointment process with a higher potential for grievances. Lastly, asking for this change at the bargaining table will quite possibly require that we make a corresponding concession in another area.