Call to Order
The January minutes were approved without amendments or changes.

Teaching Excellence Sub-Committee of the Academic Planning Committee: Spring 2018 Pilot Project

• The sub-committee is piloting a new set of student evaluation questions with Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Writing Program in Spring 2018. This is a pilot, so just getting initial data which will be brought back to Faculty Senate, just an update so that people in these divisions are aware and have some context.

• Background:
Committee consists of Office and Teaching Learning staff Christina Paguyo, Valentina Iturbe-LaGrave, and Bridget Arend, as well as faculty members Sarah Pessin, Greg Ungar, Paul Kosempel, Art Jones, and Sarah Hart Micke.

The goal of the committee is to better ensure that student evaluations are supportive of – not obstacles to – a culture of reflective, inclusive, collaborative learning for faculty and students. Additionally, the aim is to enhance faculty/student experience and aim to address what students in a series of focus groups identified as the desire for opportunities to reflect on the overall learning environment, including their own roles, etc.

Obstacles:
- Faculty concerns with current student evaluations in terms of a) content (some questions are inappropriate e.g. “how knowledgeable is this instructor”) and b) process (perception by faculty that student evaluations are being used by some unit heads in over-weighted ways toward annual reviews)
- Concerns that student evaluations elicit responses are implicitly biased against faculty of color, women, and other minoritized/marginalized members of our community.
- The “Yelp Effect”: Consumerized approach that students take toward learning and its evaluation.

Questions in the pilot:
- No inappropriate questions. The new questions ask students to reflect more on their (and their classmates’) roles in the learning process.
- Asking fewer “how did you like this faculty’s teaching” questions (and thereby collecting less data along those lines) the pilot directly supports units relying on a toolbox of appropriate ways to assess faculty teaching.
- Redirecting students to reflections on their own role in the process, the pilot:
  - Can possibly/plausibly reduce biased responses about faculty
  - Can possibly/plausibly reduce the Yelp Effect

Goal: this will foster a culture of faculty and student experience & addressing students’ expressed requests via focus groups

Sarah Hart Micke on the focus group process: Winter 2018: Christina Paguyo from OTL and Sarah H-M recruited 5-8 students for 2 groups to test the initial set of questions. Students were primarily concerned about: the content of student evaluations, context, and the culture/power dynamics at DU. Students’ main feedback was that they had a profound sense that culture in the classroom is shaped by and reflects the responsibility of not just the professor but their classmates. They wanted more opportunities to contextualize quantitative data and provide comments/reflections about how other students in the class are affecting the classroom culture. They also wanted a better understanding of how course evaluations are used and to what end.

Conclusion (Sarah Pessin): In these coming weeks, faculty will be hearing about, starting with Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) and the Writing Program, the results of these piloted questions. For additional context, these two divisions were chosen because the Deans/Directors have been open to the process, most importantly that these pilot
questions will not count these toward faculty reviews, positive or negative, for the protection of the faculty.

Kate Willink noted that the Faculty Senate had had a teaching excellence initiative in 2011, and made a joke about the “Committee of Dropped Balls,” noting that the Teaching Excellence sub-committee would build on some of this previous, great work. She also noted that evaluations are insufficient to capture teaching excellence, and congratulated the committee for taking the lead on this, as faculty can and should be leading these initiatives.

Sara Chatfield asked if someone in her department (Political Science) wanted to volunteer, who should they contact? Sarah Pessin: Someone on the sub-committee, but that’s the missing piece – keep an eye out for the invitation to see who to contact.

Proposed Amendments to the Senate Constitution

- **FEAC changes: III.A.5** - This establishes in the Constitution our current Senate practice: The Senate President, and Past-President or President-Elect, and one faculty member [not necessarily a Senator] elected to a three-year term shall be representatives to the Board of Trustees Committee on Faculty and Educational Affairs.
- **Quorum Rules, IV.C.2** - Increase quorum size from 40% to 50%. Several Senators have commented that it seems unreasonable, if not unwise, that only 40% could pass motions on behalf of the Senate.
- **Proxies, IV.C.3** - Change to proxies count towards quorum count only; a person can be a proxy for only one Senator; and proxies cannot vote. Very few faculty Senate and other elected bodies allow proxy voting; when proxy voting is allowed, it is issue-specific. Many bodies do count proxies toward quorum counts.
- **Committee Chairs, V.C.5** - Change Committee Chair term to two years and extend term until a new chair is elected in the fall. This aids Senate and Senate Executive Committee functioning over the summer.
- **Faculty Review Committee, VI.A.2.a.2** - Set member terms to end in fall rather than spring; authorize NCR to designate larger units [ex: Law, NSM, Daniels, etc.] to elect two FRC members. Most FRC work occurs over the summer. These changes make it easier to establish a quorum for cases and spread the workload. [Added context: it is very hard to establish a quorum over the summer, if there is a quorum of 7, those 7 end up doing all of the work. Kate W.: Some cases that the FRC people are dealing with are over 400 pages per case, and the commitment in time is considerable for this rigorous and very important work. John: Getting faculty who can work over the summer based on structure of 9-10 month faculty is a problem, and this will help the FRC do this very important work.]
- **Proposed Revisions to Senate By Laws: Voting on motions, II.C.** - This establishes in the By Laws our current Senate practice. Motions shall have two readings at separate Senate meetings. The second reading shall be waived if approved by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. [Kate Willink: An example of this would be the motion for Fred Cheever, which
was approved at first reading by acclamation. John Hill: Yes, we have done this before, but we had no criteria for waiving in the constitution.]

Questions:
Ronnie Pavlov, Math: The combination of 2 and 3 (quorum rules and proxies) worry me. Is it the case that if 50% showed up but half are proxies, you could have 50% of senators or less voting? So if we have a quorum but only 3 senators there, a vote could pass? John Hill: Yes, I guess that’s technically possible, but that’s not the intent. Kate Willink: This is also to make sure that someone who hasn’t heard deliberation is in a position to take a vote. Senators who had heard deliberations could submit their vote in advance, which would solve part of this issue. Ronnie: You could set some minimum percentage of how may actual senators need to be here in order for the vote to pass, perhaps If you had a choice, it would seem like the opposite should be the case, that you wouldn’t allow them toward quorum but not give them a voice. So - 50% of Senators would need to be here every time, period. Perhaps if someone’s proxy is a Senator, there could be an exception for proxies who are Senators. Ronnie: I like that suggestion, but you could still have an extreme where the quorum is the number of votes (if Senators give their vote ahead of time via proxy).

Aaron Schneider: I appreciate how hard it is to write these proposals and the wordsmithing that goes on, especially being on the NCR. I worry is that we shouldn’t make it harder for people to participate - we have this rule that if you don’t appear for several meetings in a row, then you’re not a Senator anymore, and if we take away the proxy, that would make it harder to participate. I want the Senate to be a place where it’s easy for people to participate. I have a couple of other observations – if we are going to open up the bylaws and the constitution, we may want to think about some additional changes. We have a campus where the faculty don’t have as much of a voice as we should. I have looked at the constitution and the bylaws and have some suggestions – for example, greater alignment with the AAUP. In general, the Senate can be stronger by working closely with other bodies on campus. Aaron listed some examples of items in the constitution and the bylaws which would strengthen the constitution – with recognition that this should start in the NCR. For example, there should be language like “selects” rather than “advises,” etc. These kinds of small changes are important to strengthen the faculty’s hand on campus.

Kate Willink: The more people who care about this the better – even most Senators have not read the full Constitution, so the more awareness of our governance structures the better. Also, she reminded everyone that there is a process in preparation to allow a single Senator to move forward to the Senate, potentially in consultation or not with a sub-committee and Executive Committee. Aaron attempted to distribute a printed motion, but as this was during an existing motion on the floor, this did not go forward, though Kate Willink reminded everyone that they were welcome to pick up a copy, and that Aaron could put forward a motion through an existing committee between now and the next meeting potentially.

Armond Towns: Where is the process to challenge this process?
John Hill: We are governed by Robert’s Rules of Order, and there is a mechanism to make a motion to the full Senate – he couldn’t tell the Senate the details off the top of his head, but that could be done.

Armond: Is there a potential to decentralize the process in regard to these particular issues? For example, if I’m going to ask someone to proxy for me, I ask based on their mirroring my political viewpoints. Kate W.: If you can’t come to the meeting, you as a Senator should have the right to submit your vote, so you’re not losing your vote or commitments and position. Armond: There still are some questions to answer about our decentralization and ability to work around committees.

Orna Shaughnessy: Part 3 doesn’t have that bit about Senators being able to vote and submit ahead of time. Also, I am a representative from my department, and we are already representatives of multiple voices. Kate Willink: It works out in practice in AHSS that because of the number of Senators and the size, not every department would be able to extrapolate out that exact process. Also in principle, proxies are great in the sense that more people can come to Senate and get interested in the work. Deborah Howard: I think it still exists where we have a Faculty Forum – we haven’t had one for about eight years. That’s another pertinent place, where if something can’t get to NCR or Executive Committee, or another one, right away, that’s another mechanism for discussion. Frederique: John, I have been that proxy person with three clickers! The thing is, I’ve served as a proxy a number of times and I have been under the impression that I am carrying that person’s vote, not voting myself. But, if we take away from any proxy the right to vote, then it’s great to have a free lunch, and it’s great to offer the experience – so a proxy is in that setting, a guest if they can’t vote in any way. Also I am under the impression that a quorum means “so many people in the room when a vote is to be taken” and it’s a body presence or a physical presence. Kate Willink: Proxies can be part of the deliberation and should be reporting back, they are not inactive. Also, we have not heard anything about 1, 2, 4, and 5 – any discussion or are we good there?

Dean Saitta: I feel strongly about is the constitution and its implications about due process. This is a flawed document in many ways – I feel Aaron should be able to distribute his document, which reflects some AAUP thinking about ways to strengthen the constitution. The constitution is problematic based largely on issues with the FRC and faculty’s ability to appeal their decisions to the Provost. It also infringes on faculty rights re: due process and faculty rights to serve on committees high level administrative committees. We as a faculty body have the opportunity right now at this critical moment to take a look at this constitution so we can generate something better going forward. Kate Willink: I’d like John Hill as NCR chair to please comment. John Hill: I certainly understand the concerns about proxies and we’ll think about these suggestions and come back with changes. Any other changes? On 5, a Senator requested clarity on language about units and # of faculty, and alignment with existing policies like the one for the IRB board policies as a way to avoid over-representation of different units. John: Right now the Executive Committee is empowered to name additional people to FRC if there is a perceived imbalance in the committee. Kate Willink: To be clear about Aaron’s question and Dean’s – what we’re doing right now is a mid-level revision that was reviewed by the NCR –
there are 2 more meetings. If you feel really strongly about this motion, bring these revisions to the Executive Committee, it’s not as if there is an interminable amount of time between now and the end of the academic year. Right now this is the process for shaping motions, and it can be changed, but there is nothing right now that prohibits senators who really care about the constitution from following the existing process if they have a motion that they are really passionate about.

Senate Size Discussion

Led by incoming Senate President Darrin Hicks
Darrin began by orienting us as to Senate values (deliberative, participatory, transparent, and effective) and then presenting both sides of the debate about Senate size. We want a fully participatory Senate where anyone who wants to speak has the ability to do so, and that there is an effective means for allowing people to speak, that the process is transparent, that we understand where any piece of legislation is at any point, etc. These values should orient us regardless of size.

Two critical points:

- The Faculty Senate is not operating at near-full capacity or participation. The attendance averages between 50 and 65%. Over the last year, there’s been an increasing number of proxies, which can be invaluable or detrimental dependent on how they are used. Some might be fully communicative, some may be distributed in organization and not. Darrin used the metaphor of a class where 50-65% of students are absent. In this class, the absent students would cast a shadow on the remainder – the students would wonder “why do I have to be here?” That becomes a malaise that can spread throughout the class and decrease legitimacy, and the same thing can happen in the Senate.

- The DU Faculty Senate is much larger than those of our peer institutions. Darrin showed list of peer/aspirant Senates at institutions like us/that we want to be like. DU has a 8:1 faculty ratio on the Senate, and 16:1 faculty to student ratio in classes. Is this large of a Senate the result of misplaced priorities? We are spending more time on governance than teaching/other aspects of our positions. Is this a ratio that would work for a small liberal arts college but not a mid-major R2 institution like us? This over-enrollment may lead to a feeling of exhaustion and malaise and under-commitment. So – what is the average ratio of faculty to senators. It would be 29:1. What if we said let’s throw out the outliers – CU, USC, George Washington, which have these enormous student bodies and very small Senates. Then it’s 22:1. That would mean 37 Senators. We now have 94.

Some potential advantages of a smaller Senate:

- More efficient
- More deliberative
- Engender more commitment: When members of a deliberative body feel that they have a real likelihood of engendering a real solution, they will be more communicative, they are more willing to sacrifice short-term gain to long-term gain. (disclosure: this is
Darrin’s area of research). This commitment becomes contagious and circulates through the institution.

Potential problems:

- Less representative: This is the obvious one – small units, some are so small they wouldn’t be afforded a senator and have no voice whatsoever, or units that will go from something like 25 Senators to 8. If you are a person who already feels disempowered and unable to make changes in a quick way, this worry should be very salient to you.

- Response: Using an issue of proportionate voting. We have 15 units. Some are tiny, but have really important views and voices and should be included in deliberation. We could have a body of 15, but the person who is representing 31% of the faculty could have 31 votes or even a portion of a vote. That allows you to create a system with a lot of divergent voices across the campus speaking to one another but not trade it off for representative power. A not mutually exclusive remedy would be more all-faculty forums. I am a fan of direct democracy and for some issues this might be more effective to increase franchise to adjunct, non-tenure track stream faculty that aren’t represented well now. We can disarticulate the problem of representation thinking of them as two separate issues that we can solve.

- Reduction of communication: Without having representation at the department or program level, vital communication can be lost. The most effective way to communicate now is at departmental faculty meetings. We have to ask ourselves – is that ideal happening at a widespread level. It doesn’t seem to be, because not every unit is divided into pats. There is no effective mechanism for some units to talk together. In his own department, they have talked about the Faculty Senate once in the past 20 years, the junior faculty get an easy service appointment and that’s it. Transparency can be alternative means of communications: could be web-streaming, easily searchable Faculty Senate archives. For the sake of argument, say there is one representative for AHSS, and they are responsible for 247 faculty. There is no rule that says that this person shows up and votes however they want without communicating. They could ask each chair to forward an individual faculty vote to that rep, they could use polling. That one person would be so visible and so accountable that you’d be more likely to communicate with them and to make sure that you know what they say. This “village model of government” leads to diffuse information from lots of sources with no internal prioritization, and there is no mechanism to sort. The easiest thing to do is just delete all University e-mail.

- Less diversity among elected representatives: This is the incumbency problem. If we went to a Senate that’s smaller, the “names” get elected, and there is less diversity. You could do more/better recruitment. In a proportional voting system, maybe they have to do it by “faculty stream” (series). That “clinical” vs. “tenure track” distinction is more salient, and we need to think about representation along power rather than just by units.

In a small Senate, some of the things we have been talking about could be solved – unusual and divergent voices emerge and have more floor space, deliberation goes deeper, there is greater engagement, and greater consensus.
Questions, Deliberation, Straw Poll Vote  
[Notes from Kate Crowe’s table]

1. Given the case we have just heard, do you think smaller is a good strategy for increasing quality, efficiency, effectiveness of deliberation?  
   Ryan Buller: Yes, as soon as I heard the idea I thought it was good. I felt even better about it after hearing the concerns about having series representation rather than just by unit. Senate seems to be predominantly tenure track and/or teaching faculty, and even though it tries to represent all voices, that’s a concern. Sara Chatfield: If you’re tenure track you’re compensated for service, and if non-tenure track faculty aren’t compensated for service, that’s something to think about. Haven’t had a chance to talk to the department, but she has the sense that Political Science would not be happy about the reduction in size. Aaron Schneider: Liked the idea that we make sure that the different series are represented, and the size is somewhat immaterial, it’s the values/effectiveness that’s critical, and we should do what helps us get there. Kevin Lynch: There is an implication that if we have 75% attendance that if we cut people we’ll have higher attendance and that may not be the case. If we have a smaller senate that may not solve the attendance problem. It wasn’t clear from the units what we would do with the smaller units. It’s not clear what the proposal actually is.

2. How should we choose?  
   Sara Chatfield: It might be how it is now where we have online voting, which is not a great process – I might know who won, but it would go back to the “name,” and in a lot of cases, they don’t know the person and can’t make an informed decision. Whereas if there are more senators, they know everyone from the department and can make an informed decision. For larger units, they might want to have a specific ratio so that all series are represented, but otherwise we still like the idea of having units – but unless the Senate wanted to specify criteria, I don’t know how that would work and you’d have the same problem.

3. How many Senators should we have?  
   Ryan Buller: It can’t be an arbitrary decrease if it’s a sizable decrease, if you shrink it you have to legitimately shrink it to a small enough size that you address the concerns about efficiency and deliberation. 40 seems almost too big if that’s the goal. Aaron: I don’t really have an opinion – a big Senate or a small Senate is immaterial. Emily: Our department is 40, so Ryan’s point is right on – it is still a lot of voices even if you reduce quite a bit. Kevin Lynch: I’m in favor of an incremental change – maybe try something a little smaller, maybe a 1:15 ratio, maybe 54-55 and then see how that looked, and then maybe shrink further if that worked well.

Results by Question:

1. In principle, I support making the Senate smaller.  
   a. Yes: 63.24% (43 votes)  
   b. No: 26.47% (18 votes)  
   c. Abstain: 10.29% (7 votes)  
   d. Total: 68 votes

2. I support a Senate size of:  
   a. 30 or less: 2.78% (2 votes)  
   b. 31-45: 33.33% (24 votes)
c. 45-60: 25% (18 votes)
d. Current size: 20.83% (15 votes)
e. Abstain: 18.06% (13 votes)

3. Should we reduce the size of the Senate, I support electing Senators:
   a. Retain a ratio based proportionate system by unit (divisional votes): 50% (34 votes)
   b. Ratio based at large (full faculty vote on all Senators, rank order voting): 1.47% (1 vote)
   c. A combination of ratio based proportionate systems by unit and ratio based at large e.g. 15 senators by unit and 15 at large: 19.12% (13 votes)
   d. Unit representation with proportional voting power, e.g. a Senator from NSM would have X#s of votes based on NSM faculty size: 10.29% (7 votes)
   e. Abstain: 19.12% (13 votes)

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.