The 762nd regular meeting of the Faculty Senate will take up a particularly significant proposal for revising the General Education Diversity Requirement and then proceed to completing the technical revisions of the bylaws and addressing various curricular and academic concerns.

Committee of the Whole: Proposed Changes to the Diversity Requirement

The Senate will devote the first half hour of its meeting to functioning as a Committee of the Whole to permit discussion of the General Education Council’s proposal to revise the General Education Diversity Requirement. Individual speeches will be limited to three minutes to allow for many comments, so please be ready to focus on what you regard as the key points needing attention.

Comments are welcome on any aspect of the proposal or its implications, particularly regarding 1) the structure of the requirement (a new Diversity designation course plus retention of the current G and U designations with a DIV course taken during a student’s first year, plus retention of both the U and G requirements), 2) the content of the new (DIV) or revised (G and U) learning outcomes and course expectations, 3) the changes to the Social World requirements made to fit the Diversity designation course within the current number of credits required to satisfy General Education Requirements, and 4) the practical implications of making these changes.

Both the revised proposal approved by the General Education Council on November 4th and the original version approved on September 30th has been posted to a special discussion link on the Faculty Senate website (https://www.umass.edu/senate/content/comments-on-gen-ed-diversity-revision). The November 4th version is also being sent with these notes.

The September version has been examined by the Academic Matters, Program and Budget, Status of Diversity, and Undergraduate Education Councils. The Student Government Association’s Senate has been following the proposal via the student members of the General Education Council and, on October 25th, adopted a motion endorsing the proposal and recommending that the Faculty Senate adopt it. The September version also inspired discussion in some college curriculum committees and departments; individual faculty members have also been discussing it. Some have provided comments for the discussion webpage, and they are being posted as they arrive. Others have provided their views directly to the General Education Council. The November revision benefitted from all these comments.
Those unable to attend the meeting or wishing to elaborate on remarks made during the Committee of the Whole session are invited to send them to secretary@senate.umass.edu for posting.

Announcements, Questions

We will have the usual periods allocated to announcements and questions.

Bylaw Changes

The Senate will proceed to the third and final reading of the currently-proposed changes to the Bylaws. Consistent with Article 10 of the Faculty Senate Constitution, no amendments may be proposed at this meeting; the vote is an up or down of the text as amended at the 760th and 761st meetings. The Senate had drifted away from following this rule over time, but the Rules Committee believes it should return to following a rule intended to prevent last-minute surprises on something as important as the Bylaws. The Rules Committee is aware that some additional revisions are needed, and will propose them during the spring term. That means there are opportunities for others to make suggestions as well.

New Courses: Consent Agenda 1

As always, any Senator may request that an item on a consent agenda be separated out for separate discussion and consideration. It would be helpful if anyone seeking a separate discussion notifies the Senate Office before the meeting, but this is not required.

This consent agenda covers 12 courses recommended by the Academic Matters Council and 5 recommended by the Graduate Council.

We should anticipate a large number of course approvals at coming meetings because the extent of the confusing situation caused by departments persisting in teaching experimental courses beyond the three times allowed in the current policy on course approval has been noticed. It is being addressed as departments are being urged to decide whether to convert a long-running experimental course into a proper permanent course or to abandon it as no longer useful to their programs.

New Business: Consent Agenda 2

This consent agenda covers 7 proposals: 1 on program revision, 1 in a technical revision to the Academic Grievance Policy, 2 relating to the Junior Year Writing Program, and 3 on renaming a major or a certificate.

The amendment to the Academic Grievance Policy also separates that policy from the Academic Honesty Policy by presenting it as a separate Senate Document rather than
continuing to make it hard to find by treating it as Appendix A to the Academic Honesty Policy. This status has caused some confusion in the past, and the need to amend provided an opportunity to separate the two. They are related, but honesty questions are not the only source of academic grievances.

A Note on Presentation of the Agenda

For many years, agenda items have been listed as being presented in a Senate Document with a Motion, for example:
Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning Bylaw Changes, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 17-001B with Motion No. 01-17.

This practice irked several people who believe that the Senate Document specifies and explains the item on which action is requested while the Motion is the mechanism by which it is presented for a vote. In their view, it is not part of the document and notation on the agenda should not suggest otherwise.

Beginning with this meeting, the agenda now reads (using the same item as the example):

Special Report of the Rules Committee concerning Bylaw Changes, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 17-001B.

The connection between item and motion, which is needed to keep the history straight, is maintained by listing the number of the motion by which it is presented on the cover page of the Senate Document.

MJ Peterson
Secretary