

Good morning,

It's a very early Thursday, foggy and quiet, with the only sounds I hear a mixture of the early squirrels arguing about something already... the sound of my computer fan. While I just finished making my coffee and caring for my too many animals, my mind has already been busy with what I wanted to write to you in this report, given that you have now had a chance to hear the committee/caucus reports yesterday and my abbreviated verbal report.

List:

1. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to talk with our former FS President, Beth Shepherd, about the work she has been doing as the chair of the Gen Ed Committee. We all know that one appears to be intractable, she and her team have made some formidable progress on creating a clear, comprehensive rubric for proposing new Gen Ed courses. This rubric has been shared with ExComm, and then Michael Black shared it with the FS TLT committee for comments, and now it will go in front of the deans for their comments. The fact that it's progressing so quickly is not because it's being shoved along with no oversight, but rather that it actually makes sense!

2. The Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee met in late October as well. We have a few current and former FS members of this committee, and most of that subgroup is now also actively leading the discussion that will present the updated priorities related to faculty to the main committee for a vote in January, for consideration by the Board of Trustees in March.

The IPAC was also one of the first groups who met with the architect firm that has been retained by the university to consider our campus master plan for the coming ten and future years. I am going to strongly encourage any of you who can, or are interested in this process, to accept an invitation to be part of the various stakeholder discussions that are currently occurring around the various campuses. Those meetings are scheduled to take place in the coming six weeks.

3. There are several new dashboards that are being developed at the moment. The first is hosted and maintained by our ORED office, and is designed to help us understand more clearly the path from R2 to R1 in actual metrics--this one is fairly close to completion, so we are looking forward to that announcement soon. Others, related to things like funding impact, or other metrics, are in different stages of development and we will keep you informed as we hear more.

Of note also is the pending impact of the Big Beautiful Bill. There is a working group that has been constituted from stakeholders around the campus system to determine impact of that as we progress into the coming year also. As of now, there are many unknowns, but I am pleased that the conversation is happening now, in anticipation of possible change, rather than in reaction.

4. You will remember that we instated an Ad Hoc Committee to review our current Senate Bylaws several months ago. This effort is led by our parliamentarian, Candice Selwyn, and a small team of people who are charged with evaluating our Bylaws for opportunities to keep or develop that document to meet the needs of the faculty for the next 5 - 10 years at USA. To facilitate this process further, on Nov. 11th, I met with Interim Dean Franklin Trimm (WCOM) to discuss opportunities to support our WCOM faculty; he had a lot of very useful ideas and I am optimistic about his plans to meet with our CL (Greg Brower) and their WCOM Faculty Assembly Chair (this year it's our Marie Migaud!). He has also connected with Candice in her role as chair.

5. As a final item for today, last week Friday the Council of Chairs met for a quasi town hall with Dr. Kent, a brief introduction of the newly developed teaching effectiveness evaluation process (recently passed by CAD) which is now in development at the various colleges/divisions. The people who will be primarily impacted by this new process will be our new colleagues who start in Fall 2026. Additionally, the ILC is developing several training modules for a sort of "train the trainer" process that will hopefully allow the concern of peer reviewer variance to be ameliorated to some extent. Chairs asked the same questions that we have, related to workload, variance, bias, etc. so my impression is that while this has been passed, there will be opportunity for continued conversations on this topic as we understand more of the reality of how this will work--I certainly believe that there is and hope you all do as well, particularly as these evaluations are woven into how we are measured for promotion and tenure (looking into the future). Finally, at the end of this meeting, our chair colleagues brought up some specific concerns about process support and bottlenecks around campus... essentially things that take up faculty time, and in turn their time as chairs that do not serve the overall mission of USA. Ellen Harrington (CoC Chair) will bring this to the administration for discussion, but this might also be something we spend more time on in committees--so stay tuned for more on this.

There's always so much to share, and I know that there are a few of the ExComm team who plan to send out some additional information to the plenary as follow up to questions yesterday. In the meantime, have a good weekend and please always reach out if you want clarification or need to catch up on anything.

Thank you so much for everything each of you do. The Senate work on campus is NOT going unnoticed, and it is definitely appreciated and that is squarely your 'fault'! :)

Well done!

Christina

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