Amendment of Faculty Senate to the Board of Trustees Amendment to the GW Faculty Organization Plan

Presented by Executive Committee Chair Charles A. Garris, Jr.
Faculty Assembly
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In June, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution instructing the President to put forward a resolution at the Faculty Assembly allowing full-time Tenured, Regular, or Specialized Faculty of the rank of associate professor or higher to be members of the Faculty Senate while they included no limitations on the percentage of Specialized Faculty in any school. The Board said that it wished to “enfranchise” the Specialized Faculty. However, the Senate has always asserted that the Specialized Faculty are very much “enfranchised” at GW. They have equal votes right here in the Faculty Assembly, they can vote at the School level for their Senate representatives, they a welcome to join Faculty Senate standing committees where the real work of the Senate occurs, and they can participate in many important governance issues at the School and Departmental levels. The Senate recognizes the excellent contributions that Specialized Faculty make to the University and completely agree that they should be enfranchised in areas where they can contribute. However, their participation is the Faculty Senate is not considered by many to be helpful to the Senate’s important role in shared governance.

During the summer, the Faculty Senate met with the Board and expressed concern for various reasons:

1. Specialized faculty do not engage in all of the three core faculty activities of research, teaching, and service, and instead are responsible for only one or two of those activities. To deal effectively with the issues the Senate normally faces, we believe Senators should be involved in the breadth of all University activities;
2. Most Specialized faculty would feel unable, if they were members of the Faculty Senate, to engage in robust dialogue with senior members of the Administration or to disagree with the policy preferences of the Administration without fearing for their future job security;
3. The Faculty Senate is greatly concerned that the Proposed Board Amendment, if adopted by the Faculty Assembly, would severely undermine the independence of the Faculty Senate as well as the Senate's ability to carry out its vital role in the shared governance of the University without undue influence by the Administration, in view of (1) the limited scope, short terms and highly contingent nature of the appointments of many Specialized faculty and their greater vulnerability to pressure from administrative officials, (2) the absence of any limitation on the number of Specialized faculty in any school under Article I of the Faculty Code as recently amended by the Board of Trustees.
4. Many Specialized faculty with “soft money” appointments are contractually obligated under external grants to dedicate all of their working time and effort to grant-related
activities and are therefore prohibited from devoting time and effort to the Faculty Senate or other University service;

5. The Senate Committees and the Faculty Senate are concerned that Specialized Faculty members have not had an adequate opportunity to consider and express their views on the question of whether they would favor an amendment to the Faculty Organization Plan granting them eligibility to serve in the Faculty Senate even if such an amendment might impair their existing potential rights to engage in collective bargaining under the National Labor Relations Act;

The Executive Committee approached the Board after Resolution 16/4 was passed in September and asked the Board to consider revising its June resolution. We met with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board and had a very productive discussion. The Board agreed to revise its resolution to the extent that there were assurances that half of the Senate Representatives from each school must be tenured and that members of the Faculty Senate shall have competed at least three years of full-time academic service at the University. These were important concessions. However, they did not adopt Senate resolution 16/4, as we had hoped, which voices concerns about having Specialized Faculty serve for the above reasons. We therefore place the decision before the Faculty Assembly, with three options which were laid out in the materials we sent to all faculty. Option 1 is to allow all faculty, tenured, regular, and specialized to serve in the Senate, Option 2 is to allow tenured and non-tenured regular faculty to serve; and Option 3 is to remain with the current system where only tenured members can serve. All of these options are subject to the provisos that only full-time faculty of the rank of associate professor or higher, having completed at least three years of University service; and that at least half of the faculty Senate representatives from each school shall be tenured faculty members.

Thank you.

Under the direction of the Faculty Senate, I move to amend the resolution as indicated in the strikes and inserts of Attachment C. Specifically I move to strike the term “full-time” after “(2)” and before “faculty members” in line 9 of paragraph 3 of Attachment B, and to strike the parenthetical “(regular or specialized)” in line 10 and to insert in that same line 10 the word “regular” immediately after “(2)” and before “faculty” and to add the term “without tenure” after “faculty members” in line 9.

As seen in ATTACHMENT C, the revised language would read:

“The members of the Faculty Senate shall have completed at least three years of full-time academic service at the University and shall be either (1) tenured faculty members or (2) regular faculty members without tenure who have attained the rank of associate professor or higher.”

Specifically, the new paragraph 3 would bring the resolution in line with Faculty Senate Resolution 16/4.

Please note that the reason we are striking the term “full-time” after “(2)” and before “regular faculty” is because according to the new amendments to the Faculty Code, “Regular Faculty” are “full-time faculty” so that the term “full-time” as noted is redundant.