University Senate Nominations and Elections Committee

Annual Report, 2012-2013

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The University Senate Nominations and Elections Committee held two elections during the academic year. In addition, a call for willingness to serve for a faculty representative to the Faculty Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents was conducted.

- As of September 2012, there were 14 senate committee vacancies. 11 were filled via election. 3 vacancies remained after the election.
- As of February 2013, there were 64 senate committee vacancies. 50 were filled via election. 14 seats remain unfilled as of April 2013.

Fall 2012 Elections

Early in the fall semester, Richard Corzo in IT&I contacted the Committee to discuss the possibility of using the online balloting system to conduct the call for willingness to serve. As fall elections are commonly held to fill a very small number of vacancies, IT&I believed that they could implement an electronic willingness to serve process using this smaller number of vacancies as a test. The Nominations and Elections Committee members relayed the appropriate information to IT&I (indicating which vacancies were available, as well as which schools were eligible for these vacancies). The electronic willingness to serve process was initiated on Monday, September 24, 2012, and ended on Friday, September 28, 2012. Faculty were notified ahead of time about this new process; faculty were also contacted after the end date to ensure all who had indicated willingness were adequately reflected in the results the Committee received from IT&I. This new electronic process worked very well.

Using the data received from IT&I, the Nominations and Elections Committee prepared the first ballot for the Fall 2012 election, which was conducted electronically. In total, three ballots were generated for this election: a preliminary, a final, and a run-off.

Spring 2013 Elections

The new electronic willingness to serve process was again used for the Spring 2013 election. The Committee again relayed all relevant data to IT&I, indicating which vacancies were available, as well as which schools were eligible for these vacancies. Using the information from the willingness to serve process, the Committee generated the first ballot for the Spring 2013 election. In total, two ballots were generated for this election: a preliminary, and a final. A run-off election was not required.

Two coding errors disrupted the Spring 2013 election cycle. The coding for any names containing apostrophes was not correct, and the system could not register ballots containing those names. This error occurred on both the preliminary and final ballots. IT&I staff were able to correct these errors.
In March 2013, the Nominations and Elections Committee was charged with conducting an election for a faculty representative to the Faculty Advisory Committee. Two faculty members indicated willingness; one faculty member subsequently withdrew their name from consideration. The remaining faculty member was appointed by unanimous consent. An election was not required.

As a point of information, this was the first year the Arts & Sciences Nominations and Elections Committee used the electronic balloting system. Due to system requirements, only one process (willingness to serve, election, etc.) can occur at any one time. This created some minor scheduling issues for both committees during the election process. It will be necessary for these two committees (and any other Nominations and Elections committees who may wish to use the electronic balloting system) to coordinate their efforts. In order to ensure all elections are held prior to the end date of April 30, it may be necessary for the committees to begin all elections processes earlier in the semester.

Also, the Committee was notified that some faculty have found the informational emails containing dates and names of candidates for upcoming elections confusing. These faculty members assumed the emails indicated an election was already underway. Given that these informational emails were requested by many faculty members when the electronic elections process was first implemented, Committee members are reticent to discontinue using them. The initial recommendation from the Nominations and Elections Committee is to use very clear and concise language which will distinguish these informational messages from messages indicating voting has begun.

Many thanks to Richard Corzo, et al. in IT&I.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer O’Brien, Chair

April 30, 2013