School Representatives in Faculty Governance at Sonoma State University, AY '07-'08

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Introduction

After working for the Senate for over five years, I have recognized the need to create an Orientation to Faculty Governance for a variety of reasons. The strongest of these is my experience of faculty new to governance coming to me with questions and asking for guidance. While I am most happy to assist any member of Faculty Governance, I believe that preparing a meaningful Orientation program will prove to be a more efficient means of providing essential information to new members of governance and consequently may create a more shared view of the role of representatives to governance committees and the Senate. It is my belief that this will strengthen faculty governance at SSU.

Method

As I began my work thinking about and creating such an Orientation program, I was immediately struck by the difficulty I had defining the role of a School representative to the Senate or other committees. Having witnessed some representative behavior, heard representatives talk about their role and reading our Senate by-laws, I realized that among people currently serving as School representatives, there appeared to be wide variation in behavior. I decided to do a more systematic survey of current School representatives to determine with more specificity if my own causal observations were correct and if so, what information might I gather to help create a meaningful orientation. I developed a survey in consultation with Institutional Research and obtained permission from the campus Institutional Review Board on Human Subjects to administer my survey. (Appendix A) I gave the survey, personally, to every Senate committee and the Senate, except the URTP committee and the Scholarship committee. URTP is elected campus wide, not by Schools and the Scholarship committee is a joint faculty governance-administrative committee.

Description

The return results of the survey follow:

Of 19 possible Senators, I received 16 responses – 84%

Of 28 possible School Reps on Standing Committees, I received 14 responses – 50%

Of 48 possible School Reps on Subcommittees, I received 31 responses - 65%

Professor Cora Neal's Math 367 class prepared an analysis of the quantitative survey for me that proved generally interesting, but provided no data that was statistically significant. I also worked with the Associate Vice President for Institutional Research, Dr. Rose Bruce, who kindly spent time with me discussing the means results for the quantitative questions on the surveys and reviewed the quantitative section of this report for clarity and accuracy. A table of the means of the survey questions follows with a discussion.

I then decided to do a series of interviews with faculty who are currently School Reps to help flesh out the quantitative survey and also to garner more detailed information for the orientation. Professor John Wingard of the Anthropology department and I discussed applied anthropological methods and how to work with qualitative data. Since my degree is in Anthropology, using a kind of ethnographic method appealed to me and proved quite useful. I interviewed twenty-two School Reps, and was only able to actually transcribe nineteen of them due to technical difficulties. Interviewees were self-selected via an email request and some were asked specifically for an interview to round out the variation in my "population." For the interviews, I re-applied to the IRB for approval and drafted an interview guide. (Appendix B) Most of the interviews were done in the Senate office and some were conducted in the particular School Reps office. All the interview data has been stripped of any identifying information for this report.

I have analyzed the composition of all School Reps to faculty governance committees in terms of School, tenure status, and gender and found that my interviews mirrored the gender status of the School Reps as a whole and to some extent the tenure status. 57% of all School Reps are female and 67% of all School Reps are tenured. My interviewees were 58% female and 79% tenured. An initial observation here is that females are somewhat more likely to participate in faculty governance than males: females are 46% of all tenure and tenure-track faculty and 57% of all School Reps.

Even though my interview sample is very small (out of 80 possible School Reps, only 19 interviews recorded), I found them to be very rich in information. Additionally, I was deliberate in selecting faculty at various levels of their careers, with varying time at SSU and approximately the same number from each School, including the Library. Certainly, if I had the time to interview a higher sample the qualitative material would be more robust. However, I did find that my interviewees provided me with information to flesh out the quantitative surveys and in this regard I believe they are most useful and informative.

For material gathered in the interviews that does not relate to the survey data, patterns are noted and direction for further discussion are offered. While the purpose of my study, initially, was to gather information that would prove useful to create an orientation to faculty governance, it has broadened into considerations of questions about faculty governance at SSU. It is my hope that Structure and Functions, as the committee that oversees our Constitution and By-Laws, will take up the issues I identified through this research.

It seems appropriate here to reflect on my status in this "culture" for the purposes of this report. I oversee the day to day functioning of faculty governance "infrastructure," such as preparing agendas for committees, doing bureaucratic paperwork, maintaining the historical record of faculty governance at SSU and various other tasks such as this report. I attend the Executive Committee of the Senate and the Senate meetings to take minutes and assist the Chair if needed. So my only actual experience in faculty governance committees is with the very highest level of governance. I have visited other committees for various reasons, but only for a short time as a speaker or to provide information. My interpersonal interactions

are primarily with the leadership of faculty governance, the Chair, Chair-Elect and Chairs of the Standing Committees and Subcommittees for whom I prepare agendas. Thus, I am "in" the culture of governance to some extent, but also very much outside of it. I do not know what actually goes on in the committees nor do I hear faculty talk to faculty about governance very much beyond Chair discussions. I believe this puts me in an excellent position to have done this study since I am apparently seen as someone who can be trusted and is knowledgeable about governance. A number of interviewees when asked whom they would go to for advice identified myself as that person. My informants appeared to me to be at ease and where gratified to hear that I would not identify them in any way in this report. All of them were very interested to read this report once it was completed.

I stress that all the people who took my survey and that I interviewed are either *currently serving as School Representatives* or just completed service. I ask the reader to keep this in mind throughout the report.

Quantitative Data

Following is a chart showing the mean for each question for the Subcommittee, Standing Committee and Senate respondents as well as a total mean for all respondents for each question from the survey:

	Question	Sub mean	Std. Dev	Stand mean	Std. Dev.	Senate mean	Std. Dev.	Total Mean	Std. Dev		
Q1	School values perspective	1.38	0.622	1.64	0.745	1.60	0.507	1.50	0.628	1	Agree
Q2	Consults with Const. on matters	2.06	0.964	1.86	0.535	1.81	0.655	1.95	0.805	2	Somewhat agree
Q3	I am well known	2.38	1.115	1.92	0.954	1.81	0.911	2.12	1.044	3	Somewhat disagree
Q4	Collegial arena	1.20	0.407	1.07	0.267	1.93	0.884	1.36	0.637	4	Disagree
Q5	attend meetings	1.10	0.301	1.00	0.000	1.00	0.000	1.05	0.220		
Q6	participate in debates	1.23	0.560	1.21	0.426	2.20	1.014	1.47	0.791		
Q7	efficient function	1.39	0.615	1.71	0.611	2.33	0.617	1.70	0.720		
Q8	RR are mystery	2.24	0.830	2.71	0.611	3.20	0.561	2.60	0.815		
Q9	Messy, but work gets done	1.71	0.783	1.71	0.611	2.06	0.680	1.80	0.726		
Q10	Reports are valuable as a representative	1.43	0.626	1.71	0.611	1.44	0.629	1.50	0.624		
Q11	reports are valuable personally	1.68	0.748	2.00	0.679	1.60	0.632	1.73	0.710		
Q12	questioning administrators is important	1.97	1.169	1.71	0.825	1.19	0.403	1.70	0.989		

Q#	Question	Sub mean	Std. Dev	Stand mean	Std. Dev.	Senate mean	Std. Dev.	Total Mean	Std. Dev		
Q13	Consult with School prior	3.78	0.934	3.43	0.756	3.20	0.862	3.54	0.894	1	Always
Q14	Consult with school after	3.29	1.084	3.50	0.855	2.80	0.862	3.21	0.995	2	Regularly
	Question	**Sub mean**	**Std. Dev**	**Stand mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Senate mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Total Mean**	**Std. Dev**		
Q15	Consult with faculty in department	2.65	1.199	2.62	1.044	2.00	0.730	2.47	1.081	3	Often
Q16	Consult with faculty who are friends/colleagues	2.40	1.037	2.62	0.870	1.81	0.834	2.29	0.983	4	Rarely
Q17	open to input, but don't seek it	2.14	1.177	2.31	1.032	2.00	0.913	2.15	1.071	5	Never
										1	Always
Q18	Don't have time to consult	3.44	1.311	3.25	0.965	4.08	1.038	3.56	1.195	2	Regularly
										3	Often
	How Consults									4	Rarely
Q20	In person contacts	2.17	0.747	2.54	0.660	1.94	0.680	2.19	0.730	5	Never
Q21	Phone	3.15	1.134	3.82	0.603	3.33	0.816	3.34	0.979		
Q22	Email	2.10	0.618	2.38	0.650	2.56	0.964	2.29	0.749		

Q#	**Motivation**										
Q25	RTP	2.87	1.358	2.21	1.251	3.07	1.387	2.76	1.356	1	Agree
Q26	Contribution to faculty gov	1.45	0.768	1.21	0.426	1.27	0.458	1.35	0.633	2	Somewhat agree
Q27	School represented	1.48	0.785	1.43	0.426	1.50	0.650	1.47	0.684	3	Somewhat disagree
Q28	Department represented	1.48	0.851	1.50	0.650	1.53	0.915	1.50	0.813	4	Disagree
Q29	get information					1.13	0.352	1.13	0.352		
Q30	no one else ran	2.96	1.290	3.00	1.080	3.07	1.163	3.00	1.191		
Q31	I enjoy it!	1.61	0.803	1.93	0.616	2.33	1.113	1.87	0.892		
Q32	Do not enjoy, feel obligated	3.36	0.870	3.23	0.927	2.71	1.204	3.16	0.996		

The mean number of years surveyed School Reps have been at SSU is 11.06. The range was between 1 and 38 years.

Discussion of Quantitative Data

From this survey data, I am able to make the following statements and discuss them in the context of what I learned in the interviews. Standing Committee members indicate that their committees are somewhat more collegial, than do Subcommittee members and Senators (Q4). This finding is a bit surprising, as in the interviews, Subcommittees were generally viewed as very collegial. I suspect the numbers are showing the affect of the GE Subcommittee in the Subcommittee group as that subcommittee was described in the interviews as much more "political" than any other subcommittee. Subcommittee members indicate that their committees are somewhat more efficient (Q7). This correlates well with the fact that subcommittees generally have more task-oriented work than any other governance committee, except for EPC. From the interviews, faculty expressed the feeling of efficiency as "getting work done."

Subcommittees have the least understanding of Robert's Rules of all the groups and the Senate has the most understanding (Q8). This correlates well with organizational behavior. The Senate receives regular tutorials on Robert's Rules as a matter of course and Senators also experience Robert's Rules at every Senate meeting. Senate School Reps in interviews all agreed that Robert's Rules were either needed and/or an absolutely needed mechanism for the Senate to function without "chaos." Much of the nature of subcommittee work does not lend itself to such formalized meeting procedures and some of the subcommittees are too small for formal Robert's Rules as well. Many faculty on subcommittees reported in interviews that they either did not use Robert's Rules or only used them weakly. Some even stated they believed the committee didn't need Robert's Rules at all.

There is strong agreement among Senators that questioning administrators is important (Q12). This finding is useful for us to realize that the desire to question administrators at the Senate is *not* the desire of a few Senators, but is rather an important aspect of the Senate to many Senators. Standing and Subcommittee respondents somewhat agreed that questioning administrators is important at their committee level, however their relationship with administrators is different than that of the Senate. It is more informal and the administrators are in a more advisory capacity.

Senators more regularly consult with friends, colleagues and their departments (which probably overlap quite a bit) than the other governance committees (Q16). Subcommittees and Standing Committees use email a little bit more regularly to consult, where as Senators use in-person contacts more than email (Q 20 & 22). I found this borne out in the interviews as well. When faculty would talk about consultation, they generally did mention that they talked to people "on their floor" or "in their hallway" most and, second, faculty on other committees or projects they may be involved with. However, faculty interviews noted that their emails out to constituent faculty had a very low response rate. Everyone in the surveys described themselves as regularly open to input, but *don't seek it out*. Specifically, in one

interview, a faculty member said he thought "if faculty were concerned enough," *they should seek him out*.

There is a bit more agreement on Standing Committees that faculty serve in governance for RTP credit. (Q25) Senators definitely *disagree* that they serve for RTP credit. Here I would again point out that 67% of School Reps are tenured already. School and Department representation by School Reps among all committees is relatively the same, with faculty more than somewhat agreeing that they do represent these two areas (Q 27 and 28). A high number of Senators said they serve to "get information" (Q29). In interviews, several faculty remarked that the Senate or the listserv Senate-Talk were the places to find out what's going on in the university or what the current issues are. From the interviews, though, Senate-Talk is also seen as dissuading some faculty from participating in the Senate. Senators in the survey strongly agreed that they serve to make a contribution to governance and only somewhat enjoy it (Q 26 and Q31). A discussion of perceptions of the Senate follows later in this report. Overall, most faculty somewhat disagreed with the statement, " I don't enjoy serving, but feel obligated." This agrees with statements by interviewees that governance was seen as a part of the job of a faculty member and if seen as an obligation, it was primarily a positive obligation.

To focus more on the consultation portion of the survey, I note that in the question "I bring matters before the Senate (or Standing Committee or Subcommittee) back to my School for input from my constituencies (department chairs, curriculum committee, faculty in all departments)" all respondents somewhat agreed with that statement (Q2). However, later in the survey, all respondents said they consult with their Schools prior to meeting bordering on *rarely*, and only a bit more often consulted with Schools after a meeting. Standing and Subcommittee members often consulted with faculty in the department and closer to regularly consulted with friends and colleagues. Senators regularly consult with faculty in their departments and a bit more regularly consult with friend and colleagues. The most interesting finding in the survey, is that Subcommittee and Standing Committee members indicate that they "often do not have time to consult, " and the Senators said they "rarely do not have time to consult" (Q18). Both Dr. Bruce and I interpret this finding to mean that the Senators may not have understood the question correctly since it was phrased in the negative, whereas all other questions in that section were phrased in the positive. Still the findings from the Subcommittees and Standing Committees are noteworthy. On the one hand they somewhat agree that they do consult and on the other say the often do not have time to consult. (Q 13 – 17) Clearly, *they are not seeking it out* (Q17).

During the interviews, I stopped asking faculty how they consulted because it was clear they weren't and they seemed to get uncomfortable when I asked about it. I did obtain information about consulting through other less direct questions and discovered that many School Reps are not sure how to consult, are not sure what kind of representative they are (trustee or delegate), and if they did try to consult through email, received very little response from their constituencies. A few noted the lack of any formal structure in the Schools for input or feedback to governance committees. Others reported that they would only bring back to their *departments* matters that rose to the level of department interest. Only one of the small Schools

has institutionalized regular reports and consultation among its faculty concerning faculty governance. To elaborate here would eliminate the anonymity I promised my interviewees. Suffice it to say that it is a conscious decision by this School and its faculty to behave in this way.

A further interesting finding from the quantitative data is that "being well known among [one's] faculty" does show a correlation to service at particular levels of governance. I believe this has implications for the content of the orientations. Subcommittee members show the lowest agreement they were elected to their committee because they were "known." The Senate has the highest agreement among the levels of governance that Senators are elected because they are "known." One interviewee remarked that it is "hard to get elected when no one knows you" and another remarked how useful it had been to start on Structure and Functions, a subcommittee, to gain an understanding of how governance works. This finding could be useful to point out in an orientation that part of preparing to enter governance, a faculty member needs to participate in School activities that help them be introduced to a wide range of faculty in their School.

Further discussion of all data gathered sorts into two sections. The more practical section contains the information gathered that pertains specifically to orientations to faculty governance. The more philosophical section provides data that I hope Structure and Functions will use as a springboard for discussing important issues revealed by my study and that relate to the content of an orientation in terms of the role of School Reps and just what is it that faculty governance does in the university.

The Practical Section

In this section, I discuss the findings of both surveys regarding an orientation itself and how I interpret the findings to illustrate components of each orientation.

The majority of people taking the survey responded that they would like to have an in-person orientation, followed closely by viewing a PowerPoint presentation. This finding meshes well with the number one reason why interviewees said they enjoyed faculty governance – to meet other faculty from across the university. The career of an academic can be somewhat isolating, some faculty remarked, and many interviewees said that if they did not do university service they would not know anyone outside of their department and school. Even though the social aspect of governance is clearly visible, the magnitude of its importance is now clearer. This may be an aspect of governance that could be used more positively to motivate faculty to serve and to help service be more enjoyable. To this end, I recommend that the orientation be very interactive and allow for some opportunity for attendees to meet and connect with one another.

Early in the interview process, one interviewee suggested that there actually be two orientations. One orientation would describe faculty governance as a whole and how it fits in with the rest of the university. The other would be an orientation for faculty who had been elected to a governance position or were thinking about it. For simplicity sake, I will call the first orientation, Orientation #1 and the second, Orientation #2. Everyone I interviewed, after this suggestion was made, agreed that

this kind of format seemed like a good idea. The first one was particularly suggested for new faculty. Here I would recommend that the first orientation be overseen by the Professional Development subcommittee and integrated into their programs for new faculty (which are also open to all faculty). PDS has already accepted this recommendation and the first Orientation #1 is scheduled for October 17th. The second Orientation I recommend be overseen by Structure and Functions. Since S&F is the committee overseeing the Constitution, By-Laws and elections, it seems a natural fit. Additionally, this would institutionalize the orientation, so that it doesn't go away when I do.

Orientation #1 - How Does this University Work? The Big Picture via Faculty Governance

Interviewees expressed interest in knowing how faculty governance fits in with the rest of the university. For the first orientation, I suggest the following interactive way for participants to three-dimensionally see the organization of the university and how faculty governance interacts with it. Five people would be needed to stand in the center of the room. The five people would represent: the Faculty Chair, the Senate, the Executive Committee, Structure and Functions and the Senate office. Around the room on the walls would be signs or pictures of the President (and his office), the Provost (and his office), Faculty Governance committees, the CFO (and his office) and the VP of SAEM (and his office). There would be statements of relationships on pieces of paper in "a hat." Other participants would pick a piece of paper out of the hat and read it out loud. Then either themselves or another person, depending on how many people are there, would take a piece of colored string and visually connect the various points to show relationships. We could end up with a visual web that people could then observe and discuss. The list of relationships that could be used is in Appendix C.

Additionally, in the first Orientation, information would also be provided about running for election, other ways to find out about university service, given a brief introduction to the Senate website and the RTP "folklore" on our campus.

Folklore can have the meaning of "popular fantasy or belief" (OED online: http://www.oed.com/) as well as traditional customs, etc. I have two sources of information on the relationship between faculty governance and RTP. In the quantitative study, the mean for the question – *I serve on (this committee) for RTP* were – Senate 3.07 (somewhat disagree); Standing Committees 2.21 (somewhat agree) and Subcommittees 2.9 (somewhat disagree). In this group, only faculty on standing committees were somewhat motivated to serve due to RTP considerations. This is likely due to the fact that 67% of School Reps are tenured as previously mentioned. However, I have heard on more than one occasion that "speaking up" in faculty governance and/or the Senate could be detrimental to one's RTP process. Teasing this out a bit, I asked my interviewees about the relationship between serving in faculty governance and RTP. Four faculty, one non tenured female and three tenured faculty (2 female and 1 male), referred to the "folklore" that speaking out in governance can affect someone's RTP. This was expressed in terms of the "subjectivity" of the tenure process. Another remarked, "There are people on the

Senate who might in some way make decisions on your tenure, so there is a tendency not to speak up, if it's contrary to what's going on." Another remarked that, "A full professor said putting a non-tenured person in a certain position would make them politically vulnerable." A further example of faculty to faculty communication about RTP: an interviewee told me s/he had seen senior faculty "push" governance work on junior faculty "when senior faculty should be doing it." "The senior faculty say "that will look good on your RTP." " When probing faculty on this question, I had the clear sense that faculty are more worried about other faculty than they are about administrators. One person did mention the Deans as a source of concern, but no one expressed worry about the President or the URTP committee. In fact, all of the people I interviewed expressed that service in faculty governance would be seen **positively** in an RTP document, and they had no direct experience or evidence to support that speaking up in faculty governance, including the Senate, had any negative impact on RTP at Sonoma State University. I found this comment particularly interesting: "There is a strong culture here of people serving in faculty governance. . .clear that the President approaches the RTP process from a factual and professional perspective. . .When you're not tenured, it's easy to be leery and believe the perception that talking out is not ok. Then you get tenure and find out it's not true!" I recommend that this finding be presented in the first orientation with the recommendation that new faculty weigh this finding with the dynamics or perspective of their particular department.

I will also provide a handout to faculty of preparation advice other faculty have given to those considering service in faculty governance. (Appendix D)

Orientation #2

For the second orientation for faculty who have been elected or are considering running, I recommend that the duties of a School Rep be presented and how items move through governance to show the structure of faculty governance, the relationship between committees and presentation of the various online tools that I have developed to assist faculty in governance roles.

The online tools are 1) a Pachyderm presentation on all the committees of faculty governance – *What Committees Do*. This presentation provides more concrete information about the work of a committee, as opposed to its charge, the time the committee usually meets and what characteristics or skills are needed or could be obtained by participation in each particular committee; 2) a Pachyderm presentation on chairing a committee – *What Do I Do Now? Chairing a Committee* and 3) Flash cards and other "games" to learn Robert's Rules. They can be found at: http://www.sonoma.edu/Senate/Governance.html.

To show how items move through governance, I propose to create in the orientation a portion of the faculty governance organizational chart using participants in the orientation to again create a 3D model. An item of business would be presented at some level of governance and then moved through the "org chart" by means of questions and explanations.

To discuss the role of a School Rep in the orientation requires more input from Structure and Functions. As previously discussed in the preceding section on the quantitative surveys, current School Reps are not seeking consultation regularly, there are no formal mechanisms in the Schools (except one) for Schools Reps to consult with the entire School and most people really only talk to their friends and colleagues about governance issues, and those conversations are very informal. Following is a discussion about how School Reps see themselves. I would appreciate guidance from Structure and Functions on this section of the Orientation. What exactly do we expect from School Reps given the information from this study?

The Philosophical Section

The following are "themes" that I found compelling in the data from the interviews and survey data that are more philosophical in nature and ask that Structure and Functions discuss these findings and how they might influence the Orientations and other structures of faculty governance, such as the by-laws.

Ideas about the Role of Faculty Governance

I can report on faculty ideas about the role of faculty governance in the university from the interviews since I did not ask this question in the surveys. Eleven out of nineteen faculty used the word "curriculum" somewhere in their answer to the question about the role of faculty governance. However, how the faculty saw curriculum in faculty governance varied somewhat. There was a general feeling that anything that affects the curriculum or even specifically the classroom itself was under the purview of faculty and was the appropriate area of functionality and decision making for faculty governance. One interviewee went so far as to say "faculty governance doesn't govern anything, except the curriculum."

I noted a small gender variation here. Men talked more about "running the university" or "helping run the university" and women talked more about "having a voice" in the university. One female faculty said that faculty governance is "the voice of the curriculum." Female faculty also talked about students more specifically in their answers to this question such as "The role of faculty governance at the University is to see the curriculum be supported and be made relevant to the students." *One* male faculty member, who saw the role of faculty governance as helping the university develop the mission, talked about students being the "main stakeholders." Among the women's comments there seems to be the idea that faculty are closer to students than administrators and thus are a "vital link" in the administration of the university. Male faculty talked more about developing standards for the curriculum, programs and for faculty than the female faculty, although there is some variation here too. Still, the difference in viewpoint of running the university or having a voice in the university appears to have a gender distinction.

Faculty also talked about faculty governance maintaining legislative faculty "rights," channeling opinion and advice to the administration, "establishing control over ourselves in programs and curriculum," having a voice in hiring and "where

money goes" because that affects the students and the curriculum, and that faculty are the "guardians of academic matters."

Fortunately, these varied opinions are not drastically opposed to one another and I suspect a general consensus about the role of faculty governance could be obtained among SSU's faculty. However, the fundamental question of whether faculty governance helps "run the university" or has a "voice in the university" seems to be of significance and is further complicated by the gender implications previously identified. The discussion on how School Reps see themselves is illuminating on this point.

How School Representatives See Themselves

From the surveys and the interviews, it is clear that the School representatives are not behaving in any uniform manner nor in the manner described in the by-laws. Only one person in the interviews reported being asked to come to a Department Chairs meeting to report on an issue before the Senate. Many faculty noted the lack of a formal method for reporting back to the School and/or receiving feedback from the Schools.

Comments from the interviews show that when consultation happens at all, it appears to be very informal and focused in the departments. The quantitative data also showed this pattern with respondents indicating they consult often with faculty in the department and closer to regularly consulted with friends and colleagues. These informal consultations appear to take place in "hallway talks." Email or other electronic formats were used by a few of the interviewees, but all reported that they did not receive much feedback.

Many expressed their confusion over the role of a School Rep and noted they would vote their "conscience," no matter what the School thought. One person felt the need to "defend" his School on the Senate and three faculty (all males) reported seeing themselves as just members of the Senate, not necessarily representing the School. One of these said he always voted for the university as a whole on the Senate, not his School. Another said he did not feel his School's perspective had been needed on the Senate. A couple of female faculty did talk about getting feedback or wanting to get feedback from either their department or School and trying that with various levels of success.

What strikes me most about interview answers to this question, is that faculty are very much more focused in their departments, rather than their Schools and only one person out of 19 expressed the viewpoint that he was looking out for the university as a whole. This provides a very sharp contrast to interviewee's perspective on the role of faculty governance, especially among male faculty. To "help run the university," seems to require a university wide perspective, but School Reps are generally focused in their departments, the smallest academic unit in the university. A couple of faculty remarked on the tension between either needing a university wide perspective for their committee work and the needs of the "departments", and the tension between an individual faculty member's perspective and their "department." It is suggestive that School Reps on the Senate are more

representing their departments or themselves as members of a department, than their Schools and with a very few seeing themselves as truly overseeing the whole university.

Thus, here in reported *behavior*, having a "voice" in the university seems to be the norm among School Reps and it is a particularly personal voice as well. Some faculty did talk about the tension between their own opinions and the opinions of their departments and generally, most interviewees seem to represent themselves within their disciplines with occasional influence of others on their perspectives. We might want to conclude here that the high rate of participation in faculty governance by women and women using the idea of having a "voice" in their conceptions of the role of governance might play a role in this reported behavior. However, only women in the interviews talked explicitly about wanting to obtain some sense of what their departments or Schools thought. A couple of male faculty talked about using email to try to consult. All interviewees seemed to feel that they could not get what they wanted from other faculty in terms of consultation or were frustrated by the lack of a structure for doing so.

Perceptions of the Senate and Other Faculty Governance Committees

To put it bluntly, the Senate has a very mixed reputation that is leaning heavily towards the negative among the interviewees. Recall that previously I noted from the survey data, that Senators have the lowest enjoyment factor in their service for all levels of governance. The information presented here comes from School Reps who have or are serving on the Senate itself and from School Reps who have never served on the Senate. Repeating themes are that the Senate does not accomplish any work that is perceived to affect faculty or perceived to be "important," the Senate focuses on issues that are not germane to what most faculty think are of interest, that certain (unnamed by interviewees) people on the Senate have personal agendas they are promoting, and that the Senate is seen in constant conflict with the administration.

Here are some examples of what people currently sitting on the Senate said about the Senate. The comments from each interviewee are separated by paragraphs:

 "Why spend time in every Senate meeting going over things that are in the past? One of the major symptoms is that people don't know about the day to day business and how much of that does get done because it's overshadowed by the resolutions stuff."

"The Senate could be more focused. . . the faculty are one side and the administration on the other side. . .faculty should fight less with the administrators and the administrators should fight less with faculty. Compromise is a good thing." "Junior faculty members don't have a clue. They don't know what the Senate is about."

"A number of people think it's run by left wing loonies. There are others who think it is run better than other campuses because good left thinking people are committed to participating. And another group of people could care less."

"If it's [Senate work] done right, not a big deal, but if it's controversial, a big deal."

"The Senate is wasting time fighting the administration."

"The Senate is a place of abstractions. . . things that never got resolved, couldn't get resolved [at the Senate]."

"I don't think the Senate has a popular following. I think that's for a lot of reasons. It has to do with the absurdity about certain things that happen on the Senate and those are things people hear about. . . .People who serve on it think of themselves as very self-important and it suffers because of this. . .The idea of having a Senate is something I truly admire, but this campus seems to take itself too seriously."

"There's a lot of ignorance of what goes on in the Senate."[Some think] it's just this place for the discontented to make a bunch of noise but nothing really happens." "Some people think it's silly or don't recognize it's importance at all or think that there are blowhards on the Senate, it's inefficient, wastes time. . .but that's democracy and we need to listen to all points of view."

[Some think that the Senate is] "the eyes and ears" of the faculty and keeps the administrators in line, others that the Senate wastes time and doesn't get anything done."

"People think it's valuable or they wouldn't run for it." This person noted s/he had always run opposed for the Senate.

A small note here that most faculty reported running *opposed* for governance positions in *the Schools*. It's just the leadership positions where we see single candidate races. Only one interviewee said the Senate has a good reputation and the person who said this is very new to campus. This interviewee also remarked, "Some people think it is super policized and heated, but doesn't find it that way. . .People's reputations play a role in how the Senate is perceived."

People who have never sat on the Senate had this to say:

"The Senate is thought to have more power than it does. . .statements are symbolic and have moral authority, but no legal recourse, like our no confidence vote."

"Some of the tenor of the conversation on campus is adversarial against the President and that turns some people off in term of work being done and what's being done here. It has turned some people off in terms of entering faculty governance, particularly the Senate."

One faculty member had heard a number of new faculty say the Senate is "too political, they really need to focus on RTP and really don't want to get involved." This sentiment from new faculty was troubling the faculty member reporting it.

"It's important that everyone get involved." This faculty member also said Senate-Talk "makes it less likely that she would go to the Senate."

"It [the Senate] is very divisive and negative and doesn't get anything done and people don't necessarily want to participate. . .I would say there has been a lot of moaning and groaning."

"They take up issues that are not important and make us look like idiots in the community." This faculty named the Army banner in the basketball stadium and the Blood Bank issue here. She identified left of center, but "does not feel like the Senate voice is representative." I asked this faculty member if she got that feeling from Senate-Talk to which the faculty member agreed.

One faculty member who has been on the Senate for a number of years mentioned that this negative view of the Senate appears to have started around six years ago. No one else made this observation and thus it may be idiosyncratic.

Interviewees also mentioned other committees in terms of reputation. FSSP was talked about primarily positively since they give out grant money. The GE subcommittee was brought up a number of times. I was told a *story* by one faculty member that a former Chair of the GE subcommittee apparently did not tell the members that Chairs have only one term and can be re-elected. S/He just kept being Chair. This, of course, may not be "true," but is rather an example of the kind of perception able to be generated about faculty governance. Others said the GE subcommittee is political because their decisions have resource implications. Another noted a "hidden agenda" on this subcommittee in the past. None of the other subcommittees were mentioned in interviews.

It came out clearly in the interviews that the reputation of EPC had changed over recent time. This appears to have been the result of the different faculty Chairing EPC. However, one interviewee described EPC as "scary, tough and frightening." APC has the worst reputation among the interviewees with people using words such as "dysfunctional." Another interviewee stated, "I've heard that [APC] doesn't accomplish anything and then I witness it." One person expressed concern that APC was being "usurped" by the Provost's office. FSAC was mentioned a few times, once regarding their work on the RTP policy and another that there were too many "greenhorns" on the committee. One junior faculty member said s/he didn't want to be on EPC or FSAC because s/he did not have a good enough sense of history for a good perspective. Another interviewee summed it up well, "I've heard all kinds of gossip. . .Yeah, some committees are easy, some don't do anything, some don't talk, a lot of committees spin their wheels. I've never heard 'Oh this is such a great committee, they get so much accomplished.' "

Conclusion

After reviewing all the data obtained in my study, I believe that SSU's faculty governance has various interesting issues to sort out. Faculty governance as a whole could use better PR in general and it is my hope that the Orientations will be a part of that larger PR effort. While we cannot control "gossip" among faculty, we can

attempt to provide other information about governance that stresses its positive aspects. Here, I believe that the social aspect of governance could be used more deliberately. Wouldn't it be great if faculty governance could participate in creating more "esprit de corps" among SSU's faculty? Clearly, the role of School Reps needs to be discussed with all of the complexity found in this research. Structure and Functions may want to review the duties of School Reps as written in our by-laws along with this study to start the discussion. A more purposeful understanding of what is expected of School Reps would be most welcome, I believe, from all faculty participating in governance and perhaps for faculty not participating in governance as well. Can some sort of formalized structure be developed in the Schools for the School Reps? Whether faculty governance is helping "run the university" or is "having a voice" in the university appears to me to be a fundamental question that would benefit from deep dialogue and thoughtful consideration. This comment from an interviewee, I believe, is telling us something very important: "[new] faculty tend to [do service] things that have a good payback, to feel like you are doing something." For the benefit of new faculty at SSU, it appears vitally important to express to the general faculty what faculty governance does accomplish now and to encourage all faculty governance committees to engender a feeling of accomplishment among their members. Faculty governance does oversee the curriculum, which is central to the university's mission. It does provide a social network for faculty beyond their own departments and Schools. It does interface with the leaders of all areas of the campus. Faculty governance is an important part of the university. Strengthening the perception of governance and the actual ability to process its work with a sense of accomplishment could benefit the entire university.