

College of Arts and Sciences
Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2018
Dogwood Room

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Prof. Marti LoMonaco at 3:35 p.m. There were 55 faculty members present.

No proxies were held at this meeting.

1. Announcements from the Chair

The chair announced the passing of Prof. Vincent Rosivach. The viewing will be on Wednesday, April 18th from 4-7 pm. The funeral will be on Thursday, April 19th at 11 am.

Prof. Giovanni Ruffini did not have anything prepared since he was living in denial the past few days. The Classical Studies Program will have a colloquium in the 2018-2019 academic year. There will be a gathering in the next few days so people can share their remembrances about Vin. Prof. Ruffini commented that in the past three days, it has become persuasive how involved Vin has been at this University the past 53 years. Many people have come forward to and shared how much Vin has met to them and their programs. We should all hope to have this legacy.

Prof. Peter Bayers offered the following remembrance for Prof. Leo O'Connor.

"Dr. Leo Francis O'Connor died peacefully March 30, 2018 at 81 years of age, his family by his side. He was born in Jersey City, NJ on July 24, 1936.

A memorial service for Leo will take place in the Chapel on Saturday, April 21 at 11:00.

Although Leo spent his adult life in academe, he always fondly remembered his early working years. He was a ball boy for the Jersey City Giants, a busboy on the Jersey shore, a teamster for Safeway Supermarket, a barrel maker for Inland Steel, and an ironworker for the New Jersey Turnpike Authority.

Leo attended St. Peter's College Prep, graduated from St. Peter's College and went on to serve in the U.S. Army Infantry, obtaining the rank of Captain. After his military service, he worked at CBS News and Prudential Insurance, after which enrolled at New York University, where he would go on to receive his PhD in Literature.

In 1965, he joined the English Department at Fairfield University. His career at Fairfield spanned 50 years, during which time he founded the undergraduate American Studies Program and reinvented the graduate American Studies Program.

In 1989, Leo was the recipient of the Fairfield University Alumni Award. This award was especially meaningful to him because teaching was Leo's passion. He never felt that he was working because teaching was his calling, and he truly enjoyed every single hour he was in the classroom with his students.

This is reflected by remarks from students I contacted about Leo's passing.

Ben Gott, a former graduate student remarks:

"After graduation, Leo would always remember me whenever I saw him, and I was thrilled to chat when he asked how my teaching was going. He was an educator from the old school who truly cared about his students and how the knowledge he imparted made us better readers, writers, thinkers, and citizens."

Marianne Gumpfer, another former student writes:

"First and foremost he was a spellbinding lecturer, he never had a notepad it all just came off the top of his head and his lectures were always interesting, full of humor and tremendous humanity."

Mike Greubel:

"He had an incredible breadth of knowledge of American History and was able to share it with his class in a direct and approachable way, and he was always there to give advice to those who needed guidance in times of uncertainty."

Leo was always very supportive and kind to me, and I think of him fondly every time I turn to the many books he gave from his office library upon his retirement.

But I'd like to conclude this remembrance with a story about Leo from the English Department's Michael White. He told me this story after we learned of Leo's passing, and I asked him to write it down for this remembrance.

Michael writes:

"Back in the early 2000's, I'd called a guy to install a computer. When the guy showed up in his Geeks R Us yellow car, I found a man in his forties, long-haired, a nerdy looking computer fellow who, as soon as we started talking, quickly lost me with techno-jargon about hard drives and gigabytes. While he was under my desk fiddling with wires, he asked me what I did. When I replied that I was a professor of literature and a writer, he said, "Oh, I love reading. My favorite novel is Faulkner's

"Absalom, Absalom'." I was both surprised and impressed, especially because Faulkner is so difficult to read and is so seldom appreciated these days. He pulled himself out from under the desk and we had a long, engaging conversation about Faulkner and more generally about novels and writing. . . .

...When I told him Fairfield University, his face lit up and he said he'd [graduated from] Fairfield some twenty years earlier...

He said his favorite teacher was a man named Dr. O'Connor. "Do you know him?" "Of course," I replied. The man waxed poetically when he started to talk about his favorite teacher. "I loved Dr. O'Connor's class and he's the main reason I love Faulkner. He taught me how to read him and how to appreciate his novels." When he left he asked me if I would say hello to Dr. O'Connor. Shortly after this, Leo and I and some others from the Department went to Chicago to interview candidates for a job. Over a drink at an appropriately Irish pub, I told Leo about the man and the compliment he'd paid him. Unlike me who has a hard job recalling students from one semester to the next, Leo recalled him exactly, even down to his essays and his grade. I can't decide what I was impressed by more: the homage the guy had paid Leo, or the fact that Leo had recalled him twenty years later. That was the Leo I knew and admired.

Please join me in a moment of silence in memory of Leo F. O'Connor."

Prof. Shannon Harding announced that the deadline to apply for the position of Core Director for Social Justice and Core Director for Interdisciplinary Studies is Tuesday, April 17th at midnight.

2. Approval of the March 26, 2018 meeting minutes

McClure/Safalia.

41 in favor. 0 opposed. 14 abstentions

3. Elections: Chair of CAS Faculty, and Arts and Sciences Planning Committee Representatives from the Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences

Prof. LoMonaco announced that elections would be held for three positions: CAS Chair and two seats on the Arts & Sciences Planning Committee.

Prof. LoMonaco announced that she and the Secretary of CAS received the following nominations:

CAS Chair: Professor Scott Lacy

Arts and Sciences Planning Committee (Humanities): Professor William Abbott

Arts and Sciences Planning Committee (Social and Behavioral Sciences):
Professor Michael Andreychik

The Chair asked for other nominations from the floor. Since no additional nominations were received, Prof. Lacy, Prof. Abbott, and Prof. Andreychik were elected by acclamation.

4. Discussion about the Grade Change Policy

Associate Dean Glenn Sauer brought up an issue regarding grade changes. When a faculty member awards the grade of incomplete, the grade is automatically converted to the grade of F after a period of time if the student did not complete the work. Dean Sauer mentioned a case where a student turned in work 10 years later and the grade was changed from F to A. The Associate Deans from the different schools talked about the matter. The Registrar suggested that the incomplete stay for one year and then turn to an F after one year.

Prof. Bayers asked if this applied to a graduate student. Prof. Sauer mentioned that it was an undergraduate student.

Prof. Li mentioned a case of a severe medical situation where the student has been hospitalized repeatedly. Prof. Sauer mentioned in these instances, the Dean's office get involved.

The Dean's office will draft some language about the matter and will bring it to the College Faculty for a vote in the 2018-2019 academic year.

5. Discussion on Forming a Template on Assessment

The Annual Report forms are out to Chairs and program directors. The Assessment will be sent out separately.

The Dean's office is working with Jay Rozgoni to make the assessment form available on-line. The assessment form will be a fillable form. The form will be circulated out to faculty in the summer of 2018. The assessment form will be due on October 1, 2018.

Prof. Michelle Farrell asked if the assessment forms will also apply to the interdisciplinary programs. All programs will be building toward getting assessment forms in place.

6. Discussion about Faculty Mentoring

Dean Greenwald wants all faculty who are going up for tenure and promotion to receive the proper mentoring. There will be a call for individuals to serve as Faculty mentors. The CAE had a Faculty Mentoring program, but it stopped. The new program will not change what is happening already in the Department.

7. Discussion about Writing a Strategic Plan for the College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Greenwald has asked a small committee to work on Writing a Strategic Plan for the College of Arts and Sciences: the Directors of the Schools, the Associate Deans and the Dean. The Co-Chairs of the Committee are Associate Dean Elizabeth Petrino and Prof. Michael Pagano.

The purpose of having a Strategic Plan is to give a sense to donors what the College represents. The Plan will provide information about key initiatives and gives information about how the budget is spent. Having a strategic plan will also make the College more value driven and will help to unify the faculty and staff behind a set of shared goals.

Dean Petrino and Prof. Pagano attended a conference in early March 2018 to learn about best practices for forming a strategic plan. It is key to involve all groups (Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni) when writing a strategic plan.

The Dean would like to have three to five strategic priorities that should be linked to Fairfield 2020.

- Sample Strategic Plans will be available from AJCU and Aspirational Institutions on Dropbox.
- A working document will be placed on Quip or a version of Blackboard.
- The Committee will look for distinct and measurable goals and ones that can be assessed.

The Committee has met three times as a committee and have begun a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assessment of the College. The results from this assessment will be distributed by the School Directors who will solicit feedback from Departments and Programs. The assessment results will be made available on Quip and will be open to the College Faculty, Staff, and Administrators in May. The Committee will be asking for additional input not deletions or revisions. The Committee also hopes to form possible focus groups among graduating seniors.

In the Fall of 2018, the Committee will continue to gather information and reach out to groups, including students, (focus groups), alumni (survey) and faculty and staff (town hall meetings). By December 2018, the Committee will develop a list of four to five key strategic priorities, sub-goals, and actions that can be taken to

achieve them. By the Spring of 2019, the Committee plans to bring a proposed strategic plan to the College of Arts and Sciences for its review and endorsement.

Prof. Nels Pearson mentioned that Chairs will have the QUIP document available to them as well.

8. Presentation of CAS Distinguished Mentoring Award

The 2018 CAS Distinguished Mentoring Award is awarded to Prof. Maggie Wills. Dean Greenwald read the following citation:

“The 2018 recipient of the CAS Distinguished Advising and Mentoring Awards is Maggie Wills, Ph.D. She was nominated by the entire faculty of Communication, led by Interim Chair, Jocelyn Boryczka, Ph.D. who wish to point out that Dr. Wills also received the CAS Distinguished Teaching Award in 2006 and they surmise, is one of the few-if not the only faculty member-to receive both awards.

The faculty comment Dr. Wills’ devotion to advising over her 26-year tenure at Fairfield where she has enjoyed a total of 1216 advisees (1143 in Communication/Public Relations and 73 in Liberal Studies), at an average of 47 advisees per year. She has a tradition in our department of not just helping students choose courses, but listening to their goals, values, and uncertainties and discussing with them how various courses across disciplines, extra-curricular activities, and service-learning opportunities can help enhance their liberal arts education and aid in differentiating themselves from future job candidates.

Student testimonials abound. Sydney Arestivo, BA ’17, declares, ‘when it comes to dedicating countless hours and unparalleled commitment to students, nobody quite compares to Dr. Wills. She has been a close mentor to me as my professor, my academic advisor, and now my boss as I am currently her service-learning associate. She continuously pushes me to go above and beyond in my work.’ Jason Hafen BA ’10, Vice President of SRS Real Estate Partners in New York City recalls she always made me feel like I was the only one in the room. She always gave me honest advice and didn’t worry if it was what I wanted to hear or not. Whether I reached out to Dr. Wills or just dropped by her office, she was there to help out in any way possible. The door was always open. Elizabeth Mercado, 17, one of her advisees in the BLS program asserts Dr. Willis has, on many occasions, been the sole support for me as a non-traditional student. She encourages me to never give up, no matter the obstacles I face as a single mom. It is thanks to her that I will complete my BLS degree this Fall and indeed, Mercado succeeded.

Dr. Wills is also a strong mentor for junior faculty and was instrumental in reviving the university’s Debate Team, for which she serves as the faculty advisor. She also has been advising commencement valedictorians for the past fifteen years.

For these sustained commitments and accomplishments, the College of Arts and Sciences recognize Maggie Wills, Ph.D. with the 2018 Distinguished Advising and Mentoring Award.”

Prof. McFadden asked about the Distinguished Teaching Award. Prof LoMonaco mentioned that the committee received zero nominations for this award.

9. Brief Remarks from the Dean

The assessment reporting will be due in October. We will front load the data as much as possible.

The goal is to develop a strategic plan that we will recognize. Every faculty member, every program, and every department will see itself reflected in the goals. We want a short and livable document that is a few pages in length. We will use this document to request resources. There will be many opportunities to offer feedback.

It has been nine months since I arrived at Fairfield University. It has moved quickly. I am more excited today than I was on July 5th when I arrived. We want to make celebrating publication of articles and books part of the culture of the College.

The Dean met prospective students. He sold the College to the students by telling them that they can learn from world-class faculty and be mentored by faculty on research projects. Prospective students are unaware that faculty mentor undergraduates on research projects at Fairfield and we need to ameliorate this. Faculty take mentoring students in research for granted, but from the outside perspective, that is not the norm.

The Dean is working with directors of the schools to create the funding priorities list. The college never had a set of priorities for funding. There are opportunities to invest in the college. Having a funding list and a strategic plan is necessary to ask donors for money.

The Dean announced that Karen Keiser is the new Director of Development for the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Dean is working with David Frassinelli, to address short and long-term priorities. This summer there will be major renovation of Bannow Science Center (5 million dollars). There are greater needs that may include a new wing in the Bannow Science Center. Donorumma and Canisius will be refreshed this summer. The Dean wants to hear the priorities for space and new construction for the College.

The Dean is working on identifying foundations to support institutional grants and institutional projects including service learning, labs, and community engagement.

The Dean will be working in the office this summer and hopes to announce good things at the start of the academic year.

The Dean congratulated Faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences who were promoted to the rank of Associate Professor and Professor.

The Dean thanked Profs. Margaret McClure, Steven Bayne, and Marti LoMonaco for their dedication and service to the Arts and Sciences Planning Committee.

10. Adjournment

Thiel/Crawford. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Miecznikowski
CAS Faculty Secretary