Academic Council Minutes of April 2, 2012 (3:30-5:00 p.m. in CNS 200)

Faculty Attending (16): Profs. Bayne, Dennin, Keenan, Lane, Mulvey (Secretary of the General Faculty), Nantz, Petrino, Preli (Chair), Rakowitz (Executive Secretary), Sapp (Recording Secretary), Shea, Strauss, Tromley, Vinekar, Walker, Zera

Administrators Attending (5): SVPAA Fr. Fitzgerald S.J., Deans Campbell, Crabtree, Franzosa, Gibson

Absent (2): Dean Beal, Prof. Greenberg

Guests (1): Prof. Bowen

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

1. Presidential Courtesy: SVPAA Fr. Fitzgerald S.J. reported good news resulting from the Open House event with over 2000 students and parents on campus. We have a strong applicant pool for next year’s class. He thanked the faculty, staff, and administrators who participated in this event and reminded us of another one in two weeks.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty: none

3. Report from the Executive Secretary

3a. Minutes. Rakowitz requested motions to approve two sets of minutes.

Approval of Minutes for Meeting of February 6, 2012, reconvened on February 27, 2012. Minor Corrections: Bayne asks for an adjustment on page 4 of the minutes, correcting the recorded vote to reflect one vote against the stated motion.

MOTION. [Keenan/Walker] to approve the minutes as corrected.
MOTION PASSED: 15-0-2

Approval of Minutes for Meeting of March 5, 2012.
Minor Corrections: none

MOTION. [Rakowitz/Strauss] to approve the minutes as corrected.
MOTION PASSED: 14-0-4

3b. Correspondence. none

3c. Oral Reports. none

4. Council Committee Reports:

MOTION. [Rakowitz/Petrino] to reorder the agenda as follows: items 7a, 7b, 6c
Discussion: none
MOTION PASSED: 17-0-0.

7. New Business

7a. Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees: Report from Meeting on March 29, 2012
Report: Bowen summarizes the meeting between faculty and members of the Board of Trustees. The faculty based their presentation on issues outlined in recent motions passed by the Academic Council. The faculty shared documents including a list of IIA schools and a copy of the current MOU. A lengthy discussion followed the faculty’s presentation, including a conversation on the “portfolio” review of academic programs. While the conversation was “lively,” Bowen remains unsure if it was impactful.

Discussion of the Report: Dennin asked if the results have been released regarding the reaccreditation of the School of Engineering. The SVPAA answered that the accreditation process revealed no deficiencies but identified areas for improvement. The final decision regarding the maintenance of accreditation will be made by ABET this summer.

Kennan asked Bowen about questions asked by members of the Board of Trustees that seemed somewhat confrontational. Bowen acknowledged that some members were more confrontational than others and gave as an example one question from a Board Member who asked: “Don’t you know times are changing?”

Mulvey noted that she will soon be sending to the trustees all the materials from the “Concerned Faculty” per the motion passed at the last General Faculty meeting. It was noted that the Faculty Secretary is charged in the Handbook to be the official correspondent for the General Faculty in communication with the Board. Mulvey asked if the Council had any thoughts on what might go in a cover memo with all the materials from the “Concerned Faculty”. Nantz suggested mentioning the Handbook committees that the memo had been sent to and pointing out that the group of “concerned Faculty” is not an ad hoc committee with any formal standing.

7b. Report from the NEASC subcommittee working on governance standard

Report: Bowen provided an update on work by the subcommittee during their two recent meetings. The committee is making sure that content included in the report is up-to-date and includes everything NEASC needs in regards to issues impacting full- and part-time faculty as well as student participation in governance. Bowen added that there is time to make revisions based on recent developments regarding the Board of Trustees. She characterized the situation as “wait and see” in regards to the Board’s recent challenge to its commitment to the 95th-percentile.

Discussion of the Report: Nantz asked when the NEASC document is due. The SVPAA replied that the final draft is due in July. Bowen was thanked for her report.

6. Old Business

6c. Report from group formed at AC meeting on 2/27 to discuss DSB core language concerns

Report: Rakowitz reported that the group met twice and made very little progress beyond minor issues regarding study abroad, and moving toward second semester basic courses being offered both Fall and Spring. Rakowitz expressed disappointment that representatives from Modern Languages, the College, and the Dolan School of Business could not find more common ground. Nantz asked Gibson if he felt “happy” and if he thought the challenges could be overcome. Gibson expressed pessimism and said that the problem is not solved. With Gibson’s encouragement, Tromley repeated the same motion that was made at a previous meeting of the Academic Council.
MOTION [Tromley/Lane]: to change the Modern and Classical Languages requirement for Charles F. Dolan School of Business undergraduate students from two semesters at the intermediate level to two semesters of the same language at any level.

Discussion of the Motion: Lane spoke in favor of the motion. Gibson reminded the Academic Council that this issue has been debated for four years and that this solution—as stated in the motion—has been approved by the DSB faculty, its curriculum committee, and the UCC. Gibson explained that this motion was motivated by a change in policy by Modern Languages that turned out to be problematic to DSB students, their ability to pursue academic minors and be competitive in the workforce. He spoke in favor of the motion. He also pointed out that the School of Engineering has no language requirement, and that the School of Nursing has a flexible language requirement. He emphasized that no business school anywhere has such a large language requirement. Gibson added that this requirement puts the program at a disadvantage in relation to the University’s peer institutions. Tromley pointed out that accreditation bodies agree with the motion. Shea expressed respect for Modern Languages but supported the motion. She explained that incoming first-year students often misunderstand the implications of the language placement test; she claimed that some School of Nursing students purposely fail the test so that they can be placed at easier levels.

Keenan asked Crabtree if CAS students also complain about this requirement. Crabtree said that CAS students “whine as much but with less consequence.” She said that first-year students are coming in less prepared in math and language from high school, and that reality has caused some difficulties. Students often misunderstand the incentive to do well on online placement tests. Rakowitz spoke against the motion and said that the Core should be similar across programs and that this motion removes some of the incentive to take languages. She added that it becomes tricky when students change majors, particularly among colleges. She suggested that we vote down this motion and look to create a broader university policy regarding the Core instead of making this change only in the professional schools. Mulvey noted that the policy was changed for the School of Nursing in 1989, and it was a decision made by the Academic Council, and did not go to the General Faculty; she spoke in favor of the motion and said that we should just “get on with it.” Dennin spoke in favor of the motion and said that he wants this motion to apply for all students, not just students in the DSB. He is not in favor of “two Cores.” Nantz remained “on the fence,” and said that studying language is important in our world. She also said that she favors uniformity: having the same core for everyone. She said, however, that she’d reluctantly support the motion.

MOTION. [Nantz/Lane] to Call the Question
MOTION FAILED: 11-6-0 (note: two-thirds majority needed to pass)

Continued Discussion of the Motion: Walker spoke against the motion and said that students in the natural sciences are just as busy as business students, and pointed out that “language is important” and the “Core is important.” He added “the Core is what makes us unique,” and proposed that having a strong language requirement in the DSB could set us apart in our marketing efforts. Crabtree explained that Modern Languages is also worried about enrollment management and, for many reasons, opposes this motion. Further, Modern Languages worries that by reducing the language requirement, we are sending the wrong message. Tromley pointed out that this is not an attack on the Core, but an attempt to rectify a wrong: the language requirement, she claimed, is a disadvantage for DSB students. She used a chart to explain that DSB students simply have to take too many classes, making it impossible for them to double major or minor. She ended with “it frightens me” and again emphasized that professional schools
have accreditation standards that they must follow, and the current Core places students in the professional schools at a competitive disadvantage. Gibson agreed.

Petrino said that the liberal arts curriculum is important and spoke against the motion. Petrino asked whether DSB students can fulfill the language requirement while they are abroad? Gibson said it is possible, but students don’t typically decide to study abroad when they arrive as first-year students and begin the curriculum. For example, many students study Spanish to fulfill the language requirement and then later decide to study abroad in Florence. Nantz spoke again in favor of the motion, but pointed out that even in the CAS, we have heavy Core requirements and warned her colleagues: “This is important because we send signals by these decisions.” She added, “Language is about culture, not ordering at a restaurant.” She ended by saying “This is not a trivial decision.”

**MOTION.** [Nantz/Lane] to Call the Question
**MOTION PASSED:** 17-0-0

**MOTION:** original motion, see above
**MOTION PASSED:** 10-7-0

**MOTION.** [Nantz/Lane] to ask the Academic Council to recommend that the College of Arts & Science Curriculum Committee take up the question of language requirements in the Core for the undergraduate students in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Discussion of the Motion: Dennin spoke in favor of the motion. Lane spoke in favor of the motion. Crabtree spoke against the motion (but understands why it was made), and suggested that the UCC instead revisit the entire Core instead, not just the language requirement. Crabtree said that it makes sense that everyone has same Core requirements, which they currently don’t. Tromley spoke in favor of the motion. Mulvey said that she plans to abstain, and said that she is not sure where this is headed, pointing out, for example, that perhaps we should revisit the Core requirement regarding Philosophy before we revisit the Core requirement about Modern Languages. Nantz spoke in favor of the motion and agreed that it may be the right time for a review of all Core requirements, but, in response to Mulvey’s comment, pointed out that the difference is most apparent in Modern Languages (based on the motion that was just passed), so we should start the process by exploring the language requirement.

**MOTION.** [Nantz/Lane] to Call the Question
**MOTION PASSED:** 12-4-0

**MOTION:** original motion, see above
**MOTION PASSED:** 15-1-1

8. Recess

**MOTION** [Rakowitz/Keenan]: to Recess the meeting
**MOTION PASSED:** 15-1-0

Respectfully submitted, David Sapp