ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting on
Monday, November 5, 2012

Present: Professors Steven Bayne, Mousumi Bhattacharya, Nancy Dallavalle, Joe Dennin, Bob Epstein (Executive Secretary), Chris Huntley, Dennis Keenan, (Chair), Ginny Kelly, Wendy Kohli, Phil Lane, Elizabeth Petrino, Susan Rakowitz (General Faculty Secretary), Shawn Rafalski, David Sapp, Joyce Shea, Cheryl Tromley, Roxana Walker-Canton.


FUSA Representative: Robert Vogel.

Invited Guests: Professors Paula Gill Lopez, Meredith Kazer.

Regrets: Prof. David Downie, Deans Jack Beal, Robbin Crabtree.

Chair Keenan called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m., welcomed FUSA representative Rob Vogel, and had everyone introduce themselves.

1. Presidential courtesy.

SVPAA Fitzgerald expressed three mea culpas regarding three items on the agenda under new business: First, for not bringing the course repeat policy that Mary Frances Malone put together to the AC. Second, for the decision to have adjuncts default to online IDEA evaluation forms. Third, for not being able to construct a mechanism for dealing with student registration PINs in accordance with the policy approved by the AC last semester in time for this registration period.

SVPAA Fitzgerald mentioned that the ACEC had discussed revising the Handbook and he mentioned a few items he thought we might want to talk about revising: the section on faculty teaching load, fleshing out faculty obligations with regard to teaching, scholarship, service, and perhaps add something about collegiality. Finally, he mentioned maybe we should revisit the professor of the practice language, because the language does not fit how it has worked out in practice—perhaps creating a second category of senior lecturer.

Chair Keenan asked if there were any questions.

Professor Dennin said that he thought that the practice with professors of the practice should exactly follow what the Handbook describes.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty.

Professor Rakowitz mentioned the need for a new edition of the Handbook and made the following motion:

MOTION [Rakowitz/Second]: The Academic Council authorizes a subcommittee consisting of the current and immediate past GFS to work with the SVPAA’s office to put out the 11th edition of the Handbook.

MOTION PASSED: 17 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

3. Report from the Executive Secretary

a. Approval of minutes of 10/1/12

Corrections: Professor Kohli noted that her name was misspelled on the top of page 7.

MOTION (Lane/ Rafalski): To approve the minutes of October 1, 2012 as amended.
MOTION PASSED: 16 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

b. Correspondence

i. Professor Epstein drew our attention to the correspondence (on page 12 of the packet) from Steve Bayne for the Philosophy Department on the new sexual misconduct policy from the student handbook, and additional correspondence (on pages 13-14 of the packet) from the current and former General Faculty Secretaries.

Professor Rakowitz mentioned that the purpose of the memo from the GFSs was to provide us with the content of the policy referred to in Professor Bayne’s memo, and to let us know that VP Pellegrino contacted both GFSs about the change.

MOTION (Bayne/Lane): To make the changes to the sexual misconduct policy an agenda item at a future AC meeting.

Professor Dallavalle asked whether we wanted to gather facts first before putting this item on an agenda.

Professor Rakowitz mentioned that is why we would want to invite VP Pellegrino to the meeting when we discuss this issue.

Professor Keenan suggested that maybe we can collect together the relevant information and invite the appropriate people to the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: 17 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

ii. Professor Epstein then drew our attention to the memo from Mary Ann Palazzi on Athletic conflicts with final exams. He noted that the only conflict is a men’s basketball game scheduled for a reading day.

Professor Lane asked SVPAA Fitzgerald when this is going to stop. He emphasized that this is a direct violation of policy that there be no games scheduled during exams.

Professor Dennin said he agreed with professor Lane.

Professor Keenan asked whether the AC wants to take up this matter.

SVPAA Fitzgerald said he would forward this issue to the athletic director and, at Professor Lane’s urging, up the administrative chain of command.

4. Council Subcommittee Reports

Professor Epstein said there are no subcommittee reports ready, but he did describe an issue with the subcommittee on broader academic freedom language for governance documents. He noted that this is a three person committee, and one member is on leave this semester. Two subcommittee members want to suspend the subcommittee’s work until member on leave returns in spring. The third member of the subcommittee wanted the work of the subcommittee to continue and raised the issue with the ACEC. Since the subcommittee members were two to one in favor of suspending work, the ACEC decided to take no action.

Professor Bayne stated that this is an important issue and asked whether this means it will just have to wait until Spring.

Professor Rakowitz indicated yes.

Professor Kohli asked whether a replacement could be named.

Professor Rakowitz indicated that we typically do not replace members on subcommittees.
At this point, in order to deal with issues involving invited guests, Professor Epstein made the following motion:

MOTION (Epstein/Fitzgerald): To reorder the agenda to deal with items 7a and 7b before returning to item 5.

MOTION PASSED: 17 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

7.a. Report from Committee on Conference on October meeting with Board of Trustees, and Academic Council input for December meeting.

Professor Gill Lopez, Chair of the Committee on Conference (CoC), said she thought the meeting with the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) of the BOT went well, and she emphasized the positive nature of the meeting. Faculty told the members of the Academic Affairs Committee that they were interested in developing a shared agenda and goals. The AAC seemed to be receptive to this idea. They discussed having faculty meet with BOT members over lunch and having faculty presentations. One item AAC members brought up were marketing goals.

SVPAA Fitzgerald agreed that the meeting went very well and thanked professor Gill Lopez for taking charge of this.

Professor Lane (a member of the CoC) noted that the President and the new chair of the BOT (William Atwell) were in attendance, and that this was out of character.

Professor Gill Lopez agreed that this was true prior to this past June. At this meeting she thought there was a collective sigh of relief, but she did not think they will be at the next meeting.

Professor Kohli (a member of the CoC) noted that the faculty’s discussion of a vote of no confidence in the President did not come up.

Chair Keenan asked whether the AC had any suggestions for the next meeting with the AAC.

SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that one of the next major items will be approval of the MPA proposal at the next AAC meeting.

Professor Rakowitz said concerning the MPA that she thought it was fine to inform the board of a new program, but she didn’t think it was wise to have them approve them.

SVPAA Fitzgerald stated that the BOT has always had to approve new programs.

Professor Lane stated that he thought he heard BOT members mention something about a new strategic plan, and he asked SVPAA Fitzgerald whether there was a new strategic plan.

SVPAA Fitzgerald stated that the President has begun a conversation about refreshing our current strategic plan. It is on the agenda for the Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting. When asked about the composition of the SMT, SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that it was composed of senior administrators, deans, and select faculty leaders such as the ACEC. He noted, however, that the SMT is a group mostly about information sharing rather than deliberation or decision-making., but he did state that they hope to make it more about in-depth discussion in the future.

Professor Lane stated that the faculty and AC need to have input into any strategic plan.

Professor Kohli returned to the issue of marketing, and she mentioned that there was some grumbling around the table at the meeting with the AAC that we don’t do marketing so well. Professor Kohli said that she hears it from every one of our schools at Fairfield, so that is an issue that should be taken up with the BOT—especially since they brought it up.

Professor Gill Lopez stated that there was consensus that marketing is an issue that we should jointly attend to.
Professor Epstein asked Professor Gill Lopez to let the BOT know that we faculty would be glad to participate in marketing.

Professor Tromley noted that we have a Marketing Department in the School of Business, but university marketing never seems to tap into the Marketing Department’s expertise.

SVPAA Fitzgerald mentioned that we ended up having a surplus last year and some of that money has been used for increasing travel and other funds to support faculty scholarship, but he has also offered faculty expertise to VP for Marketing and Communication Sudhakar, and she seemed receptive.

Professor Epstein noted that faculty would have some ideas about how to spend surpluses.

Chair Keenan thanked Professor Gill Lopez and the rest of the CoC.

7.b. IDEA evaluations for adjuncts.

Chair Keenan called the AC’s attention to pages 18 and 19, and called on Professor Kazer (FDEC representative) to explain the situation.

Professor Kazer said that last year the FDEC was charged with making a recommendation about whether to continue offering both the yellow qualitative evaluation forms and paper IDEA forms along with the online IDEA forms. Their recommendation was to continue both paper and online forms, but they did not make a recommendation concerning which would be the default. The Academic Council accepted the recommendation, but also decided, to her disappointment, to make the paper the default for the IDEA form. Professor Kazer noted that this year the default went back to paper IDEA forms for full-time faculty, but the administration made online IDEA forms the default for part-time faculty.

Professor Epstein asked Professor Kazer why she was disappointed that the default went back to paper.

Professor Kazer said that going back to paper sets us back environmentally. She recognizes that there are concerns over response rate, but she thinks that the paper forms require a lot more paper generation than faculty really want.

SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that his recollection of the AC discussion on this is that especially for pre-tenure junior faculty it is really important to get a high response rate and so we would want them either to use paper or develop methods to raise online response rates. He continued that we try to work with part time colleagues, but a lot of them never respond to the email prompts to set up their IDEA forms, so for them any data collected is meaningless. Finally he stated that students have a right to evaluate every class, and departments need to have them evaluated.

Professor Bayne asked whether part timers using paper IDEA forms produce any higher rate of the faculty member filling out the IDEA Faculty Information Form (FIF).

SVPAA Fitzgerald said that when part timers use paper IDEA forms, the forms very often never are taken out of their mailboxes.

Professor Sapp said that looking at the data, it seems as if over half of our classes taught by adjuncts, and he wondered whether this was right.

SVPAA Fitzgerald said yes, but that includes a lot of small professional school clinical sections.

Professor Sapp said he was concerned with how this is skewing our data. Since we have so many people not turning in their FIF, their scores will be low, and this data is skewing our overall ratings.

Professor Kohli stated that this is part of a bigger issue with our relationship with our part time faculty, and she wondered whether this is something that will be addressed by the subcommittee on the status of part-time faculty.
Professor Kazer said that faculty own their own data, unless faculty choose to share their data. We have aggregate data, but this does not go into the NEASC accreditation report.

Professor Tromley asked whether the population we are compared to is all universities in the IDEA database, so if our part-timers don’t fill out evaluations, they are not being included.

Professor Kazer replied that if faculty receive paper forms, but don’t distribute them, then there is no data generated at all. The problem is with faculty that don’t fill out the FIF. In these cases, when the evaluations are online, students still get the email notifying them that their evaluations are ready to be filled out, but if the instructor has not filled out the FIF, then they will receive lower scores, which does bring our scores down.

Professor Epstein mentioned that some adjuncts actually get great guidance and take the forms seriously like with EN 11 and 12. The point at hand, he continued, is that faculty said the default was to be paper, but the administration made it online for part time.

Professor Bhattacharya asked whether we should be concerned about response rate.

Professor Kelly noted that if the default for adjuncts is online evaluations, and the instructor does not fill out the FIF, students still complete them online and so the data is skewed. If adjuncts default to paper, but don’t give out the forms, then we just don’t get the data, but it doesn’t skew the data.

SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that for NEASC reporting we can aggregate the data any way we want and we can find a way to filter out the bad data.

**MOTION (Kelly/Second): The default for the IDEA evaluations should be paper for all part-time faculty.**

SVPAA Fitzgerald spoke against the motion, reiterating that we can get good data, this would just be a waste of paper time money and effort.

Professor Tromley said she was opposed to the motion because of the environmental impact.

Professor Dallavalle stated that the failure to give good guidance on the FIF is just a failure of chairs.

Professor Bayne stated that as the person who made the motion when the AC discussed the IDEA form last year [May 14, 2012], it was his interpretation that when the motion said that the default should be paper, then this applied to all faculty— both full and part-time. As a result, he said he was not sure that this motion was really necessary—we just need to do what the previous motion said.

A discussion of whether this motion was really necessary or in order followed, and subsequently the AC returned to the discussion of the motion on the floor.

Professor Petrino spoke in favor of the motion. She said that paper rates are higher and this is important for assessment purposes.

Professor Sapp said that he didn’t want to be wasteful, but he is just disturbed by the numbers.

**MOTION (Dennin/Second): To call the question.**

**MOTION PASSED: 15 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions.**

**MOTION on the floor PASSED: 9 in favor, 7 opposed, and 1 abstention.**

5. Petitions for immediate hearing

*Altering the academic calendar for the remainder of the semester to try to recuperate some of the class time lost last week as a result of hurricane Sandy.*
Professor Epstein distributed printed copies of the three possibilities that were previously distributed to AC members by email.

Professor Rakowitz went through the options:

A: We do nothing systematic. We simply say that a week of class time is gone, and we move on with no change to the academic calendar. Faculty are free to seek a particular solution for themselves.

B: To add two class days to the end of the semester by dropping the third reading day and condensing final exams, plus making a number of small changes to some class meeting times over the remainder of the semester. This option would recoup between 75 and 150 minutes for each course, depending on the time code.

C: To hold classes on three Saturdays over the next five weeks, calling one a Monday, the second a Wednesday and the third a Friday, while still adding time to T-Th turbos and time code 2N. This option would recoup between fifty and 150 minutes per class, depending on the time code.

SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that with option B that Accounting and Modern Languages will be asked to give up their own final exam time blocks, students will still not be required to take more than two final exams in one day, and that whatever changes we propose it will be an option up to individual faculty. Faculty that are not able to meet during the additional times will of course not be forced to hold those classes—ought implies can.

Professor Lane said he wants to speak for students—he believes that this is a waste of time. Students aren’t going to miss having a couple fewer of our classes.

Professor Dallavalle said that she thinks it is important for us to say that our class time is important.

Professor Rafalski said that he thought it is too late in the semester to manage option C.

FUSA President Vogel mentioned that he does not like the idea of having five straight days of exams, and he would avoid changing times or time codes, but the loss of reading days in B is not such a big deal.

Professor Bayne mentioned the difficulties that any changes would present for part-time faculty, who may already have commitments elsewhere.

Professor Walker-Canton Roxana mentioned a suggestion from Kathy Schwab that we should make up time not by adding days, but by requiring students to attend a certain number of other campus events.

Chair Keenan noted from our discussion that it seemed as if option C was out, so the debate seemed to be between option B or doing nothing systematic [option A]. He wondered whether anyone was interested in making a motion for our adopting option B, so we could discuss it and vote it up or down.

Professor Dennin noted that if we adopt B, the new exam schedule would not be optional for individual faculty.

**MOTION (Dennin/Fitzgerald):** To adjust the academic calendar for the remainder of the semester by adding two days at the end of the end of the semester, adding twenty minutes to all remaining M, T, W turbo class meetings, adding 25 minutes to three non-Wednesday three times a week classes, adding time to all remaining 2G time code classes, dropping one final exam reading day, taking away the Accounting and Modern Languages special exam periods, and condensing the final exam period.
Professor Lane spoke against the motion because he believed that anything that changes the final exam schedule will make it harder to return to normal.

Professor Epstein thought that option B is not terribly disruptive. It is not that complicated—we are just going to have two more class days. We have missed class time, and this would be a uniform way of saying faculty can make up time in this way.

Professor Shea said that no one is comfortable in making changes—it will never be normal, but there are classes that do need to cover all the material. For those that can’t afford to lose the time, this is a reasonable way to make it up.

SVPAA Fitzgerald spoke in favor of the motion, and he mentioned that it will be important for us to be flexible with students who work or have internships and also not to schedule an exam or other high stakes activities during the times that classes are extended.

Professor Rafalski asked how much will this change the exam schedule.

FUSA President Vogel thought that some students will just say we had a hurrication, but some students will want to get their time. He then asked whether there was any reason not to have an extra reading day in the middle of those five straight days.

Professor Dennin suggested we could leave Saturday as an exam day and put the reading day somewhere else.

Professor Epstein said, just keep in mind the normality of the schedule.

**MOTION (Dallavalle/Second): To call the question.**

**MOTION PASSED: 15 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.**

**MOTION on the floor PASSED: 11 in favor, 4 opposed, and 0 abstentions.**

**MOTION [Dennin/Lane] to adjourn.**

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven M. Bayne