ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, April 29, 2013

Present: Professors Nancy Dallavalle, Joe Dennin, Bob Epstein (Executive Secretary), James He, Chris Huntley, Dennis Keenan, (Chair), Ginny Kelly, Wendy Kohli, Phil Lane, John Lasseter, Susan Rakowitz (General Faculty Secretary), Shawn Rafalski, Joyce Shea.


Invited Guests: Professors Paula Gill-Lopez (item 7b), Kathy Nantz (item 4c), Marice Rose (item 7i), Carl Scheraga (item 7c).

Regrets: Mousumi Bhattacharyya, David Downie, Elizabeth Petrino

Chair Keenan called the meeting to order at 3:30.

1. Presidential Courtesy

SVPAA Fitzgerald S.J. announced that AVPAA Mary Frances Malone is working on commencement. 882 bachelor’s degrees; 394 master’s degrees; 18 Certificates of Advanced Study; and 3 doctorates will be awarded.

SVPAA Fitzgerald S.J. announced that next year will be his fifth year in his current position and that he is planning to step down. In addition, Dean Susan Franzosa will be stepping down from her position as Dean of GSEAP this summer.

Professor Dennin asked how many freshmen were expected to enroll for the fall 2013 semester. SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J. stated that we are slightly above last year’s numbers at this time. Last year’s enrollment included 991 freshmen.

Professor Rakowitz reported on an email exchange she had with President von Arx, S.J. that included two subjects. 1. The Council approved a motion indicating that we are on record opposing the addition of a new EVP at this time. The President indicated that this is a responsibility that rests with him. He will get back to the Council regarding the interviewing process, and 2. The Council approved a motion requesting that the President continue to invite the Chair of the Faculty Salary Committee (or designee) to the Budget Committee. The President indicated his intention to do so.

2. Report from the Executive Secretary

a. Approval of minutes from 3/4/13

Corrections: Prof Rafalski noted that on page 4, in the 1st paragraph a question that was attributed to Prof Rakowitz was in fact asked by Prof Rafalski.
MOTION (Lane/Fitzgerald): To approve the minutes of 3/4/13 as amended.

MOTION PASSED: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

b. Approval of minutes from 3/18/13

MOTION (Lane/ Dallavalle): To approve the minutes of 3/18/13.

MOTION PASSED: 12 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention.

c. Oral Reports

Prof Epstein informed the Council that a faculty member was potentially planning to give material directly to members of the Academic Council, without vetting it through the Executive Committee. Prof Epstein indicated that this is not within normal protocol and informed the Council that if we receive information that is not part of our agenda, we should treat it as correspondence between faculty members and not as official Academic Council business.

4. Council Subcommittee Reports

a. Subcommittee on the status of part-time faculty

Prof Kathy Nantz presented an interim report, beginning by bringing the Council’s attention to the categories of inquiry (located on p. 1 of the NTT Task Force Update) in the meeting packet. The subcommittee is in the process of conducting a survey to answer the questions that have emerged in these 4 areas and to develop a profile of non-tenure track (almost 400) faculty.

A survey has been developed and is ready to go out (with the support of Amy Boczer, Director of Institutional Research). The primary issue at this point is the development of an appropriate email list for distributing the survey.

Prof Nantz brought the Council’s attention to information pertaining to a similar task force at the University of Maryland. While the two school profiles differ, this issue seems to be experienced at other universities.

Finally, Prof Nantz respectfully requested of the SVPAA a small stipend to complete this work over the summer (perhaps $1000.00 to cover small stipends and administrative costs associated with development and distribution of the survey).

Prof Lasseter suggested that CNS should be able to assist in finding a technical solution to the email list development issue. In addition, he asked about our retention rate as it pertains to non-tenure track faculty positions that tend to be ongoing.
Prof Nantz was unable to answer this question with specific data but reported that, based on the latest survey data, a large percentage of part-time faculty report long-term relationships with the university.

b. **Subcommittee on sexual misconduct policies**

Chair Keenan reported that this subcommittee has been formed and includes Profs. Dallavalle and Shea.

5. **Petitions for immediate hearing**

SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J. asked that the Council charge the executive committee with beginning the process of electing faculty members to 2 search committees; one for the position of SVPAA and one for the position of Dean of GSEAP. He noted that in recent similar searches the search committees consisted of 6 or 7 faculty members and 6 or 7 administrators/"friends” of the university.

Dean Franzosa suggested that we might want to consider how this process was approached previously.

SVPAA Fitzgerald noted that it would be helpful to begin this process during the summer, as the bulk of the work for both committees will take place in October of 2013.

**MOTION (Fitzgerald/Lane):** To charge the executive committee of the Academic Council with proposing a process for providing faculty representation on these 2 search committees, including what the composition of both might be.

Discussion:

Prof Rakowitz reminded the council that the President ultimately determines the size of each committee and that the Academic Council decides the composition of faculty representation.

Prof Kohli proposed that the Council let the executive committee do some research and report back with additional information.

**MOTION PASSED:** 13 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

6. **Old business**

   a. **Proposed changes to Spring 2014 Academic Calendar**

Prof Epstein reported that the most pressing and necessary calendar change was to the length of the spring semester. The subcommittee has proposed schedule changes in response to the disparity of teaching days and overall length of the semester, in the form of a 3-part motion:
MOTION (Epstein/Lane):
(1) That the first day of classes for the Spring 2014 semester be changed from Tuesday, January 21, to Thursday, January 16.
(2) That Tuesday, February 18 should follow a Monday schedule rather than a Tuesday schedule for undergraduate day classes. The administration should communicate to faculty that flexibility should be allowed for instructors who have unavoidable teaching conflicts and for students who have obligations that cannot be rescheduled. Professors should be encouraged to demonstrate sensitivity to students with scheduling conflicts, particularly in scheduling exams and other major assignments.
(3) That Monday turbos should not be offered as regular undergraduate time codes in the Spring 2014 semester.

Discussion:

Prof Dallavalle suggested that we consider removing the text in part 2 of the motion beyond the first sentence.

**AMENDED MOTION (Dallavalle/Kohli): To strike the 2nd and 3rd sentences in part 2 of original motion.**

Discussion:

Prof Rakowitz spoke against the amended motion, stating that the proposed language might provide necessary support and clarity.

Prof Epstein spoke against the motion stating that the proposed language is helpful.

Prof Kohli suggested that it might make sense to consider placing an asterisk after the first sentence of part 2.

Prof Dallavalle reiterating that striking this text makes sense, given that we are so “thin”.

Prof Lane called the question.

**QUESTION CALLED, AMENDMENT PASSED: 7 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention.**

**AMMENDED MOTION PASSED: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

7. New business

a. **Ballot of candidates for Committee on Committees**
Prof Rakowitz reported that there are 2 openings for the Committee on Committees; both must be filled by faculty in the humanities. Beth Boquet and Ryan Drake have put their names forward.

**MOTION (Rakowitz/Lane); To place Beth Boquet and Ryan Drake on the ballot for the Committee on Committees.**

**MOTION PASSED: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions**

b. **Committee on Conference: advice on June meeting with Board**

Prof Gill-Lopez joined the meeting, asking for input regarding the upcoming meeting of the Committee on Conference (CoC) with the Academic Affairs (AA) subcommittee of the Board of Trustees (BOT).

Prof Gill-Lopez reported that, at the conclusion of the last meeting with the AA subcommittee, Prof. John Baldovin, S.J., Chair of the subcommittee, was clear on 2 concerns among faculty, that he planned to present to the full Board: 1. The lack of a serious strategic plan for the university, and 2. Low morale, due in part to proposed changes in faculty compensation. Several members of the CoC have proposed following up on the full Board’s reaction/response to these concerns. In addition, Prof Gill-Lopez reported that the CoC might follow up on Bishop Murry’s, S.J. question regarding whether there has been an equivalent increase in faculty and administrative positions. SVPAA Fitzgerald responded by indicating that, depending on the timeframe, these numbers are not equivalent.

Prof Dennin suggested that we may know in a month’s time how faculty morale has truly been affected.

Prof Epstein suggested that the CoC propose to the AA subcommittee that a strategic long-term solution to the compensation issues is necessary, and this might eliminate the annual struggles that have become routine.

Prof Gill-Lopez mentioned that there is a desire on the part of the Board to come to a multi-year agreement.

c. **Motion to require the administration to prepare a strategic plan**

Prof Scheraga shared that, last year the university garnered a substantial budget surplus that “disappeared” without discussions with the Budget Committee (BC). When members of the BC raised questions regarding the surplus, they were unable to obtain cogent answers. The BC continues to argue that the process being employed does not align with best practices. In addition, the BC was informed that the academic division will bear all indirect costs associated with running the university.
MOTION (Lane/Kohli): The faculty calls on the President and the Board of Trustees to present to the Fairfield University Community a written, formal, and comprehensive strategic plan reflecting both a five year and ten year vision for the institution. The document thus generated will reflect professionally accepted format and content guidelines for institutions of higher education. The document will also incorporate best practices assessment mechanisms across all levels and all divisions of the University. It is thus understood that all of the content of this document will span all divisions, without exception, across the institution.

Discussion:

Prof Rakowitz supported the notion of having this plan, but she was unclear as to the role of faculty in the development of such a plan.

Prof Lasseter suggested adding language specifying that the plan will provide transparency and accountability. He also raised the question of who has the authority to put such a plan in place. Is the process top down or collaborative? In addition, who decides whether we are maintaining compliance with the strategic plan? His concern is that without knowing these things, we run the risk of weakening faculty governance.

Prof Epstein brought the Council’s attention to the first paragraph of The Faculty Handbook which clarifies that faculty must have a role in this process. In addition Prof Epstein asked if the Council might need to consider an additional motion regarding a specific, direct explanation for shifting financial support from the academic division to other divisions within the university.

Prof Dallavalle noted that Prof Scheraga listed a series of behaviors observed over the course of BC meetings. She asked the Council if any members possessed information that might contradict Prof Scheraga’s interpretation. Nobody possessed any such information.

Prof Huntley shared his concern that we do not have a recorded account of how or why the financial status of the university has been impacted. He wonders how we can begin the process of developing a strategic plan without this information.

SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J. reminded the Council that we have a strategic plan with 3 goals that we have made progress on. In addition, he pointed out that over the past 4 years progress has been made in shared governance within the academic division. He also indicated that no money has been taken from the academic affairs division to be used elsewhere. His perception is that the increase in costs is the result of the large debt the university has assumed and the increase in the amount of financial aid granted. Finally he noted that net tuition revenue has gone up.
Prof Scheraga suggested that we could amend the motion to include explicitly requiring collaboration with faculty and staff in the development of the strategic plan. He added that a strategic plan can function as a benchmark that will provide the budget committee with a way to assess expenditures against what is deemed strategically consistent.

Prof Dennin noted that it seems that numbers are just plugged in with no real thought and that often the data are incorrect.

**AMENDED MOTION (Dallavalle/Lane):** The faculty calls on the President to join with the Fairfield University community in the development of a written, formal, and comprehensive strategic plan reflecting both a five year and ten year vision for the institution. The document thus generated will reflect professionally accepted format and content guidelines for institutions of higher education. The document will also incorporate best practices assessment mechanisms across all levels and all divisions of the University. It is thus understood that all of the content of this document will span all divisions, without exception, across the institution.

**MOTION TO AMEND ORIGINAL MOTION PASSES:** 12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

Discussion of amended motion:

Prof He spoke in favor of the motion, suggesting that we have lacked a strategic vision.

Prof Huntley spoke in favor of the motion. He stated that, “to do otherwise would be striving for mediocrity.”

**AMENDED MOTION PASSES:** 12 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

d. – Procedures governing faculty searches.

SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J. reported that he has been working to eliminate inconsistencies in the university-wide procedures governing faculty search committees. His purpose is to give some structure to tenure track searches to maximize the likelihood of diverse pools of qualified applicants, as well as align appropriately with the *Journal of Record* and other campus initiatives.

Prof. Rakowitz noted that the Council may wish to form a subcommittee to review the edited procedures.
Prof. Lane suggested that these procedures should be presented to university counsel.

**MOTION (Rakowitz/Epstein):** The executive committee of the Academic Council will form a subcommittee to review the newly edited procedures for faculty search committees.

Discussion:

Prof Dennin asked where this information would ultimately reside.

SVPAA Fitzgerald, S.J. suggested that it be placed at the end of the *Journal of Record*.

**MOTION PASSED:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

**MOTION (Epstein/Rakowitz):** To reorder the meeting agenda to move to 7i.

**MOTION PASSED:** 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

**7.i. Proposal for VPA Concentration in Arts Administration**

Prof. Marice Rose presented a proposal for a new program, Visual Arts Administration Concentration, to be offered within the Art History major in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts.

Prof. Rose indicated that this concentration offers graduates a unique opportunity that expands beyond museum theory to include learning experiences incorporating for-profit models. This has been done with the cooperation of DSB faculty.

Discussion:

Prof Rakowitz noted that the program requirements should be clarified.

**MOTION (Fitzgerald/Rafalski):** To accept this program proposal.

**MOTION PASSES:** 10 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

**MOTION (Lane/Dennin):** To recess the meeting.

**MOTION:** Passes unanimously.

Meeting recessed at 5:05

Respectfully Submitted,

Ginny Kelly