MINUTES
ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, December 18th, 2013 (Reconvening from December 9, 2013)
1:30pm CNS 200

Present: Professors Joe Dennin, Bob Epstein, Don Greenberg, Shannon Harding, James He, Chris Huntley, Ginny Kelly, Nikki Lee-Wingate, Irene Mulvey (AC Executive Secretary), Elizabeth Petrino, Shawn Rafalski (AC Chair), Susan Lawlor (Secretary of the General Faculty), L. Kraig Steffen, and John Thiel. Administrators: Deans Bruce Berdanier and Lynn Babington; SVPAA Paul Fitzgerald SJ.

Regrets: Professors David Downie, Alison Kris, Wendy Kohli, and Martin Nguyen; Dean Robbin Crabtree.

Chair Rafalski called the meeting to order at 1:33pm.

The December 9, 2013 meeting of the Academic Council reconvened to discuss one agenda item.


An Academic Council subcommittee was charged to draft a response to EVP Lawlor’s Strategic Plan Presentation to the Council on 12/2/2013. Prof. Mulvey circulated a memo from the subcommittee addressing two specific items: (1) the Steering Committee and (2) the Potential List of Teams (with a suggestion that the Steering Committee work to refine these). Prof. Mulvey opened the discussion, suggesting that this memo be sent to President von Arx and EVP Lawlor.

SVPAA Fitzgerald mentioned that he was unable to make the subcommittee meeting, but he expressed his support of the memo with minor grammatical changes. He also suggested that the composition of the Steering Committee should mimic the structure of recent search committees for Provost and Deans (i.e. 7 administrators and 7 faculty). He proposed that the Academic Council should elect a pool of representatives from which the President would select; rather than electing the members outright. For example, electing a pool of 8 faculty from which the President would appoint 7.

Prof Mulvey stated that the drafting committee had envisioned a different composition, with 5 deans, 5 administrators, and 6 faculty. In addition, Prof. Mulvey spoke to the role of elected vs. appointed faculty members, saying that she would not be comfortable suggesting that the representatives are not elected by the Council, because the representatives would only be legitimate if we elected them. She expressed concern that this would set an unfortunate precedent.

Professor Thiel and Prof. Rakowitz spoke in favor of electing the faculty representatives, and having the President appoint them to the Steering Committee.

Dean Babington expressed concern that this plan should include more than just academic endeavors; and that we should be mindful of including administrators from different areas to be part of the process. Likewise, Prof. Huntley spoke about the importance of having the right voices at the table to be a part of the conversation.

MOTION: that AC approves the document and authorizes the Executive Committee to send it to any individuals within the university community that the Executive committee thinks are appropriate. (Greenberg/Lee-Wingate)
An revision to the document was suggested:

MOTION to revise the document as follows: To replace “As is mandated by the Faculty Handbook for search committees for certain senior academic administrators, the Council should be responsible for arranging faculty membership on the Steering Committee.” With “In order for the faculty to be legitimately represented, the Council should elect their representatives.”

(Mulvey/Rakowitz)

MOTION to revise the document PASSED: 14-0-0.

The conversation returned to the discussion of the original motion.

Prof. Greenberg spoke in support of the memo in principle, stating that we want to assert the faculty’s position and ensure that faculty represents the majority.

Prof. Epstein spoke in support of having a large amount of faculty representation, and expressed concern that while many members of the community should have a voice, they may have difficulty standing up to the administration. He expressed hope that staff members would feel free to disagree or be able to question and challenge the administration when the need arises.

SVPAA Fitzgerald stated that so far every meeting with EVP Lawlor suggests that this will be an inclusive process, and that the Steering Committee will be a coordinating committee that will direct teams of talented people from across the university. He said that we should not be focusing on the Steering Committee, but rather on changes to the list of teams; combining some of the initiatives and ensuring that the language is consistent with Fairfield’s language.

Based on this discussion, a second amendment was proposed:

MOTION TO revise the document: To delete the word “academic” in “4 senior academic administrators” in paragraph 5.

(Mulvey/Fitzgerald)

MOTION to revise the document PASSED: 14-0-0

Prof. Epstein asked for clarification about the new composition of the Steering Committee. Prof. Rafalski explained that in addition to 6 faculty, 4-5 deans, and 4-5 administrators, the committee will include 2 students and 2 alumni.

Another (third) amendment was proposed to clarify the members of the Steering Committee.

MOTION TO revise the document: After the dash in the first sentence in the second to last paragraph, put “athletics, advancement, student affairs, marketing and communication, finance, human resources, etc.,” in place of “athletics, advancement, student services, administration”.

(Fitzgerald/Mulvey)

MOTION to revise the document PASSED: 14-0-0

Prof. Epstein expressed some confusion about the role of students and alumni; for example, in theory, alumni could be faculty members. However, he also stated that the document was moving in a direction that we could support.

Prof. Lee-Wingate questioned whether the Steering Committee would coordinate things or if it would provide order and oversight in how things are done. SVPAA responded by saying that the Academic Council should have some input into the teams and topics as well, because many of the potential teams listed for the Strategic Plan include academics. Prof. Mulvey agreed.
Prof. Thiel stated that the memo makes a strong statement that the first job of Steering Committee is to articulate the goals for Fairfield. He also agreed that the academic division should have a say in the Steering Committee goals and expressed hope that the Academic Council will play an advisory role.

Prof Steffen questioned whether we should rewrite the response in light of new information about the Steering Committee composition presented earlier in the morning. Prof. Rakowitz suggested that the current response was appropriate. Prof. Greenberg also spoke in support of the memo, stating that with the time constraints, the amended document captures the will of the faculty very well.

Prof. He added that the tone should be clear about our views.

After much discussion, the Council returned to the motion to approve the document...

**MOTION:** that AC approves the document (as revised) and authorizes the Executive Committee to send it to any individuals within the university community that the Executive committee thinks are appropriate.

(Greenberg/Lee-Wingate)

**MOTION PASSED:** 14-0-0

**MOTION** to adjourn (Rakowitz/Mulvey) approved unanimously at 2:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Harding