Faculty Members Present: Professors Behre, Bhattacharya, Boquet, Crawford, Epstein, Klug, Kris, Lane, McDermott, Preli, Rakowitz, Rusu, Smith, Strauss, Weiss, Yarrington
Administrators Present: Babington, Berdanier, Gibson, Hannafin, Kazer, Williams
Observer: Jackie Kremer
Student Observer: Megan Benson
Guests: Professors Harding (7b), McFadden (7d), Staecker (7c)
Regrets: Professors Downie and Steffen

1. Presidential courtesy

Postponed until next meeting.

2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty

Nothing to report

3. Report from the Executive Secretary

Minutes from the February 1, 2016 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

Motion to approve (Lane/Weiss): approved unanimously with 1 abstention

Prof. Rusu presented a report from Chris Huntley (ongoing item #1) showing varsity athletic events scheduled during final exam week. Prof. Lane noted that the baseball team has a regularly scheduled game during finals week which is a violation of the Journal of Record. He asked if the provost was aware of this. Prof. Strauss suggested revisiting the question once the provost arrives at the meeting.

7. New business

7a. Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees: report on December meeting, preparation for March meeting

Prof. Behre gave a brief overview of the Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees December meeting with the Academic Affairs subcommittee of the Board. She reported that the conversation revolved around enrollment and staffing which is a problem that needs attention. She said that Provost Babington presented data showing that we have more full-time faculty than ever but these are not necessarily tenure-track faculty. Prof. Behre reported that Prof. Dallavalle gave a presentation at the Board meeting and then led a discussion related to mission and identity.
Prof. Behre then presented some concerns she has related to faculty participation at meetings with the Board. She said that the Committee on Conference’s time with the Board is very limited and is often taken up with presentations, not substantive discussions. In addition, the meetings in New York City are a logistical problem for faculty. This year Provost Babington has offered travel funding but it is difficult for faculty to get to the New York City meeting because of teaching schedules. Prof. Behre acknowledged that the hour with the Academic Affairs subcommittee was hard won and that cultivating a positive relationship with the Board is important and she is sympathetic to that but feels that time is limited and constrained. Prof. Preli noted that this isn’t the first time we’ve had the conversation that this time is overscheduled. Prof. Lane said that it used to be a 1.5 hour meeting with half devoted to the provost and half to faculty. He said that the pattern changed during the last SVPAA’s administration. Provost Babington noted that for the past couple of meetings, she hasn’t done any presentations. Prof. Behre replied that there were presentations by others, including touring classrooms and Prof. Dalavalle’s presentation. Provost Babington replied that these are presentations that the Board members requested and noted that the only thing on the April agenda is a conversation on shared goals. She said that these shared goals were developed in partnership between the Board and the faculty. Provost Babington said that she tries hard to make sure there is enough time but it is a difficult balance.

Prof. Rakowitz reminded the Council that one of our roles is to send items to the Committee on Conference with the Board for discussion with the Board. For example, over the past 5 years, the percentage of all full-time teaching faculty who are tenure-track has fallen from 91% to 85%. Is that a staffing conversation we should be having? Prof. Behre said they’d love to have some direction from the Council. Prof. Crawford agreed that staffing is clearly an issue, but so are other things that we continue to bring up, including a multi-year MOU and healthcare concerns. Prof. Lane said that the Committee on Conference should bring up the issue of the size of the undergraduate population. He said that Fairfield 2020 changed the enrollment goal but the faculty haven’t voted on it or addressed it which brings up huge issues. There are implications for resources and faculty; it needs to be strategic. Prof. Rakowitz said she shares the concern at how the number was arrived at and the lack of faculty involvement. She is not sure that all of the issues have been thought through. She added that she doesn’t want to ask the Committee on Conference to address salary and benefits because that is the purview of the Faculty Salary Committee. Prof. Epstein said that he doesn’t like the fact that every year the BOT hears the negative related to salary and benefits. He noted that those issues do have an impact on mission. He said that in the context of the discussions going on in the salary committee, we have to set priorities consistent with our mission for education not the business model. For example, much of the fundraising for the capital campaign was originally to be for the general endowment in support of the education mission. Now, there has been a shift with more of the funding going towards new buildings. If there is a shift in funding, this affects mission. Prof. Epstein said he thinks we should be discussing this with the Board. Prof. Behre asked how Prof. Epstein would like these issues presented. Prof. Epstein replied that he wasn’t sure but that he thinks we need to think more about how to have these
conversations. Prof. Behre asked whether there could be a more formal way to communicate information from the Academic Council to the Committee on Conference to make sure these issues get raised. Prof. McDermott said that from a business model sense, everything the Board is doing makes perfect sense if the goal is to maximize profit but that is not what we are about. Prof. Epstein asked whether it is a good business model if the goals are quality. Prof. Lane pointed out that the share of the operating budget that goes to what we’d call education has had a long decline. Prof. Boquet suggested framing this discussion around the concept of 3 pillars: 1) The priorities of Fairfield 2020 which sets the future of the University; 2) The Fairfield Rising campaign which determines what we are raising money for, and how has it shifted; and 3) the way in which these two things are aligned with the budget priorities. She continued that if we set it up like this, then the conversation is less about salary negotiations and more about the overall tension between priorities and funds.

Prof. Lane suggested that the Academic Council form a subcommittee that would work with the Committee on Conference with the Board to decide which issues to bring forward for discussion. Prof. Bhattacharya concurred saying that we want to make sure the Board sees the connections between the issues raised in the discussion today. Dean Williams voiced his support for the idea. Prof. Behre agreed saying that it would present a more unified voice from the faculty. She said that at this point, committee members are reluctant to bring forward individual issues/ideas that may not be shared by others.

Motion (Lane/Strauss): That the Academic Council form a subcommittee of three people to prepare the Academic Council for its meetings with the Committee on Conference with the Board. Passed unanimously.

Prof. Lane volunteered to chair the subcommittee. Prof. McDermott volunteered to serve. Prof. Lane will solicit volunteers for the 3rd position. Prof. Behre agreed to communicate with the subcommittee in advance of the March meeting with the Board of Trustees.

**7b. Proposal for Concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience (attachment)**

Prof. Harding presented the proposal from the Psychology department. Briefly, there is a minor in Behavioral Neuroscience that is not available to Psychology majors because of course overlap. There is interest among Psychology majors and so they designed a concentration to have the same set of classes as the minor.

Prof. Lane noted that the EPC approved this proposal quickly and that it is one of the best proposals he’s ever seen. Prof. Crawford said that he can’t see any objections since it is simply a change in terminology. Prof. Bhattacharya asked if there are any other concentrations available to Psychology majors. Prof. Harding answered no, that this was a way for a student to show an interest in
behavioral neuroscience on their transcript. Prof. Bhattacharya noted that there are multiple concentrations in management and there is always a question of overlap among classes and how they should double count. Prof. Epstein asked whether there were any biology requirements for the Psychology major. Prof. Harding said no, and that is one reason why behavioral neuroscience is not a major. A major in behavioral neuroscience would have to have more biology and chemistry. She noted that students who pursue the B.S. in Psychology take biology and chemistry.

**Motion (Rakowitz/Yarrington): To approve the Concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience for Psychology majors. Passed Unanimously.**

**7c. Proposal to change procedures for electing faculty to Handbook committees (attachment)**

Prof. Staecker presented a proposal from the Committee on Committees to change from a plurality to an approval voting system for electing faculty members to committees. Prof. Staecker explained that he has studied the mathematics of voting and thinks an approval system is a better system given that we typically have more than 2 good candidates on the ballot. He said plurality voting works well when there are only 2 candidates but that strange things happen when more than 2. Prof. Staecker explained that in an approval system, voters vote for all candidates they approve of rather than voting for the best candidate. It allows voters to voice support for multiple candidates. For example, rather than choosing between a junior colleague who needs a committee assignment and a respected senior colleague, approval voting allows you to vote for both. He said that approval voting tends to favor consensus candidates rather than extreme candidates which is something we should consider.

Prof. Preli said that in a small school you may rally votes to support a junior colleague who needs to get on a committee. She asked whether an approval system would make it more difficult for junior colleagues to be elected. Prof. Steecker said that people from small schools already have an uphill battle in the plurality system and the approval system should be no worse. Prof. Staecker also noted that if you want to elect an outsider candidate, you can withhold approval of the other candidates. Prof. McDermott asked if you are gaming it and trying to get someone elected, wouldn’t this degrade to plurality. He said that if we all game the system, it would be the same as it is now. Prof. Staecker agreed but said that lots of people won’t do this. Dean Hannafin asked whether the approval system is more susceptible to gaming than the plurality system. Prof. Staecker said no. Prof. Strauss asked what would happen if the opposite occurs, that is, if everyone checks off everyone. She asked whether there would be more ties. Prof. Staecker said that it is not a good idea to vote for everyone. That is the same as voting for no one. He said there won’t be more ties. Prof. Yarrington asked whether it would take more time to count the votes. Prof. Staecker replied that he doesn’t think so. Prof. Lane said he agrees with Prof. McDermott’s concern. He said that bullet voting can change the average and he is worried about gaming this system. Prof. Staecker said that people are gaming the system now but we just don’t think of it that way. He said that the tricks
of gaming the system are different for approval vs plurality. Prof. Bhattacharya noted that if someone has decided that they are only going to vote for their department then they will do this no matter what the system. Dean Williams said that he appreciates the committee looking out for junior faculty because this is an issue. He also complimented Prof. Staeker on his clear discussion and explanation of the approval system. Prof. Crawford said that if we want to protect junior faculty and small schools, we need to designate spots for them on committees. Prof. Lane asked whether we can change the rules on voting. Prof. Rakowitz said that rules related to voting system are not discussed anywhere in the governance documents. She said that we can change the system and make a presentation to the General Faculty or we could ask them to vote. She said that it is Academic Council’s call as to whether the General Faculty needs to vote. Prof. Strauss suggested that the Council table the issue until the April meeting for a more extensive discussion. There was consensus to table.

7d. Proposals for Core Curriculum Revision (attachment)

Prof. Lane asked for a point of information. He asked why the proposal for core curriculum revision wasn’t presented to the EPC since resources are clearly needed. Prof. Epstein responded that he (as Director of the Core) is planning to come to the EPC with a strategic plan but he can’t do that until we know what the core will look like and what resources are needed.

Prof. McFadden then presented a proposal from the UCC for core curriculum revision. He said that it is similar to the proposal submitted to UCC by the Core Advisory Council. Prof. McFadden said that UCC made 3 changes leading to a 48 credit core with 10 courses in Tier I and 6 courses in Tier II. He said that the UCC proposal adds a Visual and Performing Arts course and a Natural Science course to Tier I and allows AP credit to substitute for courses in either Tier I or Tier II.

Prof. McFadden then explained the UCC’s rationale for the changes. He said that they felt that all Jesuit core curriculums should include a VPA course. He said that the addition of a Natural Science courses was a direct response from science, engineering and nursing departments that Natural Science important component of core. He said that the UCC thought that since it is ok to use AP credits to exempt from Tier II then it should be ok for Tier I as well.

Prof. Bhattacharya asked how diversity courses fit into this proposal. Prof. McFadden said that diversity courses are not part of the core but are graduation requirements. Prof. Boquet asked about the process that led the UCC to this proposal. She said that the core task force had worked on a proposal for a long time with input from various sectors. That task force handed a proposal off to the Director of the Core and a Core Advisory Council. Prof. Boquet expressed surprise to see a changed proposal from the UCC. Her understanding was that the various handbook committees were going to provide feedback which could be incorporated by the Core Advisory Council. Prof. McFadden said that the UCC is in charge of core curriculum and the UCC rejected the Core Advisory Council proposal. He said that the UCC made amendments based
on feedback because there were strong feelings within UCC that some things needed to be changed. Prof. Lane responded that the General Faculty is in charge of the core curriculum and noted that the last time there was a change, it went directly to the General Faculty. He suggested that both proposals (the Core Advisory Council and the UCC proposal) be brought to the General Faculty.

Prof. Epstein asked why the UCC did not express their concerns to the bodies bringing forth the proposal. He said there are elements in the revised proposal that are not supported by the Core Advisory Council and that the changes do not seem minimal to the Core Advisory Council. Prof. Epstein said that the Core Advisory Council would have appreciated the chance to revise or consider UCC’s concerns before their proposal was voted down by the UCC. Prof. Epstein said that the UCC proposal does not add a Natural Science course; it simply moves a Natural Science course from Tier II to Tier I. He also questioned the decision related to AP exemptions saying that if AP credit can be used to exempt course from Tier I than there is no advantage for a course to be placed in Tier I. Prof. McFadden said that Prof. Epstein had a fair point and that the UCC did not discuss that issue. Prof. Epstein noted that the AP issue was one of many things that we could have discussed if we’d talked about this.

Prof. Epstein said that one of the founding principles for the core revision team was that all undergraduate students have the same core curriculum. He said that it was not clear that engineering students could do a 48 credit core. Dean Berdanier said that it depends on how course are counted and that the UCC proposal may work if the CAD course is counted as VPA. Prof. Kris said that there are some concerns that nursing students could not complete a 16 course core. Provost Babington asked whether this is the right forum to talk about implementation. Prof. Epstein said no, but these are critical questions that should have been discussed. He said that his main concern is that the Core Advisory Council did not have the chance to discuss the changes the UCC is proposing.

Prof. Bhattacharya asked whether the UCC considered Study Abroad. Prof. McFadden replied no.

Motion (Boquet/Lane): The Academic Council directs the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to communicate its concerns with the submitted Core revision model directly to the Core Director and the Core Advisory Council and to reconsider the proposal with any changes or revisions offered by that body

Provost Babington spoke in favor of the motion. She noted that the revised proposal passed UCC by 9 to 7 so there was room for discussion.

Prof. Rakowitz spoke in favor of the motion. She said that while it is true that any committee has the right to edit a proposal, the core revision proposal is negotiated document. She noted that the General Faculty doesn’t vote to amend the MOU because it doesn't make sense to amend a negotiated document.
Prof. Weiss said that she doesn’t understand why the EPC isn’t involved. Prof. Epstein said that the EPC will be involved but doesn’t make sense until we know what core will look like. He noted that we also want to address the issue of diversity courses. It is an issue that keeps coming up and it is important. Prof. Epstein said that if the core is revised, he will come to UCC and suggest a revision to the diversity requirement so that it fits better with the core.

Prof. Rusu requested that the Core Advisory Council include members from all schools. Prof. Epstein asked if it would be ok if instead, the council communicates to all schools at each step. Profs. Rusu/Strauss/Bhattacharya expressed concern that this model hasn’t worked so far. Prof. Epstein said he will bring more members from outside the college onto the council.

Prof. Crawford spoke in favor of the motion. He noted that the core revision process has been going on for 2 years and that much has been discussed. He said it must be frustrating to those involved when someone changes something without considering consequences.

Dean Williams agreed with Prof. Crawford and said it sets a dangerous precedent if major changes can be made at this point in process.

Prof. Boquet said that there needs to be some sense of how ad hoc and standing committees interact with our governance structures. She noted that this is not the only current example where there is some question about how and where different parallel structures meet.

Prof. McDermott spoke in favor of the motion but said that he would like the language of the motion to be such that it doesn’t diminish the importance of the work of the UCC.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn (Rusu/Strauss). Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Klug