

The New School University Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes

When: Tuesday, March 2, 2010, 8:30 am – 10:00 am

Where: 66 West 12th Street, Orozco Room, Rm. 712

Minutes from the ninth session of the 2009-10 Senate – Senators Only/Closed Session.

Chaired by Alan McGowan.

Present:

Members:

Elaine Abelson, Co-Chair, NSSR
Ken Stevens, Co-Chair, Parsons
Alan McGowan, Co-Chair, Lang
Shoshanah Goldberg, Secretary, Milano
Andrew Arato, NSSR
Deidre Boyle, NSGS
Richard Boukas, Jazz
Alexandra Chasin, Lang
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Stefania de Kennessy, Lang
Mara Kurtz, Parsons
David J. Lewis, Parsons
David Loeb, Mannes
Christopher Shinn, Drama
Barbara Siegel, Parsons
Ju-Ying Song, Mannes
Nidhi Srinivas, Milano
Howard Steele, NSSR
Gary Vena, Drama
Aleksandra Wagner, NSGS
Peter Wheelwright, Parsons
Reggie Workman, Jazz
I-Hsien Wu, NSGS

Ex Officio:

Tim Marshall, Provost

Guests:

Steve Bloom, Board of Trustees
Bevis Longstreth, Board of Trustees
Jennifer Bol, SpencerStuart Consulting

Welcome:

The meeting was opened by Alan McGowan at 8:30 am. He welcomed the members of the Board's President Search Committee and Jennifer Bol from the executive search firm SpencerStuart, who attended the Senate meeting to discuss the search for a new President.

Discussion with members of the President Search Committee and the executive search firm, SpencerStuart Consulting:

Jennifer Bol from SpencerStuart Consulting updated the Senate on the current presidential search. The consulting firm is in the process of gathering information about major challenges and opportunities from students, faculty, and other stakeholders within The New School (TNS) in order to assess the needs of the school and its stakeholders. The firm, together with the Search Committee, will create a position specification and develop a search strategy based on the specifications. The goal is to have a specification statement by early April. According to Bol, presidential searches typically take six to seven months. She is expecting the search for a new TNS President to take approximately six months, depending on the stakeholder involvement and the progress made during the summer months. Bol sees stakeholder involvement as a vital tool in the presidential search process in order to be able to draft a specification that is representative for TNS and to have meaningful conversations with potential job candidates.

Bol and the Search Committee members addressed a number of questions from the Senate regarding the search process. The Senate asked about the specific challenges in a presidential search for organizations like TNS. In Bol's experience, not many people would be willing and qualified for such a high profile job. She emphasized the fact that a presidential candidate has to have a strong managerial and leadership background in order to be qualified for the position.

A question was raised about transparency when speaking with job candidates concerning the fact that the current President is facing a vote of no confidence,. Bol confirmed that the consulting firm seeks to create an honest and transparent conversation with all candidates. SpencerStuart will educate potential candidates about the school in an open and honest dialogue to ensure that all potential candidates have a clear understanding of the school, and vice versa. Bol emphasized the role of openness and transparency throughout the entire search process. For all stakeholders, including alumni, a website will provide updates about the search process as well as an opportunity for stakeholders to submit comments and suggestions. The website will include two email addresses:

1. An email address that stakeholders can use to submit questions and comments to the Search Committee
2. A second email address to contact the search firm directly. This email can be used for direct nominations of potential job candidates:
newschool@spencerstuart.com.

The question was raised if/how the stakeholder focus groups discussed at the last meeting would be integrated in the search process. Bevis Longstreth clarified that the focus groups are different from the work of the executive search firm. The focus groups, held by the consulting group CFAR (Center for Applied Research), are being held throughout the entire university. Although this research is a different, parallel process initiated by the Board of Trustees, information gathered from those focus groups will be used to inform the Search Committee and outcomes will be incorporated into the presidential search.

The Senate reinforced the uniqueness of The New School regarding its history, culture, and structure. The diversity among the different schools implies diverse needs and procedures. Senate members believe that a new President needs to have sensitivity to, and an understanding of institutional differences to be able to lead the entire school successfully. She/he also has to leverage and incorporate the increasing role of technology in educational settings and maximize the talents of the various divisions within the whole school. Furthermore, it was stated that she/he has to be open to new ideas and be willing to participate in an ongoing learning process.

The Senate sees academic background and experience as crucial qualifications. The New School and its diversity in academic strategies need a leader with a strong scholarly record, as well as administrative experience, in the field of higher education. Moreover, Senate members would like to see in a new President who engages in consensus building and change making, and who is willing to bring different stakeholders to the table. These qualities are seen as particularly important given the current restructuring process of the school, and the change processes the school is undergoing. Instead of trying to maintain power, a new President should use his/her power to build relationships that are in the best interests of the whole university.

Other characteristics and skills Senate members would like to see in a new President are relationship building (including full-time and part-time faculty, board, donors, students, alumni, administrators, and policy makers), well-developed fundraising and financial skills, a strong understanding of vision, the ability to inspire people, the ability to listen and create safe environment of openness and honesty, understanding and fostering diversity, and the willingness to engage in moral questions.

Remarks from the Provost:

Provost Marshall joined the Senate to lead a discussion on the restructuring of the University and the development of an academic plan.

Restructuring of the University:

A large session regarding the ongoing restructuring process was held on Monday, March 1, 2010, to start creating a coherent structure around all divisions of TNS, incorporating the many restructuring initiatives within and across divisions, which currently are in process. The Provost stated the importance of integrating the various plans and proposals and bringing together the individual pieces to be able to create a coherent and compelling program structure. Findings from the meeting include consensus around the notion that Urban and Environmental Studies should be integrated with Milano and

GPIA, and to connect Creative Writing, Language Studies, and Media Studies. Furthermore, the discussion addressed the restructuring plans concerning an undergraduate division, including the programs that are currently in place, and making them more cohesive. The Provost stressed the positive outcomes of the restructuring processes and emphasised the goal of creating a stronger foundation to support growth and range of academic work and extend the academic mission. The Senate acknowledged the opportunity for the existing undergraduate programs to refine their self-understanding and to strengthen the various divisions through the creation of strong and collaborative relationships, if a fair and coherent structure was set into place. A concern was raised that some of the school's integration efforts might create "super-divisions"; large and strong divisions that would create imbalances within the entire school. The Provost affirmed that the goal was to create equally strong and balanced mid-size divisions.

Development of an Academic Plan

The Provost outlined seven main themes of an academic plan, which had been discussed in a recent meeting. He hopes to have a basic outline of an academic plan by end of the year. The discussed themes include curriculum issues, support, and strengthening of schools and programs, investment in the future of faculty part-and fulltime, e.g. through research support, support for students and administrators through the opening of programs and the creation of information systems; social justice and diversity issues; strengthening of governance, including faculty governance; international issues, including study abroad programs and the internationalization of TNS; and enhancing academic technology. It was requested that a synopsis of these themes be emailed to the Senate for review. The Provost stated a document should be completed and sent out within one week.

Other Remarks:

Alan McGowan apologized for the fact that there was not time for committee reports, especially for the discussion and vote on the proposal from the Governance Committee concerning part-time involvement. The proposal will be discussed at the next Senate meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the last Senate meeting, held on February 2, 2010, were unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 am.