The New School University Faculty Senate (UFS)

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 12, 2010, 8:30 am – 10:00 am
66 West 12th Street, Orozco Room, Rm. 712

Minutes from the second session of the 2010-11 Senate – Senators-Only/Closed Session. Chaired by Alexandra Chasin.

Present:
Alexandra Chasin, Co-Chair, Lang
Nidhi Srinivas, Co-Chair, Milano
Ken Stevens, Co-Chair, Parsons
Shoshanah Goldberg, Secretary, Milano
Elaine Abelson, NSSR
Richard Boukas, Jazz
Peter Eisinger, Milano
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Paul Hardart, NSGS
Mara Kurtz, Parsons
David Lewis, Parsons
David Loeb, Mannes
Arien Mack, NSSR
David Marcinkowski, NSGS
Christopher Shinn, Drama
Ju-Ying Song, Mannes
Chris Stover, Jazz
Paula Stuttman, NSGS
Howard Steele, NSSR
Gary Vena, Drama
Bhawani Venkataraman, Lang
Aleksandra Wagner, NSGS
Susan Yelavich, Parsons

Introduction and approval of minutes of the September 14 meeting:
The meeting was opened at 8:33 am by Alexandra Chasin. The minutes of the September 14 meeting were approved without objection, with one abstention.

Statement of charges and reports from Standing Committees:
Alexandra Chasin asked the Committee Chairs to present the statement of charges, mission, and goals of the Standing Committees:

Faculty Affairs Committee:
Aleksandra Wagner (NSGS) is chairing the Faculty Affairs Committee. Other Committee members include Elaine Abelson (NSSR), Susan Yelavich (Parsons), Chris Shinn (Drama), and David Loeb (Mannes).

Aleksandra Wagner pointed out the diverse representation of Senators from different divisions of The New School, which was important to the work of this Committee. She stated that the committee currently is in the process of formulating an official statement of charges. The Committee did not have a chance to meet since the first University Faculty Senate meeting. Meetings will be held on a regular basis, starting Tuesday, October 26 from 8:30-10:00 am.

One of the major charges of this Committee will be the development of workload standards across the University's divisions. It was pointed out that a University-wide Faculty Handbook Committee exists, which is led by Jim Miller, Special Advisor to the Provost on the Full-Time Faculty Handbook. Aleksandra Wagner has been asked to join this University-wide Committee. Several other Senators, who are currently not serving on the Faculty Affairs Committee, are also members of that University-wide Committee, including Co-Chair Ken Stevens. The Faculty Handbook Committee has met once since the beginning of the fall semester and two additional meetings are scheduled during this semester. The Faculty Affairs Committee inquired about the way in which the Senate would like to receive reports from the University-wide Committee meetings and asked for advice regarding the reporting structure, given the multiple ways of Senator representation on the different Committees.

It was remarked that the development of workload standards was an ambitious process, as it involved the engagement of diverse constituents both within and across divisions. It was reported that Parsons is currently the only division of the New School that has documented statements of workload. Ken Stevens stated that it took the division two years to develop these statements, given the complexity of this issue. At Parsons, subcommittees of a diverse range of faculty members with different teaching styles and structures, such as studio, lecture, seminar, etc., had been engaged to inform the development of fair workload standards. It was reported that Jim Miller saw the engagement of diverse constituents as crucial for a fair and equitable development of workload standards.

While the creation of a workload-specifying document was recognized as a very ambitious project, given the diverse teaching styles and structures both within and across the divisions, the Faculty Affairs Committee stated it was their goal to create such a document by the end of the academic year.

A comment was made that it was important for all UFS Standing Committees to be informed about the work of other University-wide Committees, especially of those that addressed issues similar and/or related to the charges of the Standing Committees. It was suggested that the UFS Committees should be represented on related University-wide Committees and that this representation should be taken into consideration when scheduling individual Committee meetings. Examples mentioned included the Infrastructure Committee/Academic Planning Committee being represented on the University Facilities Committee (UFC) and on the existing technology committee (P3).

The discussion was brought back to the question raised earlier about the nature of the reporting structure, given the potential overlap of the Senate Committees with other University Committees. It was suggested to draft reports of those meetings, bullet pointing the major issues raised, and distributing the drafts to Committee members for review prior to sharing the reports with the Senate.

Governance Committee:

Rose Rejouis (Lang; absent) is chairing the Governance Committee. Other Committee members include Paula Stuttman (NSGS), Paul Hardart (NSGS), and Steven Kennedy (Parsons; absent).

A major charge of this Committee is the revisions of the bylaws. The Committee is in the process of examining the current bylaws. One issue the Committee is addressing is the representation of the Jazz division on the Faculty Senate. Even though the current bylaws do allow for a first-year full-time faculty member to serve on the Senate, the Committee proposed a motion to accept Chris Stover, first-year full-time faculty member at The New School for Jazz, as a Senator without changing the bylaws accordingly. A comment was made that it was important for the governance structure of the Jazz division requires having one full-time and one part-time faculty representative on the University Faculty Senate. Furthermore, it was suggested that in the case of a Senator stepping down in the middle of a term, s/he would be represented by someone of equal part-time or full-time status. It was inquired whether this matter should be added to the bylaws. A comment was made that this issue might represent a case of a potential tension between a divisional governance structure and the Senate's governance structure. Furthermore, it was remarked that this issue may not have to be added to the bylaws, as the current bylaws state that it was up to the divisions to determine their rules and regulations for nominating alternate Senators. It was pointed out that Chris Stover has not been appointed as an alternate, but as a full Senator, starting his two-year term this fall semester.

The motion to accept Chris Stover's membership on the University Faculty Senate was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Loeb, former Chair of the Governance Committee, offered to share the records of last year's Government Committee work regarding the bylaws with the current Committee members.

A suggestion was made that the Governance Committee also examined a potential revision of the bylaws addressing the discussion around the staggering of appointments of Co-Chairs. The staggering of Co-Chair assignments is currently not reflected in the bylaws. In this context, it was reiterated that under the current bylaws, Senators are not allowed to be elected as Co-Chair in their first year on the Senate.

Another issue raised was the effect of the restructuring process of the current NSGS/GPIA/Milano divisions on their representation on the University Faculty Senate. The Governance Committee is currently looking into this matter. The Committee is also reviewing the role of officers. In closing their report, the Committee members encouraged the Senators to provide input on any other issues they would like see explored by this Committee.

Infrastructure Committee/Academic Planning Committee:

David Lewis (Parsons) is chairing this Committee. Other Committee members include Richard Boukas (Jazz), Peter Eisinger (Milano), David Marcinkowski (NSGS), Christopher Shinn (Drama), Andrew Arato (NSSR; absent), Ju-Ying Song (Mannes), and Bhawani Venkataraman (Lang).

The Committee's statement of charges has not been formalized yet. The proposed statement of charges is as follows: "The Infrastructure Committee/Academic Planning Committee is charged with examining, reporting, and advising on issues pertaining to faculty relations to infrastructure, digital and physical, at The New School."

The Committee met on October 5 to talk about their goals for this academic year. Their work falls into two major categories, (1) physical and (2) digital infrastructure.

(1) Physical Infrastructure:

The Committee's involvement in the University-wide University Facilities Committee (UFC) was pointed out. David Marcinkowski and David J. Lewis are members of the UFC. The UFC will meet on October 21 to discuss the furniture equipment of the new University Center. At that meeting, architects will present the furniture to the Committee. It was affirmed that the furniture decisions were made in direct response to comments from the Senate on the arrangements of the spaces. The minutes of the UFC meeting will be available on The New School's website at http://www.newschool.edu/luminis/ufc.html.

The UFC plans to turn an existing classroom on campus into a sample room where interested community members can view and test the new room equipment.

Other issues related to physical infrastructure include the examination of other space-planning projects, such as the proposed student center at 90 Fifth Avenue. The proposed space is planned to provide quiet space, social and meeting rooms for students, but several issues have delayed the realization of this project. The Committee has planned a site visit at their next meeting on October 26. Additional meetings will be held on November 23 and December 7.

It was inquired about the seemingly slow process of taking down the old building at 65 Fifth Avenue. It was explained that taking down the building turned out to be a more complex project than anticipated at first, as environmental and structural issues have arisen during the process, e.g., the building provided stability and structural support to the building next door, therefore, stabilizing structures had to be re-implemented before the building could be taken down.

(2) Digital Infrastructure:

The Committee continues to address The New School's IT/wireless concerns, especially in regards to the use of the current system, *Safe Connect*. One of the questions under discussion is whether there is a need to form a special technology infrastructure Committee on a University-wide level or whether the existing Committees, such as the P3 Committees, are sufficient. Other questions included the faculty's role in the examination of IT safety issues and wireless concerns, and whether the Committee should formulate a stated position from a faculty standpoint on the *Safe Connect* technology. The Committee remarked that this matter was also of structural nature, since the *Safe Connect* system had been implemented without any input from community constituents.

A comment was made that the IT/wireless concerns have to be addressed with a certain sense of urgency, as this might become a larger public issue. The Senate feels it should be prepared to address this issue should it become public. In response to a technological question, it was clarified that *Safe Connect* is a software system everyone has to install on their computers in order to access the New School's wireless network, which has caused a debate around safety and privacy issues. It was reiterated that the current discussion evolved not only from the fact the *Safe Connect* was used at all, but also from the way in which the *Safe Connect* software was implemented in the New School's wireless system. Moreover, the use of this system requires the installation of antivirus protection software. It was pointed out that other software systems usually do not require the installation of special software to a computer. It was reported that one of the explanations the Academic Technology department had stated regarding their choice of the *Safe Connect* system was that they wanted to ensure that every user of the School's wireless network had installed antivirus software on their computer. It was noted that Academic Technology has issued a document, in which they explain the reasons for choosing *Safe Connect*. Explanations include that *Safe Connect* seemed the most effective and least expensive solution. A suggestion was made that the Infrastructure Committee could ask Academic Technology to take a look at their contract with *Safe Connect* to gain a solid basis for future discussions.

Another discussion point was whether the Committee should advocate for the implementation of a policy that led students and faculty to an increased use of laptops and other mobile devices instead of desktop stations across the University. It was pointed out that the use of laptops instead of desktops would increase the multi-functionality and flexibility of University spaces and classrooms. The Committee had discussed an idea to include wireless capability in the students' tuition to provide each student with a laptop that included the necessary software. The Committee will continue to examine this idea.

It was remarked that it was important that the Senate articulated its thoughts on the IT/wireless issues in a constructive manner and come up with recommendations and alternative models rather than just critique the current policy. The Committee will present some recommendations at the next Senate meeting.

Another digital issue the Committee will examine is finding potential alternatives to *BlackBoard*, e.g. a system called *Moodle*.

Liaison with the University Student Senate (USS):

The Co-Chairs reported that they had been approached by the University Student Senate (USS) about creating a strong relationship between both entities and forming potential collaborations on mutual issues, such as the IT/wireless concerns. The Co-Chairs had asked Howard Steele (NSSR), who is currently not serving on any of the Standing Committees, to act as liaison with the Student Senate and to craft some ideas for an ongoing formal role for the liaison. Steele met with a USS representative, a graduate student from Milano. Steele reported that at this initial meeting, the main issue under discussion had been *Safe Connect*. The USS is concerned about the current wireless solution and would like to know more about how the Faculty Senate approached this matter. It was remarked that the USS might want to address this issue publicly, and the Senators agreed that the Senate needs to be prepared to engage in this matter. A suggestion was made to ask the USS to research how *Safe Connect* is used at other universities and to examine potential alternatives to *Safe Connect*. It was stated that approximately 25 university nationwide use *Safe Connect*.

Steele stated that he learned a lot about the USS when he met with the Student Senator. The Student Senate is structured quite informally. The Student Senators are currently discussing how to administer their budget of $100,000. The representative with whom Steele spoke seems eager that the USS be mentored by faculty members. The University Student Senate has a well-developed website, separate from The New School's website: http://www.newschoolsenate.org/.

The Senators discussed how to craft a good and fruitful relationship with the USS and of what nature such a relationship should be, e.g. how formal it should be structured and whether the UFS should engage in an advisory role to the USS. Ideas included having a faculty representative join a

USS meeting, and vice versa, inviting a USS representative to a UFS meeting. Howard Steele confirmed his interest in continuing the discussion with the USS.

Announcements and other business:

Free Press Interview of Co-Chairs:

The Co-Chairs reported that they had been interviewed by the *New School Free Press,* a student-run newspaper, serving both Eugene Lang College and The New School community. The Senators stated that they had presented a positive position in the interview, reiterating that the UFS looks forward to having a strong relationship with the University Student Senate. They asserted that the UFS sees the Student Senate as a lively start-up with a lot of momentum and that the UFS is interested in building an open relationship between the two entities that will benefit the entire University community.

Recognition of the outgoing President:

The current University President, Bob Kerrey, will attend the last Senate meeting in December, where he will be recognized for his work during his tenure.

Reception Plans:

The UFS together with the Board of Trustees will host a reception for the incoming University President, David Van Zandt. The details of the reception remain to be worked out. There was conversation about various possibilities. The co-chairs will continue the planning with Doris Suarez, and the discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

Flu shots:

Upon inquiry from a Senator, the University's flu shot policy was discussed. It was remarked that there seems to be an information gap, many community members may not be aware that flu shots will be available to the University community on October 21.

University-wide Committees:

The Co-Chairs announced that they plan to look into University-wide Committees outside of the Senate to examine how the Senate can get involved in other Committees in an integrated way.

Deans' Council:

NSGS Dean David Scobey will be present at the next Senate meeting in his role as Deans' Council representative. Moreover, the Co-Chairs have scheduled a meeting with David Scobey. They asked the Senators what they would like the Co-Chairs to discuss with him at that meeting. Nidhi Srinivas reported on a meeting between Scobey and Senate representatives from NSGS/Milano, remarking on Scobey's eagerness and enthusiasm. It was affirmed that Scobey was very open to discussing faculty issues.

A discussion was held about the topics the Senate would like to talk about with David Scobey at the next Senate meeting. It was discussed whether the matters of workload and Lang's concerns about the University's restructuring process should be addressed. Furthermore, it was suggested that discussion take place about the centralization of the admission departments. Another idea was to propose a potential collaboration to the Deans' Council around the arts, as the incoming President, having a non-arts background, may want to learn more about the role of the arts in this institution. For example, one of Kerrey's endeavors that the new President may want to continue was the development of a program to make arts courses available to non-arts students. The goal of this program was not only to allow non-arts students to take arts courses, but also to increase the role of the arts in the University.

It was enquired whether it was possible to take a look at the Deans' Council's agenda to be able to identify overlapping issues, the Deans Council's future plans, and their vision. It was noted that the Deans' Council initially had been created in a time of crisis and that the Senate would like to know more about the Deans' Council's role and mission in a post-crisis time.

Renaming of the Academic Planning Committee to Infrastructure Committee:
The motion to rename the Academic Planning Committee to Infrastructure Committee was seconded and accepted unanimously.

Administrative support:
The Co-Chairs reported that the question of the administrative support provided by Provost Office to the Senate, specifically, whether David Ford would continue to provide support to the University Faculty Senate, was unresolved, but expected to be clarified soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am. The Senators were encouraged to email the Co-Chairs with any questions and comments. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 9, 2010.