University Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2013

In attendance:

1. Elaine Abelson, Lang
2. Emily Barnett, Parsons
3. Adria Benjamin, Mannes
4. Carolyn Berman, NSPE
5. Julie Boyd, Drama
6. Patrick Boylan, Parsons
7. Ted Byfield, Parsons
8. Wendy D’Andrea, NSSR
9. Margaret Fiore, NSPE
10. Ragnar Freidank, Drama
11. Peter Haratonik, NSPE
12. Marcel Kinsbourne, NSSR
13. David Lopato, Jazz
14. Gina Luria Walker, NSPE
15. Frank Nemhauser, Mannes
16. Julia Ott, Lang
17. Richard Salcer, Parsons
18. Elaine Savory, Lang
19. Candy Schulman, NSPE
20. Earl Scott, Parsons
21. Luciana Scrutchen, Parsons
22. Chris Stover, Jazz
23. Ido Tavory, NSSR
24. Sven Travis, Parsons
25. Marcus Turner, NSPE
26. Val Vinokur, Lang
27. Jurgen Von Mahs, Lang
28. Susan Yelavich, Parsons
29. Inessa Zaretsky, Mannes

Not Attending:

30. Todd Lambrix, Parsons

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Ted called the meeting to order. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion is made to approve the minutes. The motion is seconded and approved.
II. Committee Updates

Susan Yelavich, Senate Affairs (“SA”)

Susan shared that she sent UFS members a survey asking how they communicate with others within their division. She noted important differences between divisional norms; for example, some divisions meet twice a year and other meet biweekly, and there are large differences even between departments within a single division. She also learned that some deans encourage regular reports while others are more occasional. The SA committee created a chart representing this communication and would like to send it to the UFS.

Susan suggested an orientation meeting for new UFS senators before the first UFS meeting of the academic year. She also shared that Patrick had volunteered to create a flier for the town hall, and she wondered if sending out a more personalized message would be better. Susan felt that the UFS should have the ability to send emails to TNS community. She also asked if others liked the idea of creating a “branded” look for the UFS.

Discussion:

Patrick asked about how to go about obtaining permission for flyer redesigns. Elaine S. said that maybe the co-chairs should ask the president and the provost. Sven felt that the UFS should be able to send emails to the all NS faculty, and Ted said the UFS should be able to communicate freely in general. There was a specific discussion about protocol; Ted said that excessive emphasis on protocol and permission-seeking was itself problematic, and that everyone should use their best judgment. Ido pointed out that, if the UFS would message all NS faculty, we should decide approximately how many messages it will send (e.g., two per semester). Frank agreed that general communications should still be vetted through the co-chairs.

Richard asked about speaking to the press as a UFS representative (even the student press). If someone asks what the UFS position is about something what is the best way to respond? Elaine S. suggested making it clear that they aren’t speaking for the entire senate. Ted pointed out that that official UFS positions are generally passed as resolutions. Carolyn asked about a faculty senate group in her MyNewSchool.

Sven Travis, Learning Environments

Sven stated that the Learning Environments committee was still trying to schedule a meeting so there was no report. He felt that there clearly would be issues for the committee to focus on but nothing has been fleshed out yet.

Discussion:
Ted suggested that, in terms of getting the new committee structure rolling, it would help if committees are conceived in a more fluid way that didn’t rely on primarily on in-person meetings. Margaret said that maybe committees should have been assigned according to availability.

**Luciana Scrutchen, Academic Affairs Committee (“AAC”)**

Luciana reported that the committee met for the first time last week. They talked about understanding workload across the entire university, for both FTF and PTF. They are also looking at policies at other universities for comparisons.

**Discussion:**

Emily wondered if FTF workload issues shouldn’t be handled by the FTF Affairs Committee. Luciana answered that the committee’s current focus is on the service aspect of workload. Candy mentioned service with regard to compensation for committee work. Sven said that PTF get paid to serve on committees. Candy asked about getting paid to serve on the UFS, or subcommittees of the UFS. Susan shared that FTF receive no additional pay for service. Sven said that, if PTF were to be paid for senate service, there would need to be a source for payment, which was unlikely given that the UFS does not even have coffee for its meetings.

Ted reminded the UFS that the president and the provost would join the meeting shortly, and that there was no predefined agenda — so everyone consider what questions they planned to ask. Susan said that the UFS should not end up asking repetitive questions and wanted to know if everyone agreed that service should be the POS’s new policy focus.

**Chris Stover, Scholarly Communications**

Chris reported that the committee had not yet met in person but had communicated via email and Google docs. Chris said the committee is having difficulties agreeing on meeting times, and was concerned that the committee may have a hard time defining a clear identity. Ted offered to help provide a framework and resources for developing a clearer understanding of scholarly communications and how it relates to various practices.

**Elaine Abelson, FTF Affairs Committee**

Elaine A. said that the committee has met via email and was planning to meet next week. Issues that have come up include workload and faculty reviews.

**Discussion:**
Elaine S. said that it is okay for committee topics to overlap since not everything is clear-cut. Elaine A. said that she would send an email with a report once the committee meets.

III. Representation on Provost Office Committees

Elaine S. reported that she is trying to get a full list of university-wide and PO committees from the PO. Known committees include: Research Council, Curriculum Committee, Facilities Committee, Budget Committee. Elaine said that she is trying to confirm that the UFS should have representation on these committees.

Discussion:

Emily wondered if the UFS had a liaison with the USS. Maybe there should be more than one liaison. Frank said that there was no standing liaison. Chris said that the UFS did have a liaison the past couple of years. Ted was the liaison last year.

Elaine S. asked if anyone serving on a PO committee could give a report about what was discussed. Elaine A. and Carolyn serve on the PO FAC. Carolyn said that one issue that came up is that NSPE voted in favor of transparency of ad hoc review committees. The issue had been pending but had been discussed, and that a vote supported transparency up to a point. Elaine A. said she would send a report around.

IV. UFS–Divisional Communications

Discussion:

Susan and the Senate Affairs Committee wanted to know if the UFS was in favor of branded communications. Margaret asked if the UFS could just do a show of hands. Patrick said he would like to make communications more engaging. Richard felt that some type of UFS branding would be beneficial. The question was put to a vote and it was unanimous. Chris felt that this discussion conflated issues of internal and external communications. Ted suggested that Senate Affairs work out some prototypes and then put them to a vote.

V. President and Provost (Open Portion)

Ted began the open portion of the meeting by asking the president and the provost about their opinion about the UFS Town Hall and if any of the issues that were brought up were significant.

Frank thanked everyone who attended the UFS Town Hall. He said that at one point he counted around 70 people in attendance. Frank said that all divisions
were represented, and that many people from the administration there. Frank said that a number of issues were brought up and it is clear that the UFS should host another town hall in the future. There was much talk about civic engagement, and students in attendance as well, which brought up the issue of UFS and USS relations.

Discussion:

The president said he hoped to have a couple members of the UFS on the budget committee again this year, and that last year it went very well. The president also noted that the issue of communication came up a lot. He said the UFS co-chairs should be able to communicate with all NS faculty without approval from the PO or CEA. Tim felt the UFS Town Hall was quite positive, and that the university has changed a great deal in the last 10 years. It has shifted from many distinct schools to a more cohesive university. Tim felt that that, now the basics of the university were in place, the school could start tackling other issues. He also said it was important to acknowledge the heavy lift involved in things like the faculty handbook. Elaine S. said that the sense of community at the town hall was impressive.

Sven said he was surprised how many issues that were brought up were not being dealt with on the divisional level, as he would have assumed. He initially felt that it wasn’t the forum for those kinds of issue but then realized that faculty who aren’t on the UFS may not know the correct channels for discussing issues. David Scobey noted the hunger to talk about community engagement and continuing education; he said normally these subjects wouldn’t fall under the purview of the UFS but maybe the UFS could forum for convening discussion (a sort of “think tank”) and informs the PO. Emily said that a reason some of those issues were brought up is because faculty don’t feel like their issues have been heard in other forums. Ted recognized this as a consistent tension and said that he is interested in finding better ways to ensure faculty members are heard. Elaine A. said that there are places for individual concerns to be aired that don’t necessarily have to do with the UFS. Elaine S. replied that the town hall wasn’t supposed to just deal with UFS matters. The president said that while individuals can raise their own issues, the UFS was set up to provide the administration with feedback. David L. asked how many students were on the USS. The president answered about 18. David L. thought it might be good to have a joint meeting with the USS, in part to develop a clearer sense of their mode, which is different from the UFS and often more politically charged. Candy shared that many of the issues that came up at the town hall had to do with questions of university identity and issues of branding and community. Tim answered that TNS is working on a new brand for the university right now. Carolyn felt that the UFS should be kept in the loop about what is going on more around the divisions, especially in regard to branding, so that the UFS can give feedback. Tim acknowledged that the current way of educating the community about things
doesn’t work well. Richard wanted to know if the university had any sort of planned advertising or marketing?

The president mentioned new leadership in that area, and said this is their first focus. Margaret said she has seen TNS ads and asked about projected drop in enrollment for the spring. As grounds, she said that one of her courses was canceled, and the explanation she received involved enrollment — but the course was canceled before enrollment for the spring took place. Tim replied that course schedules are based on projections, but pointed out that enrollment varies among programs. David S. shared that they are tracking spring applications, and academic curriculum builders are trying to think proactively about shaping the curriculum. In particular, they are trying to push earlier decisions about course cancelations so that students know in advance. David S. also acknowledged that this is difficult for faculty, especially PTF. Margaret felt it would be better to be asked about course cancelations as well as receiving clearer information about the kinds of course available and affected (for example, online versus on-campus). Emily said that the school has the contractual right to cancel courses due to low enrollment but was not sure about specific contexts. Carolyn shared that the contract sets forth penalties when classes are canceled. Ted noted that the term “enrollment” can have a variety of meanings in different planning contexts, and that it’s important not to conflate them, lest a localized drop in enrollment be misperceived as institution-wide. He also noted that the UFS is one of the few bodies where this kind of discussion can come up because it is composed from FTF and PTF, but he acknowledged that many issues separate the two.

Susan asked the president and provost to reiterate the administration’s priorities. She sensed that three issues were identity, service (leaves), and moving materials from the handbook to the web. The president replied that high-level priorities for the next five years were continued integration of academic programs, identity/branding/promotions, the endowment with the hopes of doubling it. The endowment is currently $200 million. Tim shared that he felt there were different priorities on different levels. He said rather than taking on the workload issue as a whole the administration is looking at service. Val shared that a footnote to the service issue is the problem of student advising since it falls between the cracks of teaching and service.

Frank announced that the December UFS meeting will take place in the Hirshon Suite, 55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor.

Ted asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made. It was seconded then approved.