University Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2012

In Attendance:

David Lopato, Jazz
Gary Vena, Drama
Chris Roselli, Drama
J.Y. Song, Mannes
Frank Nemhauser, Mannes
Earl Scott, Parsons
Erin Cho, Parsons
Elaine Savory, Lang
Margaret Fiore, NSPE
Steve Kennedy, Parsons
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Cecilia Rubino, Lang
Ted Byfield, Parsons
James Dodd, NSSR
Susan Yelavich, Parsons
Chris Stover, Jazz
Jurgen von Mahs, Lang
Wendy D’Andrea, NSSR
Peter Haratonik, NSPE
Nargis Virani, NSPE

Not Attending:

Warren Spielberg, NSPE
Elaine Abelson, Lang
Emily Barnett, Parsons
Teresa Ghilarducci, NSSR
Diane Walsh, Mannes
Aleksandra Wagner, NSPE

OLD BUSINESS

I. Report from Co-Chairs

Susan called the meeting to order and then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and then approved.

Susan reminded everyone that this meeting would be a little more informal than previous meetings as she was unsure how many people would make it due to the effects of the hurricane and that fact that it was Election Day.
Susan began by sharing the sad news that senate member Aleksandra Wagner's husband passed away. Susan asked the UFS for suggestions about how the UFS should express condolences. It was suggested that perhaps a donation should be made to a group of Aleksandra's choosing instead of sending flowers. Katarzyna said she would get Aleksandra's mailing address to circulate.

NEW BUSINESS

II. Storm Response

Susan asked the UFS for any feedback they may have about how communication worked with students, faculty, staff, and others affiliated with the school during and after the storm. She also asked if anyone knew that the 55 West 13th street building was the building that was open during this crisis. She noted that all of the other New School buildings were closed and there was no signage to indicate that the 55 West 13th street building was open.

Discussion:
Susan suggested that the school make an announcement about where people should go in time of emergency. Even hand-written signs would have been helpful. Ted thought it might be unwise to pre-publish information about where to go in an emergency since it can be so varied. Ted felt that the School did well considering the circumstances. James suggested that maybe just a known physical place to get information should be identified by the administration. Margaret felt that the UFS should suggest to the administration that they identify a physical starting point for emergencies. It was pointed out that both David Van Zandt and Linda Reimer were at 55 West 13th street with evacuated students and did the best they could given the circumstances. Frank suggested that the UFS as a body give kudos to the administration and the facilities staff for how they handled the circumstances of Hurricane Sandy. It was decided that the UFS should thanks the leadership team as a whole, and include a special thanks to the people on the ground as well. The Leadership Team was asked to track how students and faculty were returning to the school after the storm. There was a debate about whether or not to start school yesterday. James said that the team still wants information, so if anyone hears anything about students/faculty/staff who are still in need they should contact their dean directly. Gary shared that the Bank Street building is going to be closed for some time but thankfully the Drama community was transferred to a new contingency space on the 6th floor of E 16th Street and everything was all set up and ready for classes virtually overnight. Susan suggested that it might be nice to communicate this gratitude directly to the President.

III. Food Service Committee Representative

Ed Verdi who is in charge of food services here at TNS sent an email to the UFS co-chairs asking for a volunteer from the Senate to serve on a committee that will help
select a new food service provider since Chartwells contract is coming to an end. Wendy D’Andrea volunteered to serve on this committee.

IV. Infrastructure Report: Ted Byfield, Chair

Ted reported that there wasn’t much Infrastructure business to share but did talk about report that was compiled by a third party (Steven Laster) that issued a report about the school’s infrastructure. The report is mostly a broad survey about what’s going on around TNS which Ted felt was a responsibly executed teaser. The majority of the report was a factual overview, and mostly it was quite positive, stating that the Academic Technology department at TNS has done a good job on a small budget. This is the central point of the report. The report also included a flurry of recommendations that were more visionary and broad but that had no real substance to them. Overall the report was positive but also left the door open for more consulting work to be done in the future.

Discussion:

Susan brought up the fact that last year the UFS felt like AT and IT weren’t really in tune with one another or helping to develop certain pedagogical considerations of the faculty and she wondered if the UFS felt that this has gotten better. Ted responded by saying that the transfer to Gmail went well and was done in response to community concerns. It was also in line with the president’s service initiative. Peter felt that there are still many unresolved issues with AT. Faculty are still migrating to other platforms to get done what they want to get done. They are using programs and products independently of AT. Questions in regard to AT still need to be on the table. People are finding their own resolutions to problems. Jurgen shared that there is sort of a stalemate going on right now at the school. Blackboard is inflexible which is hard for TNS to work with because needs are so varied. To design and implement a universal change would require serious thought, work, and planning. Susan felt that the Laster report should be shared with the UFS and felt that the UFS should reiterate its concern about the disconnect between AT and IT. Ted pointed out that the Provost’s point of view in regard to the AT and IT disconnect comes down to the budget.

V. Report from Ted re: University Budget Working Group

Ted and Teresa were invited to join the University Budget Working Group. They have also volunteered to lead a working group to consider future scenarios for the University (in light of changes bound to occur at all universities). If anyone wants to be part of this ad hoc group, they should contact Ted and/or Teresa.

Ted attended the first University Budget Working Group meeting where the group discussed how the budget works. An emphasis was placed on the observation that
while the school may seem like a corporate entity it cannot just slice off budgets and programs to cut costs.

Fixed costs remain in many ways, which makes balancing the budget very complex. Overall, Ted felt it was a good meeting but is not yet sure where things are headed. The group is supposed to meet every two weeks and Ted wondered what his and Teresa’s role on the committee should be, asking if they are simply supposed to act as liaisons, or engage with the committee as full members. The UFS concluded that they should behave and interact as full members. Ted has some serious concerns about how he should report the information he is privy to at these meetings, if he should be receiving information before his dean and other people in leadership roles. James agreed that it is new for faculty at TNS to have a place in the administrative structure of the school but recommended that Ted and Teresa not shy away from full engagement. Susan was also concerned about being privy to pertinent information ahead of one’s dean. One needs to be very clear on what information can be shared and what cannot. Ted pointed out that he and Teresa will be meeting with the University Budget Working Group more frequently than with the UFS. It will be difficult to consult with the UFS about matters in an efficient way. The UFS is asked to think about an efficient way to decimate information. Susan suggested that Ted and Teresa can communicate with the UFS co-chairs during the times in between monthly meetings. Ted said that he and Teresa want to create a transparent process to communicate the information they receive to the UFS and the leadership. Nargis felt that the UFS should claim space for itself and not worry about how the administration disseminates information. The UFS can handle things delicately but shouldn’t limit itself because of that concern.

VI. Faculty Affairs Committee/Research Council Reports: Elaine Savory, Chair

Elaine reported that the Faculty Affairs Committee is scheduled to meet next week so there was nothing to report. However, she did note that everyone has been working on things independently in their subgroups.

Elaine also reported that Cluster Funding event was a great success. A reminder was sent out to those who attended about the deadline. Elaine shared that it was exciting to hear faculty talk about their projects and that it helped to feel like you were a part of a university. She also noted that there is a lot of support of this and that there is a real desire to find new faculty who don’t often get or apply for grants to participate.

Discussion:

David Lopato pointed out the cluster funding isn’t really geared for the performing arts. Elaine said she would bring that up with the group. It was asked if all faculty can receive information about the cluster funding instead just the ones who signed up for the event. Chris pointed out that Cluster Funding information can be found on the provost webpage.
Another topic that was discussed was the new New School website. A beta test page had been circulated to a select group of people around the university to check out and provide feedback. The President mentioned that TNS would also be modifying its logo and possibly language too. Ted asked if it would be possible to circulate the URL for the beta test site to the entire UFS. Steve wondered if there was going to be some kind of announcement about the changes to the identity, etc. Faculty should be made aware of these kinds of changes. Peter shared that NSPE had a meeting about the NSPE portion of the website with people from CEA. The faculty at NSPE had strong opinions about it and the launch of page was postponed until January. Chris wondered if he missed some type of communication about the making of a new website or a new logo. Peter thought that nothing had been communicated about it. Ted mentioned that the new IT webpage was a beta test for the changes that were going to be made to the website as a whole. He thought that it reflected pragmatic changes to the image of TNS desired by the President. He also felt that it was wise not have used precious resources in developing the changes.

VII. Governance Committee, Nargis Virani

Nargis reported that the Governance Committee meeting was canceled last week because of the storm. The committee plans to meet this Thursday. A major item on their agenda is to discuss and figure out divisional representation numbers. The committee plans to bring a resolution to the UFS once they arrive at an answer.

Susan asked if Warren Spielberg was on the Governance Committee. It was determined that he was still not on a sub-committee. Susan said that he sent a note to the co-chairs about needing to resign from the UFS. Susan asked if Peter would follow up with NSPE about this. Peter agreed to do so.

VIII. Report on lunch with Board of Trustees: Chris, co-chair

Chris reported that the co-chairs of the UFS and the student senate were invited to join the last BoT lunch, which was a relatively informal affair. The conversation mostly centered on the BoT asking what the faculty perception about the work the president is doing of the work was and how about the school can better reach out to alumni as a way of fundraising. As a way of challenging the Student Senate to reach out to their peers, BoT member Garry Crowder agreed to match funds if they could get at least 80% of a class of students to pledge to donate $5 each, every year after graduation. New School branding was also a part of the conversation. There was a question posed about the “newness” of TNS, to extend is the school allowed to call itself “new.” Overall these were open questions and not challenges. Chris felt it was good to be there representing faculty. James asked the BoT what kind of relationship they would like to have with the faculty. It is still being discussed as to whether or not faculty will be given some kind of representation on the BoT.

Discussion:
David Lopato pointed out that the first communication many alumni received from the school after graduating is the school asking for money. Cecilia pointed out that Alumni Affairs also has limited resources. Chris shared that another thing that came up at the lunch is the way students at TNS view themselves. Some identify as just “Lang” or “Parsons” students while other identify with TNS as a whole. Nargis shared that when she gave her UFS report to colleagues in her division that everyone was happy to hear that the UFS co-chairs would be serving as liaisons to the BoT and she wants to be sure that this sentiment gets conveyed to the BoT. A question was asked about COACHE survey follow-up. The UFS is reminded that the administration can’t legally follow-up about the survey after the initial communication about it. Cecilia is concerned that this is going to fall through the cracks. Susan said she thought that there is a inherent flaw in issuing a survey that can’t be followed-up on. She suggested that if deans and chairs haven’t been talking about the survey, then individual Senators should ask them to remind the faculty they lead to complete it. Chris found the survey to be awkward and found many of the questions to be unanswerable at times. He suggested that answering most questions relied on the faculty making unacceptable compromises with their answers.

IX. Planning for future open meeting guests

Susan presented two possibilities for guests to invite to the next open meeting. Since Tim and Bryna are planning to release their vision statement soon it might be good to ask them to speak further with the UFS about it provided the UFS can read the document beforehand. Susan also shared that the co-chairs of the University Student Senate would also like to attend a UFS meeting.

Discussion:

David Lopato would like to have interaction with the president that isn’t just data driven. Susan responded that if Tim and Bryna attend the next meeting David Van Zandt will be in attendance too but that he wouldn’t be giving a presentation. Wendy shared that she enjoys the data but would prefer to received it beforehand so she can be prepared for discussion. Ted thought it would be interesting to invite a BoT member trustee to talk about fundraising and alumni efforts. Steve thought that having the USS co-chairs would be good. The majority of the UFS would like to hear from Tim and Bryna at the next meeting. A suggestion was made to invite the USS co-chairs to a meeting in the spring.

A motion was made to adjourn meeting. The motion was seconded and then approved.