The New School University Faculty Senate (UFS)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 14, 2010; 8:30 am – 10:00 am
66 West 12th Street, Orozco Room, Rm. 712

Minutes from the fourth session of the 2010-11 Senate – closed session, 8:30 am–9:15 am; full session, 9:20 am–10:00 am. Chaired by Ken Stevens.

Present:

Senators:
Alexandra Chasin, Co-Chair, Lang
Nidhi Srinivas, Co-Chair, Milano
Ken Stevens, Co-Chair, Parsons
Shoshanah Goldberg, Secretary, Milano
Elaine Abelson, NSSR
Andrew Arato, NSSR
Richard Boukas, Jazz
Peter Eisinger, Milano
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Paul Hardart, NSGS
Steve Kennedy, Parsons
Mara Kurtz, Parsons
David J. Lewis, Parsons
David Loeb, Mannes
Christopher Shinn, Drama
Ju-Ying Song, Mannes
Chris Stover, Jazz
Warren Spielberg, NSGS
Howard Steele, NSSR
Paula Stutman, NSGS
Gary Vena, Drama
Aleksandra Wagner, NSGS
Susan Yelavich, Parsons

Ex Officio:
Bob Kerrey, University President
Tim Marshall, Provost
David Scobey, Dean NSGS/Milano
I. Closed Session

Welcome:
The meeting was opened by Ken Stevens at 8:32 am. Stevens welcomed the Senators to the last session of the fall 2010 semester and presented the meeting’s agenda. He introduced Warren Spielberg, psychology faculty member at NSGS, as a new member of the UFS. The Senators introduced themselves and welcomed Spielberg to the Senate.

Approval of Minutes from the University Faculty Senate meeting on November 9, 2010:
The minutes from the November 9 meeting were approved unanimously.

Nomination and election of a new Senate Secretary:
Shoshanah Goldberg completed her term as Senate Secretary. The Senate thanked her for her work and support during the past year. The Co-Chairs particularly encouraged part-time faculty to consider their nomination for the position of Senate Secretary. They stated that the Secretary’s responsibilities involve weekly meetings with the Co-Chairs, serving as liaison with Provost Office staff, overseeing the Senate’s website content, and editing the monthly meeting minutes. It was noted that the role of the Secretary might evolve as the Senate’s role within the University continues to evolve. It was pointed out that the position of Secretary involves outstanding diplomatic and communicational skills. A question was raised concerning the workload of this position. It was reiterated that the Secretary’s work would not exceed the workload within the senate’s working committees.

Nominations and election:
Steve Kennedy (Parsons) volunteered to stand for the position of University Faculty Senate Secretary. Kennedy was elected unanimously.

Reports from Chairs of Standing Committees:

Infrastructure Committee:
Committee Chair David Lewis (Parsons) reported on several issues the Committee has been working on since the last UFS meeting:

Safe • Connect: Lewis reported that the Committee continues to examine the issues around Safe • Connect. The Committee welcomes any input and recommendations from the Senate regarding this process. The Committee proposed that the UFS will make a recommendation regarding the implementation of a more robust committee structure around IT/AT that will be academically driven and will include the examination of the future role of IT/AT and infrastructure at The New School. The role of such an entity should include the examination of the University’s digital and physical infrastructure, including comparing BlackBoard to Moodle and other online platforms; the use of laptops and other mobile technology, such as wireless printing vs. desktop technology; hardware and software issues; etc. Richard Boukas remarked that he had been introduced to alternatives to BlackBoard, such as Moodle and WordPress. He stated that he finds these programs more user-friendly compared to the University’s current version of BlackBoard.

Chris Stover reported that he serves on a committee that specifically examines BlackBoard and Moodle. Formed in the beginning of the fall 2010 semester, the committee has not met yet. Stover
proposed to follow up with members of that committee and report his findings back to the UFS. It was reiterated that the Senate’s involvement in the discussion around IT/AT issues from an academic standpoint will be critical in the future, and it will be important to work with the incoming President on these issues. It was proposed that the Senate consider expanding its current role and structure to become an active mediator. Lewis remarked that it would be beneficial to align the Senate’s role with that of the IC and work under their umbrella to ensure proper collaboration and communication between both entities. It was pointed out that there currently is a vacancy on the IC, which might present an opportunity for another Senator to become involved, especially someone with an IT background.

University Center (UC) furniture display: In an effort to involve the University community in the decision-making process regarding the furniture equipment of the new University Center, the university-wide Facilities Committee currently is displaying 40 pieces of furniture from different vendors. The furniture pieces are displayed at 71 5th Avenue, 9th floor. Until Monday, December 20, faculty, students, and staff can try out the furniture and provide their input by filling out a form that is given to them upon entering the show room. The Senators were encouraged to participate in this process and to promote it in their divisions. It was pointed out that the try-out was primarily about finding comfortable furniture, the colors fabrics of the displayed models should not be taken into consideration, as the colors for the furniture equipment of the UC have not been determined as of yet. A complete mock up of a sample UC room will likely be displayed next summer.

Milano/GPIA divisions: The Committee also addresses issues around the future home and the coordination of faculty spaces and offices for the new Milano/GPIA division.

**Faculty Affairs Committee:**
Committee Chair Aleksandra Wagner (NSGS) reported on the work of the university-wide Handbook Committee. The Committee meets once per month to examine workload issues. Committee members from different divisions have each created a list of tasks they perform on a regular basis as part of their faculty positions to provide a common ground for understanding the different tasks and responsibilities at each division. Moreover, each program has been asked to come up with templates for teaching and research, separately for junior and senior faculty. At the Committee’s most recent meeting on November 13, the initial findings from these reports had been discussed. While a conclusive document has not been created as of yet, the templates have proven to be very helpful to the Handbook Committee to understand and compare each division’s individual situations, e.g. how the responsibilities of faculty members at Mannes differ from those of other divisions. Ken Stevens is a member of the Handbook Committee. It was pointed out that different divisions are at different stages in the examinations process, e.g. while Parsons has been examining their workload issues for a while, other divisions have just started the examination process. Next steps will include the creation of lists that allow comparing current facts vs. aspirational goals to examine what kinds of new policies can be implemented. This process will go into the spring semester and the Committee expects to present proposed resolutions for discussion to the Senate by mid-spring. It was stated that it will be interesting to see how this issue will be structured under the incoming President. Moreover, it will be useful to create a dialogue with the Provost Office to ensure transparency among the entire University.
Governance Committee:
Paula Stuttman (NSGS) has been appointed new Committee Chair, as former Chair Rose Réjouis (Lang) has stepped down from her position as the Chair. Stuttman reported that the Committee continues to examine the divisions’ representation on the UFS, and specifically the representation of the newly created NSGS/Milano division. The Committee proposed that the maximum representation from the divisions shall be six instead of eight Senators. Currently, the new NSGS/Milano division together provides eight representatives, five from NSGS and three from Milano. At their next meeting, the Committee will draft a resolution, which will be presented to the Senate at the first UFS meeting in the spring semester in January 2011.

Report on Liaison with the University Student Senate (USS):
Howard Steele (NSSR) reported that he has not met with USS members since the last UFS session. The USS held a townhall meeting around Social Justice issues at The New School, which did not have large turnout, even though the event had been very well structured and organized. Nidhi Srinivas, who attended the townhall meeting along with Ken Stevens and Alexandra Chasin, remarked that at that meeting the term Social Justice was defined as an inclusive term, not only encompassing ethnic background and diversity, but other issues, such as sexual orientation. A discussion was held around how the Faculty Senate might be able to support the USS in their endeavors and encourage students’ active involvement, as well as how to shape an appropriate structure and form for the liaison between the USS and the UFS. Howard Steele discussed the possibility of the USS nominating one or two members to attend a UFS meeting once per term, and vice versa. There is a notion that the students seek support and guidance from the UFS. Steele reiterated that he was willing to serve as official liaison with the USS. It was brought up that some USS members sought advice from University faculty members from their own division as well. It was stated that it might be arguable that the USS would be more effective if they were more formally organized. Currently, they are softly structured. As official liaison with the USS, Steele proposed asking the Student Senate to elect a formal liaison on their end as well.

II. Open Session
Co-Chair Ken Stevens welcomed President Bob Kerrey as well as Provost Tim Marshall and David Scobey, Dean of NSGS/Milano, to the session.

Remarks by Provost Marshall:
Provost Marshall distributed an excerpt from Academic Priorities 2010-2013, addressing Academic Technology (AT) issues he had been asked about at the last Senate meeting. More information will be coming in the spring semester.

Following up on last session’s discussion concerning the decision-making processes and transparency for determining faculty salaries, including pay bands, standards, and other criteria within the University, the Provost stated that he would like to wait for the incoming President to discuss this matter and get back to the Senate afterward.

The Provost Office is currently focused on the transition to the new Presidency. A complete document of academic progress will be available online next week, documenting the current state
of the University as well as goals for moving forward. The document has been created by the Provost Office upon a charge from President Kerrey.

Marshall expressed a personal thank you to Bob Kerrey for his ongoing support of Marshall in his role as Provost.

Remarks by President Kerrey:
Ken Stevens thanked President Kerrey for this support of the UFS during his presidency and affirmed that the help and support from the University has been invaluable to the Senate’s work and its continuous evolvement. He affirmed that the Senate would like to continue its relationship with Kerrey in the future.

President Kerrey congratulated the Senators for having created and shaped the UFS, which had become a strong and vital academic body within the University. Kerrey remarked that the University, and the Provost Office in particular, has been very productive over the past two years. In the past, the University had faced many structural issues due to the significant expansion of the school, which led to a new set of needs and expectations from faculty and students. He pointed out the work and processes that have been established over the past years, such as extending tenure among tenured faculty, review processes, faculty handbook revisions, and academic support to new faculty. The Provost Office’s responsibilities have expanded and processes have been set into place to be able to evaluate and compare The New School to other universities. Kerrey stated that he took special pride in working with Tim Marshall and the Provost Office. He noted that while the University still has room for improvement, committees such as the Infrastructure Committee (IC) have done great work and have tremendously improved the decision-making processes within TNS. He stated that quality and transparency have improved over the past years, pointing out the work of the Facilities Committee and the processes that have been created around improving the University’s facilities. The building on 65 5 th Avenue has been almost completely taken down, and the new University Center (UC) is expected to open in 2013. The UC will include a library, faculty and student spaces, and high quality classrooms.

President Kerrey stated he has no regrets about his decision to become President of The New School and affirmed that he is very fond of the experience he gained during his presidency. Ken Stevens remarked that the search and transition have been very successful and inquired about President Kerrey’s role and involvement in the future. President Kerrey noted the important role of fundraising at The New School. He stated that he sees TNS in a special situation, as, unlike [ADD: SOME] other universities, TNS does not receive the majority of its unearned income from alumni. He stated that The New School has had a successful fundraising year and affirmed that he is willing to support the School in its future fundraising efforts.

Stevens inquired about the President’s insights in developments at The New School’s neighboring institutions, such as NYU and The Cooper Union. Kerrey noted that Cooper had an unusual model in terms of their tax structure and policies. In his opinion, NYU seems financially stable, as they have a large undergraduate population and strong alumni relations. NYU continues to expand, e.g., the University might attempt to acquire Pratt, which could create a potential competitor to TNS.
Ken Stevens thanked President Kerrey for his insights and openness and reiterated that the Senate welcomes Kerrey’s continued involvement in different projects.

A discussion was held around the structure of The New School’s international relations. For example, the New School currently works to establish Parson’s presence in Paris and Shanghai. Both cities provide new opportunities and advantages to The New School and their student body. The international presence was seen as a way to manage risk and create international outreach opportunities. Furthermore, TNS has experienced a 30% growth of online enrollment during the last year. Kerrey noted that an extended online campus would pay academically and financially, as online programs provide more flexibility to students. A comment was made regarding the importance of providing an online performing arts curriculum, which would allow for extended outreach mechanisms, especially to international students. President Kerrey addressed the need for an improved integration of the performing arts divisions into the University, especially The New School for Jazz and Mannes. President Kerrey stated that he is confident that Dean Scobey will help to improve this middle space, as NSGS will play an important role in the School’s integration processes. He pointed out that this was also a critical aspect in the search for a new Dean at Mannes. The University seeks to find someone who will be able to manage the collaboration and integration of Mannes into other divisions. Kerrey noted that it will be essential to involve the UFS in conversations around these issues.

The Senate recognized the President’s tenure as a vital and exciting period in The New School’s history. It was noted that there seems to have been a recent shift in direction away from academic concerns towards a performing arts orientation and structural issues, such as AT/IT concerns. It was remarked that it will be interesting to see if and how the incoming President, who comes from an academic background, will be able to change the direction of The New School and refocus it on academic issues.

Adjourn for informal exchanges with President Kerrey:
The UFS thanked President Kerrey for his leadership during his presidency. Stevens thanked President Kerrey, Provost Marshall, and Dean Scobey for their time. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am. The Senators were invited to stay for informal exchanges with President Kerrey.