University Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 9, 2014

Attending:

Zed Adams, NSSR
Elaine Abelson, Lang
Anthony Anemone, NSPE
Banu Bargu, NSSR
Adria Benjamin, Mannes
Erin Cho, Parsons
Margaret Fiore, NSPE
Ragnar Freidank, Drama
Peter Haratonik, NSPE
Richard Harper, Jazz
Rachel Heiman, NSPE
Danielle Goldman, Lang
Nicolas Langlitz, NSSR
David Lopato, Jazz
Frank Nemhauser, Mannes, Co-Chair
Richard Salcer, Parsons
Elaine Savory, Lang, Co-Chair
Candy Schulman, NSPE
Earl Scott, Parsons
Luciana Scrutchen, Parsons
Shane Selzer, Parsons
Carlos Teixeira, Parsons
Sven Travis, Parsons, Co-Chair
Jurgen Von Mahs, Lang
Jennifer Wilson, Lang
Inessa Zaretsky, Mannes

Not attending:

Erica Fae, Drama
Marcus Turner, NSPE

I. Minutes and Matters Arising

Elaine called the meeting to order. She said that it was a critical moment for the senate and that the co-chairs were working hard to build relations with the divisions. She reported that the Lang faculty are suspicious of the UFS. The UFS wants to evolve with the PO but also with the divisions as well. Elaine also reported that UFS members will be invited to the President’s house for breakfast. She also reported that the UFS will be given resources not only to purchase coffee for meetings but also for a retreat in the spring.
Frank reported that he received a lot of emails from disgruntled faculty in regard to salary increases. He asked the UFS is anyone had the sense that faculty were suspicious of the UFS.

Discussion:
Elaine A. said yes. Peter asked what “suspicion” actually meant. The co-chairs answered that it meant “withholding information.” Jurgen felt a better word was “impatience.” He suggested that more updates be sent to the faculty on a regular basis.

Frank clarified that the co-chairs meet with the president and the PO the Friday before the UFS meetings so they are always immediately reporting to the UFS about those meetings. Sven pointed out that because the minutes aren’t approved in a timely fashion it is not the best way to rely on communication. Candy stated that for PTF it is more a lack of knowledge and apathy. Elaine S. replied that it wasn’t just the PTF. Elaine S. said that the UFS needs to be more empowered and resources for a retreat will help. The senators Elaine A. said that the co-chairs of the UFS have been meeting with the administration for years now and what has changed is that divisional governance has emerged in the last few years. She said that the UFS is an advisory body and can’t become something else unless it is acknowledged, unless the administration wants it to happen. Tony said that faculty are not a problem at NSPE. Sven felt that is was more of an issue of apathy at Parsons than anything else. Danielle seconded the idea to come up with a plan for more frequent communication. Peter said that at NSPE a UFS senators reports to the NPSE council. Elaine S. pointed out that the UFS does not report to the local governance and that the senators are supposed to do that. Sven asked Danielle if she was making a motion that UFS send more regular communication to the faculty. Richard S. made a motion to adopt a resolution to email to all faculty more frequent and to communicate was has been discussed at its most recent meeting within two weeks. The motion was seconded and then approved. It was suggested that aforementioned communication is vetted and approved before being sent out. Frank pointed out that in order to be more inclusional it takes more time to do things. Ragnar offered to make a short film of the co-chairs reporting on their scheduled meetings with the president and the PO. Sven pointed out that that doesn’t offer editing capabilities. Sven suggested to maybe circulate a letter to senators before it is sent to all faculty. Using Google Docs was also suggested. Sven also noted that the communication should be from the entire UFS. A vote was taken. The vote was in favor of the motion. David suggested adding text about emailing divisional representatives with questions. Adria suggested that the communication be more friendly and personable.

Elaine asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and approved.

II. Committee Reports Discussion

Elaine asked that committee reports be submitted and shared prior to UFS meetings.

Academic Affairs Committee Report by Jurgen
Jurgen reported that the committee has met and has discussed what its charge might be. He then put a motion on the table for the creation of a PTF Affairs Committee. He distributed draft letter about it to the group that articulated some issues the committee might address. He also advocated for the PTF members of the UFs to be compensated for their time. He felt that the first step should be instituting the committee as a subcommittee of the UFS and the second step should be compensating PTF.

Discussion:

Ragnar felt like Jurgen’s suggestion was a good one and like that it would be more than just contractual and would add a sense of belonging and participation. Earl also supported the concept. He often has felt there is a disconnect between PTF and FTF on the UFS. He also pointed out that not all issues that come up are solely contractual. David L. noted that PTF don’t get compensated for serving on the UFS. Other senators were also in support of these issues. It was suggested that this idea should be run past the union first, since it could potentially be viewed as a way to undermine it. Jurgen admitted that one of the challenges was to determine between contract and non-contract issues. It was said that the university has made it clear that FTF don’t get anything for serving on the UFS, like course releases, so it makes compensation for PTF problematic. Earl said as Vice President of the union and can speak on behalf of the UFS and will bring back an answer at the next meeting. Sven urged the UFS to vote on this issue, to vote yes or no, but under advisement from the administration and union. David L. said he didn’t think that Local 802 would have an issue but he wasn’t sure why the UFS would need approval to set up a committee. Sven answered because the UFS wants to be aware of the broader view of this, but not detrimental actions, which is why he urged that the UFS vote on this and then seek advisement. Richard S. suggested that the UFS vote to establish the committee today, then enumerate the charge later. Ragnar made a motion to establish the committee. The motioned was seconded and approved. A vote was taken and found to be in favor of the committee. The UFS will wait for advisement from union.

Learning Environments Committee Report by Peter

Peter sent a draft of a report about this. He also reported that the University Infrastructure committee met twice and they were pleased that the UFS was in touch. Peter encouraged UFs members to be in touch with him about issues as they come up. Peter also reported that AT and IT has merged. He will also be reaching out for new representative on the new P3 committee. He also encouraged UFS members to alert him about issues in regard to IT or Canvas. Peter also suggested that maybe the UFS should invite Lia Gardner to a meeting to speak about space at the university. Another big issue is classroom assignments. Some classes are not adequate for the needs of the course. Peter pointed out that even new rooms in UC are not adequate for what teachers are teaching. Richard S. advocated for a clearer mapping of technical facilities available at TNS. Sven reminded the UFS that the school is losing a big computer lab at 55 West 13th. David L. felt that space issues should be tied to the class size issue. Elaine A. reported that the 8th floor on 16th street is for all students, not just graduate students.
Elaine S. pointed out that it is too much to have five committee reports at each UFS meeting. She asked that the chairs of the subcommittees send their reports ahead of time and then just select a few issues from the report for discussion at the meeting. Elaine S. also suggested that during the spring semester the UFS take on the job of putting together a report about faculty dissatisfaction in regard to office spaces. It was suggested that there was an equity issue between how much people can get done with the space they are allotted and that it would be great if the UFS would make an arguments about how much people need to do while taking away their space. Tony asked if the UFs could invite the administration to come talk about faculty office space. It was pointed out that the administration never responded to letters from NSPE about this issue. Richard H. said that at Jazz the main space issue is having enough practice rooms for the students. If faculty at Jazz get an office that is one less practice room for a student. Richard S. reported that at the Facilities meeting they didn’t talk about faculty offices at all. Elaine S. said she would make this issue an agenda for the February meeting.

III. Senior Administration - Salary Issues priority

Tim, Bryna, and Joel joined the meeting.

Elaine S. shared that Tim has been encouraging deans to come to the UFS meetings and that the deans were very responsive to the idea.

Tim began by acknowledging that the first memo sent out about salary increases was not as artful as it should have been. The administration should have sent a separate memo to faculty. Tim pointed out that it is a very limited amount of money overall and that it is difficult to get the method right. He shared that in the past there have always been two pools of money. He also said that everyone, more or less, is getting a raise. There just hasn’t been an exact number put on it. He said that faculty will have a better sense of what’s happening once they see their raise reflected and that only a very small number of faculty are not getting raises due to recent salary increases. He stated that he didn’t want the issue of salary increases to be this contentious moving forward. He also said that the easiest thing to do would be to do an across the board raise but it’s not very fair to do that all the time since faculty who make more money will get a higher percent increase. Tim said that the administration wanted to work with the UFS about this issue moving forward since it should be more open and collaborative.

Discussion:

Richard S. asked if there was already a system in place for evaluating raises. Tim said that the dean’s group and an executive group make these decisions. Tim said that there has never really had a budget process for this before. Jurgen asked if the current cycle is already a done deal and also wanted to know about a general policy about wage increases moving forward, especially definitions about merit. Tim said that they definitely need more means to make process more transparent but if isn’t sure if it should be a standing committee or a policy. This will need to be debated in the coming months since it varies by percent or dollar amount. Tim apologized again for doing it inadequately this time and said that it is likely that the ship has probably already sailed. David L. asked how the
administration was looking at discrepancies with PTF parity. Tim answered that it is thought about in directly since the process is wildly different for PTF, so it was hard to compare. Richard S. asked if it was fair to say that PTF is more collective then FTF. Tim said that is true only in that there is a bargaining agreement. Elaine S. thanked Tim for having this conversation with the UFS. She also welcomed Joel and thanked him for attending the meeting. Jennifer wanted to address the comment about how faculty would feel better after they received their increase letters but wondered how much information is actually in the letter. She also wondered if Tim would send out a letter to the faculty that addresses this. Tim said that he didn’t want to rush it but that he would address some of the things in the UFS letter. He said first that he wanted to send a more general letter right now to clarify and contextualize the process, to clarify and contextualize process.

Bryna reported on the White Paper on Service

Bryna thanked the UFS for the feedback they provided on the green paper. She said that faculty interests ought be considered with service assignments and ranking of workload of service so as to ensure annual accounting of what faculty are up to and in order to reward/acknowledge faculty for their service. She said that all of this would have consequence in regard to salary increase and promotion and reappointment reviews. The white paper is the pillar of the school’s service policy. Bryna reported that the school is currently engaged with a company called Lyterati to create a faculty database. The school would then be able to make up and pull reports on what the faculty are doing.

Discussion:
There was expressed concern about going from a green paper to a white paper. The suggestion was made to have a yellow paper. There was also a question about why some recommendations were in the white paper and not others. Bryna suggested that it was critical to point out if something was missing. She also said that every division need to have a grievance process about these things and that the data collection will allow the administration to look at this every year and make adjustments. Tony said he noticed that under base load service obligations it mentioned something about recruiting students. He wondered if this was really expected since he has never been asked to do that before. Bryna said that she felt that faculty would be expected to pitch in if they had the opportunity to do so (like at a conference) but that it wouldn’t be used against the faculty, unless they were specifically asked to do it and then they refused.

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