University Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2013

In Attendance:

David Lopato, Jazz  
Jurgen Von Mahs, Lang  
Wendy D’Andrea, NSSR  
Emily Barnett, Parsons  
J.Y. Song, Mannes  
Teresa Ghilarducci, NSSR  
Ted Byfield, Parsons  
Diane Walsh, Mannes  
Chris Roselli, Drama  
Gary Vena, Drama  
Frank Nemhauser, Mannes  
Elaine Savory, Lang  
Cecilia Rubino, Lang  
Elaine Abelson, Lang  
Steve Kennedy, Parsons  
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons  
Todd Lambrix, Parsons  
Margaret Fiore, NSPE  
Peter Haratonik, NSPE  
Aleksandra Wagner, NSPE  
Nargis Virani, NSPE  
James Dodd, NSSR  
Susan Yelavich, Parsons

Not Attending:

Earl Scott, Parsons  
Warren Spielberg, NSPE

James called the meeting to order and noted he had some announcements to make before getting to the official meeting agenda. James welcomed Todd Lambrix from Parsons to the UFS. Todd will be replacing Erin Cho while she is on leave for the next two semesters. James also shared that there is a luncheon coming up that is being sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility (ACIR) at The New School. If anyone is interested in attending they should ask the co-chairs for more information.

James also touched upon a subject that was taken off the meeting’s agenda, which was how to address Bob Kerrey’s compensation, both internally and in terms of public relations. The UFS was planning to draft a resolution to ask the BoT to
address the conflict of interest inherent in Kerrey’s emeritus role since the announcement that he had taken a position with the Minerva Institute for Research and Scholarship. Since then, however, the situation has resolved itself on its own and now there is no need for such a resolution. The new chair of the BoT, Joseph Gromek, attended a meeting the co-chairs had with the President and Provost to announce the news about Kerrey before it went public. James noted that the fact that the move to ask Kerrey to step down came from within the BoT is heartening.

I. Proposed Governance Committee Resolution

As chair of the Governance Committee, Nargis presented the resolution that the Governance Committee draft and that was circulated to the UFS. The resolution seeks to increase the membership of the UFS from 27 to 30. In addition, the resolution seeks to reconfigure the formula used to determine the numbers of representatives per division so that it is more in line with current faculty distributions. Each division gets two representatives and the rest of the representation is pro-rated. The resolution was passed.

II. Faculty Affairs Report

Elaine Savory, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, began by reporting that the FAC had not met yet this semester. Elaine pointed out that since she sits on the PO FAC she felt that there should be a better work flow between that committee and the UFS FAC. Elaine mentioned that she wanted to bring information to the UFS that was discussed at the PO FAC in regard to the Faculty Handbook and Bryna said that she preferred not to have the information shared with the UFS at that point. Bryna prefers to have information filtered through the UFS co-chairs instead. Elaine also reported that in late spring there will be a demonstration conducted by a third party faculty self-report system, since the PO is looking into switch to a more standardized and user-friendly system that will not require internal maintenance. Apparently using a third party system turns out not to be as expensive as previously believed.

Discussion:

Katarzyna asked what the PO FAC was discussing in regard to the handbook. Elaine answered that they were talking about a particular paragraph in the handbook that refers to the implications of closing programs, should that ever have to happen. Elaine did point out, though, that the university is not planning on closing any programs. Language about this has always been in the handbook but now it is being made more specific. Katarzyna has always felt that the faculty’s relationship with Bryna’s office could be more collaborative. Cecilia pointed out that things are getting done or are at least in process around the university. For instance, the PO initiated the conversation about simplifying the faculty self-report process. Susan wondered if Elaine would tell Bryna that the UFS FAC would really like to share PO FAC information with the UFS with the understanding that all information would be presented as “work-in-process.” This is especially important if Elaine is to be
effective in her role as a conduit between the PO and UFS on faculty issues. James pointed out that one often gets requests to not share information and feels that a proper reaffirmation of information flow needs to take place. Chris Stover asked if the chair of the FAC is always on the PO FAC. Elaine responded that it is the logical thing to do and should be explicitly linked up if it is not already. Ted is concerned about non-University entities (i.e. firms hired to design faculty self-evaluations) that keep getting introduced around the university. He doesn’t see any reason why the self-report couldn’t be created in Google forms. It would make things easier. When administrative structures are shaped by the external agencies’ technologies, he feels that the results aren’t always ideal. Cecilia suggested that some of the UFS senators attend the self-report demonstration and report back to the full UFS. The name of company that is doing the demo is Digital Measures “Activity Insight.” It has been noted that there is already an issue with the system in that it does not allow reviewers to make comments.

Elaine then reported on the Research Council and the cluster proposals. Proposals are currently being reviewed. Decisions will be made soon. Depending on funding, this is definitely something that the university will do again next year.

Discussion:

Teresa asked for Elaine to give the UFS more details about the text in the handbook regarding the closing of programs. She felt that faculty should be aware of this sort of information. It was noted that Bryna and the PO in general are working hard to minimize the informal “deals” that faculty around the university get that have depended on individual relations between faculty and deans or chairs. Faculty ‘deals’ have been so uneven that the PO is really trying to fix that and make the process more transparent. Teresa asked if there was any discussion about annual reviews. Elaine answered no and said that what it is being talked about is the third-party technology demo. Nargis said that it is the discretion of the Senate to have the chair of the FAC on the PO FAC. Nargis recalled a time when the chair could not attend a meeting and tried to send someone in their place and Bryna said no.

III. Working Group Update

Ted and Teresa reported on the Working Group. Ted noted that getting work done during the fall was difficult because of the storm. They have reached out to a small group of people via email to see who would be willing and interested to participate in the group. This is not a subcommittee of the UFS. It is an ad hoc committee and its goal is to introduce policy recommendations that are clear and very short. Some issues that the group hopes to address include: how to facilitate externally funded research better, how to work with alumni to recruit students and create an alumni network, how to make the curriculum development process more transparent, how the university can work with the unique interests of the faculty and help them succeed. Anyone who is interested in participating should contact Ted or Teresa.
Discussion:

Elaine Savory felt that the Working Group is a great thing but is concerned that faculty who participate will not be recognized for their service as such because it is ad hoc. Ted felt that the way the university defines service should shift. Instead of service the school should come to recognize and expect “capacity building” instead of service. “Service” is too passive. Diane wondered what “capacity building” was. Teresa responded by saying that with service the faculty is expected to fit into an already defined role/position. The expectation is already spelled out. The idea would be to shift away from this and get to a place where faculty can define their own roles vis-à-vis service. Margaret wondered when the group met. Ted said that the group met last Friday but a regularly recurring meeting time has not been established at this point. Anyone from the University can join the group, including students. James felt that the group could become a very valuable resource for the Senate if it took off. He felt that the UFS is often too reactive. David Scobey, who had just come in to take part in the open part of the meeting, felt, in regard to the service conversation, that the type of shift in what constitutes service that Ted was talking about is great and that that is something review committees look for when reviewing faculty: namely, initiative.

IV. Discussion on Vision Statement with President and Provost

Provost Tim Marshall and Deborah Bogosian joined the meeting. Tim reported that David Van Zandt had jury duty and was unable to attend today’s meeting. Tim also shared that since Deborah has been the one refereeing the feedback about the Vision Statement he thought it would be helpful for her to hear their discussion.

Tim shared that the text for the Vision Statement was first developed with the Deans, and then was shared with groups in the divisions. Tim felt that everyone did good work to come to an agreement. Then the text was posted on the web. The PO has been getting feedback on the text since then and is currently working on a new draft in response to the feedback. The statement will go to the BoT next week for approval. Some people have commented on the length of the text, feeling that it should be snappier and more to the point instead of it reading as if it has been written by a large group of people. The PO will draft a Mission Statement, which will be a sharper version of the text and will be specifically for an external audience.

Susan asked if Tim could summarize the comments and feedback the PO has received.

Tim replied that in general there is support and enthusiasm for the direction of the text. There is some tension in the way the text is framed—a concern that in suggesting we are defined as a university by one content area suggests that we aren’t going to be doing anything else, which is not the intention of the text so perhaps the language should be re-written to make that point clear. The point of framing the text as it stands was to say that everything the university does will be
inflected through the identified core strengths. For example, the performance aspects of the school will be inflected through the lens of design and social research. This is an important distinction since TNS has a hard time competing with other performance schools that offer similar things since other schools have better funding and facilities so being able to offer something ideologically new is a great benefit. Overall, Tim said the University needs to emphasize, promote, and act on our core strengths.

Discussion:

Elaine Savory shared that from the perspective of Lang, it’s good to be aware of not only the history of the school but its future as well. Since Lang is younger than some other divisions, this attitude will inform greatly what happens next. Tim shared that there was an unfortunate coincidence between the publication of the Vision Statement and the launch of the new website, since there have been a lot of changes to the new website in subsequent weeks. The home page now has a much better balance of programs offered by the school. Emily wondered if there was any way to include the text “studio art” in addition to “performing art.” Tim replied that there is language there that speaks to both. The text “creative arts” is there. Since there is a strong desire not to index everything the school does, some generalizations must be made. James pointed out that a timeline of TNS history was also sent around with the Vision Statement announcement, which he thought was helpful. Tim pointed out that on one hand TNS is diverse because it has a lot of different brands and because things have grown out and been pieced together untraditionally, but on the other hand TNS is structured more simply than most schools since really the main focus of the school is liberal arts and a small number of professional programs. It isn’t necessarily complicated on a content level. It is, however, complicated on a branding level. Jurgen shared that he was concerned about not emphasizing undergraduate liberal arts since that is such a big part of the school’s recruiting efforts. Tim has received a lot of similar feedback about that so changes are being discussed in regard to that. Wendy suggested that the statement be organized in a clearer manner, having the first part state what the school prioritizes and having the second part state how the school acts on those priorities. Right now the document goes back and forth on these points throughout the document. Tim felt it was good advice to make a clear distinction between a mission statement and a vision statement. Teresa shared that it is good to move away from examples because then you just have a list of information. David Lopato raised concerns about the use of the word “design” since it is being cast in a philosophical context and it’s hard to make sense of when coupled with performing arts. Performing arts as a manifestation of design seemed to him and others to be ill-conceived. The jazz program at TNS is competitive with other programs. Tim pointed out that competitiveness has to do with how many people you accept.

Regarding the performing arts, Tim pointed out again that one can relate the idea of design strategies (signaling something practical) with how to design and manage one’s career. This is already happening here, and so the school just needs a better
way of harnessing it. James felt that people were reacting to the tendency to look through the lens of just two pursuits/areas of scholarship—namely, design and social research. He asked, why not conceive of the university in a more modular framework? Ted shared that binary oppositions don’t tend to be generative and he wondered how Tim and the PO foresaw it working. How does the PO see it effecting changes? Tim replied that the vision statement would inform investments, grants, and decision making about priorities moving forward. The vision statement is intended to say that TNS is a place to go to for X. Gary shared a recent interaction he had with a former student about how she was constantly seeking out and learning about new ways to “sell” herself in her art. Gary said he wasn’t sure how Drama was helping its students do this but it seems that Drama is indeed helping and there is a connection to what Tim is talking about his own experience with students and alums. It was noted that the school has had to professionalize in order to give students more options. Maybe this has caused the school to drift away from its experimental roots. David Scobey shared that there are problematic effects of the ‘design and social’ meme. References to design and social research speak more to methodologies, so that makes him think it shouldn’t be the meme of the document. Cecilia felt that having other words (i.e. humanities) in the document would be good since would speak to the legacy of the school. Tim felt that he wanted the school to have a clear representation but perhaps it should be more artful. Margaret pointed out the perhaps the document is missing the word “communication.” She saw a couple of places where that word would fit and feels it is important since it speaks to a more substantive skill needed in the world. Wendy asked if the school had a slogan. Perhaps it should? Peter reminded everyone that TNS is also known for its non-traditional students and that this should be taken into consideration when seeking to attract people to the school.

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