The New School University Faculty Senate (UFS)
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 1, 2011; 8:30 am – 10:00 am
66 West 12\textsuperscript{th} Street, Orozco Room, Rm. 712

Minutes from the sixth session of the 2010-11 Senate
closed session, 8:30–9:00 am
full session, 9:00 am–10:00 am
Chaired by Nidhi Srinivas

Present:

Senators:
Alexandra Chasin, Co-Chair, Lang
Nidhi Srinivas, Co-Chair, Milano
Ken Stevens, Co-Chair, Parsons
Nargis Virani, Secretary, NSGS
Shoshanah Goldberg, Milano
Jeffrey Goldfarb, NSSR
Gary Vena, Drama
Andrew Arato, NSSR
Richard Boukas, Jazz
Peter Eisinger, Milano Barbara Seigel, Parsons
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Paul Hardart, NSGS
Bhawani Venkataraman, Lang
Rose Rejouis, Lang
Mara Kurtz, Parsons
David J. Lewis, Parsons
Christopher Shinn, Drama
Ju-Ying Song, Mannes
Chris Stover, Jazz
Warren Spielberg, NSGS
Howard Steele, NSSR
Paula Stuttman, NSGS
Aleksandra Wagner, NSGS
Susan Yelavich, Parsons

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

Welcome:
Nidhi Srinivas opened the meeting at 8:30 am.

Approval of Minutes from the University Faculty Senate meeting on February 1 2011:
The minutes from the February 1, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Reports from Chairs of Standing Committees:

Faculty Affairs Committee:
Committee Chair Aleksandra Wagner (NSGS) reported that the committee has been collating a more complete list of issues that the Senate might like the Faculty Affairs to take up. These include: benefits related to leave, healthcare and retirement; research, including travel. Wagner also reported that she had met with Michele Davis of Human Resources, who has invited the participation of a Senator from the committee to join Susan Yelavich has agreed to serve in that role. Wagner is waiting to hear from the Provost’s office. Barbara Seigel mentioned that part time faculty has recourse to address issues but it seems that full time faculty has no system in place to address issues affecting them. The committee was asked to prepare a list of contacts to whom full time faculty can go for redress. This, in turn, raised again the question of an ombudsperson; though there had been a hire in process, that process has now been suspended. President David van Zandt is of the opinion that an ombudsperson is not necessary if systems are in place as they should.

Susan Yelavich mentioned that the Senate had passed a similar resolution with regards to an ombudsperson either in 06-07 or 07/08. Katarzyna agreed. A request was made for a listing of past resolutions and it was pointed out that past resolutions are posted on the UFS website. Nidhi pointed out that we need to ensure all resolutions are posted on the website.

Governance Committee:
Committee Chair Paula Stutman (NSGS) reported that the by-laws state the total number of members on the Senate as 27. The correct number of senators representing the newly created NSGS/Milano division is still under discussion. The committee proposes to clarify the explanation of the calculation for the number of representatives in the Senate’s by-laws. The committee also notices that there is significant turnover of Senators at the end of this academic year and recommends moving to a system that would be designed to maximize continuity on the Senate. The committee suggests a grace period allowing for the extensions of terms of certain Senators currently serving in order to get back to a more stable and stabilizing system. Alexandra reminded everyone that the Senate’s role is to suggest it to the Divisions but it is up to each Division to decide.
The committee will bring relevant proposals for resolution to the next Senate meeting, and will require more time in the agenda to have a full discussion about the role of the Secretary. The current by-laws state that the Senate consists of four officers; the secretary’s position is that of an officer. The current by-laws do not distinguish between the co-chairs’ and the secretary’s position.

**Infrastructure Committee:**
Committee Chair David Lewis (Parsons) moved to have the committee’s name officially changed to the Infrastructure Committee. Richard Boukas seconded. The resolution was unanimously passed.

The committee continues to believe that faculty could be better represented in more efficient policy-setting bodies in The New School. Decisions would benefit from comparisons with best practices at other institutions.

The SafeConnect audit results have been postponed. They will not be delivered in February as earlier stated, but are now expected in April.

The committee’s next meeting will be March 22nd.

The committee is working aggressively on issues related to laptop software, trying to identify from peer institutions their comparable policies in this regard. Richard Boukas mentioned that it would be advisable to get in touch with the Berkeley School of Music, Wesleyan, etc. to find out what software they permit or pay for.

The committee will focus in the future on the problem of mobile technology, noting that space limitations at The New School make it impossible for there to be enough desktops for all the students (and faculty) to do all the work they are required to do. Since this means that many students and faculty have to purchase their own computers to do coursework, this make for unfair and unjust policies that put some faculty and students at a clear disadvantage. Currently some programs (The graduate programs in SCE for instance) are required to have a laptop, which makes the expense eligible for a loan. The committee will consider the logic and the implications for wider implementation of this strategy in The New School. This issue has ramifications for both students and faculty.

Paula asked if this would include individuals who do not have their own laptops. Nidhi suggested that we find a way to be part of the IT policy-making body. Alexandra suggested that someone commission a cost analysis from academic technology for giving faculty laptops with software. Nidhi suggested we proceed realistically by first studying what is prevalent, then add desired ideal goal and match the current with the ideal.

**Report on Liaison with the University Student Senate (USS):**
Howard Steele (NSSR) reported that he had issued an invitation to the USS to send a member or two to this meeting, but never received a response. The co-chairs will issue invitations to the next Open Session of the UFS, which is the final meeting of the year. Steele also reported an interest from the New School Free Press in attending a UFS meeting. Co-chairs will also issue an invitation to the next Open Session to a reporter from the NSFP.
Divisional Updates were postponed

The “new division,” The NSSR and Parsons will give divisional updates at the next meeting.

II. Open Session
Co-Chair Nidhi Srinivas welcomed President David Van Zandt as well as Provost Tim Marshall and David Scobey, Dean of NSGS/Milano and Deans’ Council Representative, to the session. He invited them to address the Senate but suggested they also leave some time for questions.

Remarks by David Van Zandt:
The President started by saying he has spent much of this time talking to various constituencies within the University. He has come away very impressed by the faculty and staff’s energy and enthusiasm for their respective work. He also senses much positive energy among the students. However, he feels there is not enough discussion around issues of quality. Quality must become part of our vocabulary. In addition we need to look at issues of accountability. This includes offering the students best services not only when they are with us, but also tracking their trajectories and successes beyond their school years. It also includes tracking how our faculty performs in class and in their areas of research. To this end the President has spent much time with the Deans and the VPs discussing how we can improve quality and accountability. We also need to develop a long-term ongoing vision and plan for the University. It is a remarkable institution but does not seem to take advantage of all its constituencies. This will be a consultative process at all levels. He sees his job as throwing around ideas for people to draw upon, it is then up to the leadership to accept and chart directions. Tim Marshall’s job is to push us to make decisions.

Our big challenges are space limitations in the foreseeable future and, to some extent finances, although we are comfortable on a year-to-year basis. The new building will provide considerable space but it also puts us into a bind to raise the enrollments from 10,000 to 14,000 in order to generate sufficient revenue. We will have to look at alternate ways of generating funds. It is here that good customer service to students during their time here and following them later will reap benefits. We need to change the service culture around the entire institution. Students should not have to go to multiple locations and individuals for related issues. We have got to make services more rational. We also need to be more aware of how we treat and ought to treat each other. Follow up on issues is also a necessary part of providing service. We need to identify service matrix at each level and have it publicly available. This includes financial aid for students, professional help for faculty. Tim’s office is working on several research opportunities for faculty.

The University also needs to work on its academic platform and infrastructure. For example, a common schedule will allow faculty to move easily between their offerings in
different divisions. The President has asked the Deans and VPs to have the common schedule finalized and operational for Fall 2011. However, the teaching schedule is not expected to be set until Fall 2012.

According to the President a body like the University Faculty Senate (UFS) can be very helpful for focusing on issues that are difficult to address with the larger body. He intends to use the UFS, work with different groups in the UFS, count on them as partners in moving the University to the next stage. That is the President’s management style.

The President opened it up for questions. Richard Boukas started by expressing his appreciation for the ready access to the President. He suggested the University take up a more aggressive stance in its offerings of online courses. It will facilitate the internationalization of the University and its goal of global expansion. Online courses require working closely with faculty with regards to issues of various technological and pedagogical models out there.

Nidhi mentioned briefly the past history of adversarial relationship(s) between faculty and administration. More relevantly for the future, he wished to focus on collegial and productive relationship(s) with the administration, with senior leaders of the University whose decisions affect faculty and students alike. What are the best ways to work together; we as faculty were very keen on having an ombudsperson because currently faculty, particularly full-time faculty, has no point person to bring up issues relevant to them.

The President responded by saying that the fact that academics and administration were, to some extent, on opposite sides was not lost upon him. However, he does not come from an institution, which had such a sharp dichotomy. Everyone worked together, providing their individual perspectives including members of the staff. He is currently going through the process of putting certain structures in place. Deans and VPs are already working together. In his opinion, to have an ombudsperson somehow solidifies the existing dichotomy, putting different constituencies at further odds with each other. He would not like that. He wishes to start from where we currently are, get out of past patterns and look forward. There are clearly many institutional issues that he is very aware of, and has tried to change some of them during his short tenure through being readily accessible. He wants to get things done.

Aleksandra asked whether the President intends to add personnel or refocus existing personnel to align with his vision and get the several initiatives going? David Van Zandt responded by saying he does not intend to bring in new people. He realizes that there is a lot on each person’s plate and that everyone feels stretched at the moment. However, in his opinion, most things he talked about require reorientation and refocusing.

David Lewis brought up the tension between the ideal of academic excellence versus the reality of needing higher enrollments. How would the President go about prioritizing within this hierarchy of choices? The President confessed that he, too, found the various projections and growth figures rather puzzling when he first looked at them. He found no discussion of quality built into this quantitative growth such as enhancing our reputation, reaching out to alumni, including higher high school GPA, SAT, GRE, etc. Therefore, he has asked all deans to identify what they are looking for. He also wishes to approve
certain objective standards for promotion, tenure, even though there is always a
subjective element to these, strong articulation of standards is always helpful. All our
programs have different goals, we need to identify and know where we are.

Jeffery wished to revisit the issue of quality and quantity from the perspective of quality
of our curriculum and our research, as it exists within our Divisions. It is necessary to
keep alive projects we inherit. David Van Zandt responded by saying it is critical to
understand how divisions can help each other, work together communally and
individually whilst the administration endeavors to turn this into a University by
restructuring services making all divisions more than the sum of our parts. We had
announced a number of joint initiatives but they were pulled back. The past push to make
the University whole may have been a little too rigid. He does not think we can copy a
traditional university. We can cross divisions to make something new. Since he has been
here, the President has seen more efforts across divisions, faculty have a foot in different
divisions. The question is does one force this centrally or allow individuals to forge this?

Tim Marshall added to this by saying that issues of faculty working together are being
worked on more quietly. More joint faculty appointments are being made, engaging
faculty in different divisions without the burden of extra committee work, extra
supervision, etc. These may be simple ways but that is what scared faculty off in the past
with rather botched up attempts. 56% of NSSR joint appointments are with Lang and
these relationships are working better. Not only individual faculty but also departments
are now working together. Very interesting programs are emerging through this joint
venture. Parsons and Lang are currently talking about opening up a Liberal Arts
initiative. There is a lot of activity going on but not out in public, it is critical to
strengthen the culture before making this too public. Individual divisions are thinking
through their relationship with the University.

David Van Zandt acknowledged Tim and his office’s substantial role in this transition
period. He called Tim one of the greatest assets as well as our Deans a tremendous group.
Nargis reminded everyone that it was the UFS, which had insisted upon the past
President, Bob Kerry, that Tim Marshall’s contract be renewed so he could continue as
the Provost during the transition period. She also urged the President and Provost’s
office not to let much of the past work done by the UFS be lost during this restructuring
phase and asked if the UFS could prepare a list of such work and forward it to their
respective offices. The President responded that he and Tim meet with the UFS co-chairs
on a regular basis precisely for this reason and would be very open to discussing these
pending issues.

Alexandra reminded everyone that the Faculty Handbook is an ongoing process-a work in
progress, an initiative between Tim’s office via Jim Miller and the UFS. It is important
to remember that the initiative on customer service does not displace the Faculty
Handbook work.

Warren Speilberg wished to remind everyone that in the midst of discussion on creativity
and freedom the issue of fragmentation is not forgotten, especially the pending issue of
part-time faculty to be brought together with full-time faculty and students.

Alexandra announced the sad demise of one of her colleagues at Lang-Akilah Oliver
(1961-2011).
Nidhi Srinivas thanked President Van Zandt, Provost Marshall, and Dean Scobey for their time. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.