University Faculty Senate Meeting
Tuesday, April 9, 2013

In Attendance:

Candy Schulman, NSPE
David Lopato, Jazz
Earl Scott, Parsons
Emily Barnett, Parsons
Gary Vena, Drama
J.Y. Song, Mannes
Nargis Virani, NSPE
Frank Nemhauser, Mannes
Aleksandra Wagner, NSPE
Wendy D’Andrea, NSSR
Elaine Abelson, Lang
Cecilia Rubino, Lang
Steve Kennedy, Parsons
Katarzyna Gruda, Parsons
Todd Lambrix, Parsons
Peter Haratonik, NSPE
Ted Byfield, Parsons
Margaret Fiore, NSPE
James Dodd, NSSR
Chris Stover, Jazz

Not Attending:

Susan Yelavich, Parsons
Teresa Ghilarducci, NSSR
Chris Roselli, Drama
Elaine Savory, Lang
Diane Walsh, Mannes
Jurgen Von Mahs, Lang

I. Quick UFS Business

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

Governance Committee Report [See attached]

Gary Vena reported on behalf of Chair Nargis Virani. Gary shared that the Governance Committee is accepting the role of facilitator in regard to divisional protocol and elections. Gary shared that the Governance Committee is open to
comments and suggestions from the UFS. The memo will be drafted in a more attractive way before it goes out to the divisions.

Discussion:
David Lopato asked for clarification about divisions maintaining term length. Nargis shared that the divisions should be keeping track of how long people are serving on the UFS. Nargis also reiterated that the Governance Committee needed to know which current members of the UFS were eligible to serve again. She will send around list as a Google document for individual editing.

Chris reminded everyone to begin thinking about nominations for three new co-chairs, since the current ones will be stepping down at the end of the semester. He also reminded everyone to look at Steve Kennedy’s Curriculum Committee report, which was circulated prior to the meeting.

Faculty Affairs Committee Report

Frank Nemhauser reported on behalf of Chair Elaine Savory. Frank reported that the FAC has not met as a group for a while, but the work they have mostly been dealing with has been on the faculty handbook, which will be addressed during the presentation scheduled for the open portion of the meeting.

Infrastructure Committee Report

Ted Byfield stated that there was nothing to report.

Chris shared that the co-chairs requested a detailed walk-through of the new building, on a date scheduled specifically for the co-chairs and IC. Chris will email the UFS to see if anyone else would also like to attend.

II. Open Portion

A. Full-Time Faculty Handbook

Joined by Bryna Sanger, Tim Marshall, Eleni Litt, Rosalie Sullivan, Jim Miller and David Van Zandt to discuss edits being made to the Full-Time Faculty Handbook.

Tim reported that the PO had been trying for many years to work on faculty governance issues in a more transparent and mature way, while remaining as collaborative as possible. The PO adopted a green paper/white paper system to encourage this process. The UFS and the Deans are the last stops in the process before changes are presented to the President and the BoT. The PO is interested in building more trust and confidence among the faculty and hopes that processes like this encourage that to happen. Tim reported that one part of the Handbook that has not been edited was the workload portion. The reason this part was not edited is because attention needed to be paid to other issues first. The PO wanted to work on
securing work at the university before piecing it out, as there are all manner of unintended consequences when working on policies like this. The PO wanted to be careful to frame its principals first.

Jim Miller shared that put in a broader context the UFS has been crucial to ensure that consultation happens because it has had a long history with full time faculty revisions or lack thereof.

Bryna reported that there has been an on-going revision process in regard to the Handbook. The two major revisions made to the handbook were a result of the green paper/white paper process and other discussions in which there was faculty consultation. The UFS FAC and the PO FAC collaborated on the revisions. Editorial changes were made to make the Handbook more accessible and readable. A question they faced when making edits was to determine how much of the information should be available and updated frequently on the web. The Handbook itself is much smaller and clearer. Both the deans and the associate deans gave feedback. Bryna welcomed feedback from the UFS, if any other issues have arisen. She also shared that the UFS co-chairs attending a meeting with the PO FAC when edits were being made. A lot of different groups of people around the university have been involved in reviewing the Handbook. There are still a few weeks left before the document will go to the BoT so the UFS is encouraged to share any concerns they have sooner rather than later.

Discussion:

Wendy said she didn’t get the email with the Handbook that had been sent out to the full-time faculty. Rosalie confirmed that an email was sent from the PO in March.

Ted gave a summary report of the comments gathered from a recent Parsons Faculty Council meeting. Some comments were written and compiled. Ted said he would email those comments to the PO. But a lot of the comments were just verbal. A lot of the Parsons faculty felt that they were not consulted in this process. There was also concern about whether or not the Handbook has the status of a contract. Parsons faculty are split on this issue. One concrete suggestion that was made was that when changes are made that those changes should be indicated and dated. This should be done to track changes made over time. The faculty were particularly concerned about benefits, and wondered if they are being/have been pared down. Another suggestion was setting up some kind of public commenting forum for the faculty.

Bryna responded by saying that there were university-level and division-level discussion about Handbook revisions. Comments were solicited at the divisional level and came to the PO in an aggregate form. She isn’t sure if receiving every individual faculty comment would have been helpful. The logic of the process was to get a sense of what the big issues were. She reported that there were significant differences between the kinds of information that would remain in the Handbook
and that which would be moved online. The belief is that the information on the web should be on the web because it will need to be updated more regularly.

James wondered what the difference was between the material in the Handbook and online, and if edits to the web materials would need to be approved by the BoT. Tim shared that the materials that are moving online include things like links to HR information that pertain to benefits. The idea is to have a consistent place where all similar types of information live. This also includes the faculty resources list. There was language in the Handbook that didn’t even apply or exist anymore in regard to a resource list. There was also language pertaining to affirmative action that was updated to be more relevant.

Bryna reminded the UFS that the Grievance Committee practices were revised by the UFS after the need for the committee arose. Jim felt that the UFS should try to be more proactive instead of reactive.

James reiterated the concern about whether or not the Handbook was contractual. There is a lot of anxiety around the university in regard to contracts. It would be good to know the relationship between the Handbook and individual contracts. Tim shared that individual contracts trump anything else. The Handbook explains what should be in an individual contract. James felt that many faculty needed this point to be made more clearly. Bryna shared that it is always the case that by law a faculty contract would trump what is in the Handbook. She also addressed the concern about which version of the Handbook faculty are to follow. Bryna made clear that no matter what year faculty were hired everyone is covered by the same Handbook. The Handbook serves as a best practices document.

Nargis noted that both faculty and the PO have come a long way, but noted that maybe more consultation would be a good thing. She suggested having a town hall meeting just for faculty, so that all faculty related issues could be discussed then. The co-chairs are planning to host a UFS led town hall in the fall. Emily pointed out that a discussion about the Handbook pertains only to FTF and not PTF, and therefore might burden the town hall if the town hall is meant for all faculty.

Aleksandra wondered what the time frame was that the PO hoped to address the workload portion of the Handbook. She pointed out that faculty who are helping to develop programs and performing other service now want to know how their work will be evaluated later, and when uniformity across the divisions will occur. Tim felt that the university will be in a better place to do this in this coming academic year. The university does have a workload policy, and a lot of work has been done in regard to supplemental pay and leaves. Right now the PO is setting the ground work and trying to work out what should be central and what should be local. This will avoid tensions and burdens later.

Jim reported that he served on a workload committee several years ago and the biggest issue was that the university was unable to produce and accumulate
accurate and reliable data about what faculty were doing. Moving forward, the university will have better data, from which to make a more informed policy. Bryna reported that this year the faculty self-report asked specific questions about how much time faculty spent on things. Once aggregated, this data will serve as a base line. Another issue that needs to be addressed is how much should be centrally defined versus locally defined.

James asked whether the Handbook will have an appendix of divisional charters. He felt that workload should relate to these charters. Cecilia provided feedback from Lang faculty. Faculty were worried about the contractual language issue at first but then after doing some research learned that other handbooks at other universities were constructed the same way. Lang faculty expressed concern about the way RTA faculty are represented in the handbook. Since RTAs are constantly undergoing reviews, Cecilia felt it was important to know where they were in regard to policies like leaves. She also felt that the RTA review process was more stringent at Lang than at other divisions. The Handbook should be more clear about what RTAs are being reviewed on. Tim agreed that a balance must be found, and he would appreciate input from the UFS. He agreed that job descriptions should be primary. Bryna asked that the UFS appointment grievance committee members by May 1 for the next year so there would be no last minute scrambling if the committee should be called upon. James reminded her that it is a standing committee so there are already members appointed.

Bryna asked the UFS to give the PO comments about the handbook no later than April 17.

David Lopato asked about the breakdown of faculty numbers. Eleni answered that there are 400 FTF: 201 RTA, 188 tenure, 42 EE, compared to 1600 PTF.

B. Shared Capacities Initiative [See attached]

Joined by Adrienne Marcus and Joseph Salvatore

Adrienne reported on the Shared Capacities Initiative. The university is continually trying to integrate and develop clarity for students in a deliberate way about what it means to get an education at TNS. They are not calling it “general education” for a reason. That term has a negative feel to it, as if it was setting up a hierarchy of disciplines. Instead they are trying to create a list of “capacities.” How the capacities get implemented will look different from division to division. Adrienne and her team have been doing a lot of research on this topic and have been following the national conversation, which has been to move away from core curricula, towards an emphasis on the skill base being taught and how that skill will be used after the student graduates.

A subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee has been established, which is busy meeting with a lot of groups around the university. The
The subcommittee is also acting as a reading group, collecting a good list of reading material to share with the community. In the fall, the subcommittee hopes to attend divisional faculty meetings and to have public events and information sessions that will be videotaped and put online, in an effort to develop a long list of capacities that TNS wants to focus on, and which also relate to the vision statement for the university. After a long list is compiled, faculty across the university will vote online about what capacities they would like to see TNS adopt. In the spring, the subcommittee will put together three proposals that will be voted on and finalized. In May 2014 the subcommittee will put together a report for the PO and hopefully the capacities will be institutionalized. The following year the divisions will see how they are already meeting the capacities and then moving forward will see how capacities can be fulfilled if they aren’t already being met.

Discussion:
Elaine asked if this would be required for students to graduate. Adrienne answered that yes, some courses would be required. Elaine asked if foreign languages would be a requirement. Adrienne answered that it could be, depending on the division. Peter asked if students would get to define their own capacities. Adrienne shared that capacities could be met through classes or assignments. These capacities would be defined before students get here. Defining a capacity does not define a course or its content. Emily asked if any PTF were serving on the subcommittee. Adrienne answered yes. Chris wondered about the word “capacity” and used the word “value” as a stand in, but is having a hard time making sense of its usage. Adrienne defined the word “capacity” as “transferable skills.” Ted felt that in the past these would have been called “competencies,” and was troubled by the word “capacity.” David Lopato also had a problem with the word and felt that it was important to find a better word. James felt that trying to find one word to define all the divisions risked being vague and might end up meaning nothing. He was troubled by the word “capacity” being used at the beginning of a process that would run through a person’s life and maybe not be apparent necessarily upon graduation. Adrienne shared that this is one project among many. This is a curricular-based project and she is looking forward to having this conversation with faculty. What does the university want undergraduates to leave with? Adrienne reiterated that the next step would be in the early fall when the subcommittee meets with the divisions to get feedback.

Chris made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved.
re: News from the Governance Committee

1 message

Gary Vena <venag@newschool.edu>  Fri, Apr 5, 2013 at 12:49 PM
To: Nargis Virani <viranin@newschool.edu>

APRIL 9th, 2013:  NEWS FROM THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE ROLE OF FACILITATOR/COORDINATOR REGARDING FACULTY SENATE ELECTIONS. WE WILL WRITE A LETTER TO EACH DIVISION HEAD (DEAN/ DIRECTOR) INDICATING OUR INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNICATION WITH EACH DIVISION.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS WILL BE INCLUDED:

(1) UPDATED INFORMATION ON NUMBERS OF SENATORS IN EACH DIVISION.

(2) THE INCREASE TO A 3-YEAR TERM AS WELL AS THE INCREASE TO 30 SENATORS, RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

(3) THE PROPORTION OF PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME REPRESENTATION. OUR RECOMMENDATION IS TO CONTINUE THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF 1/3 PT AND 2/3 FT, BUT WE RESPECT EACH DIVISION'S DECISION TO DETERMINE THIS.

(4) THE SUBMITTAL OF NAMES OF NEWLY ELECTED SENATORS BY MAY 3rd, SINCE THE LAST FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF THE SPRING SEMESTER IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 7th.

(5) IF CURRENT SENATORS ARE ELIGIBLE TO RUN AGAIN, WE SUGGEST YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE FACULTY TO FIND OUT IF THEY WISH TO RUN AGAIN. PLEASE LET OTHER FACULTY KNOW THAT THAT PERSON IS CURRENTLY A SENATOR.

(6) WE RECOMMEND THAT EACH SENATOR'S TERM BE CAREFULLY MONITORED BY EACH DIVISION.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
**Shared Capacities Initiative - website landing page**

*Why we are not calling it “general education”:* The term “general education” has connotations of large institutional mandates, but we want to emphasize the local means to identify the capacities determined through a shared process across the university.

This is the first in a series of orienting documents that we’ll use to update you as to where we are in the arc of this project. We invite you to participate as fully as you want and are able to. Look for updates here and invitations to hear, comment on, and give input into this exciting opportunity to co-create a shared set of university capacities that gives a fuller life to the values expressed in our vision statement. Although the plans for steps after 2013-14 may change from what is indicated below, we believe that this work will continue over a number of years, as we carefully determine how to implement the shared capacities resulting from our conversation next year, and how to build in an iterative process that allows for revisiting and modifying as conditions, values, and priorities change.

General education models have traditionally provided undergraduate students broad exposure to multiple disciplines, forming the basis for intellectual skills and civic sensibilities. Often these models developed into a required core curriculum or a list of distributional courses, serving as foundations for in-depth study in the major. To be clear, the model we imagine is not a common core nor a list of required, distributed courses but rather comes from the agency of each division in articulating its own, localized means of helping students to meet these shared capacities. We believe many of the shared capacities that will be discussed in the coming year are already incorporated into students’ learning arcs in their division and program. Through this process, the university will develop ways for students to gain increasingly complex capacities that can be used and shared across multiple disciplines, before and while they are studying within their major, an experience that will prepare them for life after graduation.

We are, therefore, part of the emerging practice with other colleges and universities in the twenty-first century that are developing innovative general education structures that scaffold student learning and reflection in ways that are both integrative and intentional. These structures support the major by connecting learning across disciplines, both in and out of the classroom, and by preparing students for the challenges of the future through a “liberal education.”
Liberal education is an approach to learning that empowers students and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world as well as in-depth achievement in at least one specific field of study. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, strong cross-disciplinary intellectual and practical skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. (For more information about the definition of liberal education in this context: https://secure.aacu.org/PubExcerpts/Conte.html)

The New School is beginning a process to develop its own understanding of a liberal education, framing through its curricula the university’s priorities as described in the vision statement developed by the President, Provost, and Deans (http://www.newschool.edu/leadership/vision/) as well as in the current research and best practices in undergraduate education (faculty will soon receive an invitation to a Blackboard site with resources).

As the first step in this process, during the 2013-2014 academic year a faculty subcommittee (link to list of Shared Capacities Subcommittee members on Provost’s Office website) of the University Curriculum Committee will lead out a university-wide conversation, inviting faculty and students to think and talk about what capacities all undergraduate students should be expected to develop by the time they graduate, regardless of division or program. Through a coordinated discussion both on-campus and on-line, the members of the subcommittee will seek wide faculty input and consideration. Our conversations will be guided by the research of the Association of American Colleges and University (www.aacu.org), and particularly its Liberal Education and America’s Promise, or LEAP, initiative (http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm) and the Essential Learning Outcomes, which that initiative has defined (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm). AAC&U uses research from within and outside the academy to develop guidance for higher education institutions incorporating aspirational as well as practical goals. We hope that this opportunity to engage colleagues across the university in considering the shape of an undergraduate New School education will yield not only a list of shared capacities, but also a common space to continue communicating with each other about our work of teaching and learning.

Please check back here for information on upcoming events and additional resources. You may also email Joseph Salvatore (salvatoj@newschool.edu) or Adrienne Marcus (marcusa@newschool.edu), Co-Chairs of the subcommittee, if you have questions about the process.

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Shared Capacities Subcommittee Members:
Julia Dault – Faculty and Assistant Dean of Curriculum, Parsons
Erica Fae – Faculty, Drama
Richard Harper – Faculty, Jazz
Mark Larrimore – Faculty, Lang
Adrienne Marcus – co-chair, Admin, Provost’s Office
Joseph Salvatore – co-chair, Faculty, NSPE
Faye-Ellen Silverman – Faculty, Mannes
John Vanderlippe – Faculty and Associate Dean of Faculty, NSSR