The New School University Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 8:30 am – 10:00 am
66 West 12th Street, Orozco Room, Rm. 712

Minutes from the first session of the 2010-11 Senate – Senators-Only/Closed Session. Chaired by Ken Stevens.

Present:
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
Steven Kennedy, Parsons
Mara Kurtz, Parsons
David Loeb, Mannes
Arien Mack, NSSR
David Marcinkowski, NSGS
Rose Rejouis, Lang
Chris Shinn, Drama
Ju-Ying Song, Mannes
Chris Stover, Jazz
Paula Stuttman, NSGS
Howard Steele, NSSR
Gary Vena, Drama
Bhawani Venkataraman, Lang
Aleksandra Wagner, NSGS
Susan Yelavich, Parsons
Welcome and Introductions:
The meeting was opened by Ken Stevens at 8:33 am. He welcomed the Senators to the first session of the 2010-2011 Academic Year. His welcome remarks were followed by introductions of the Senators.

Report of Co-Chairs on meetings with Provost Marshall:
Stevens reported on the monthly meetings he and the Co-Chairs have had with Provost Marshall. The Co-Chairs were impressed by the Provost’s support, as the Provost affirmed viewing the Senate as faculty leadership agency and a body of continuity and stability in a time of change and transition.

Review and discussion of September 8, 2010 meeting with President-Designate David Van Zandt:
The Senators reflected on their initial meeting with President-Designate David Van Zandt. It was suggested that regular meetings with Van Zandt be implemented when he starts in January of 2011. The Co-Chairs asked the Senators to share their thoughts and ideas for building a constructive relationship between the Senate and the new President. The question was raised as to how to communicate the ethos of The New School to the incoming President. It was stated that the President-Designate currently is learning a lot about The New School, that he seems open to the learning process and very interested in the The New School’s structure. It was suggested that the Senate advise Van Zandt about the nature of its work, building on last year’s discussion about offering arts curricula to non-majors, online learning, and interdisciplinary efforts of faculty and students to continue exploring new learning opportunities. A concern was raised that the President-Designate had admitted not being fond of committee work, but that he was more interested in creating intimate contacts instead. A discussion ensued as to how these more intimate meetings should be structured to include the Senators.

Ken Stevens reported on the Co-Chairs’ meeting with the Deans and Van Zandt in which Van Zandt had reiterated the importance of the Provost’s office. One concern of the Co-Chairs was the rearrangement of power - with the provost office ascending - in a time of change. Stevens affirmed that the Senate currently has a candid relationship with the Provost. A discussion ensued as to how a power shift towards the Provost Office might affect the rest of The New School. Furthermore, the Senators were impressed by Van Zandt’s interdisciplinary approach; however, as he comes from a different academic background, it was suggested that the Senate should educate him on the fields of the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
Introduction of Chairs of Standing Committees, discussion of committee service & prospective issues for the coming year:
Ken Stevens affirmed that this year’s committee work will be intensive. He said the Senate needed to be considerate about the committees. Every Senator should be a member of one standing committee. The Co-Chairs reiterated the importance of the committee work, as the full Senate meetings would not provide time for in-depth discussions of specific issues. The actual work has to be done in the committees.

Academic Planning Committee (APC):
Committee Chair David Lewis was excused, as he was out of town. David Marcinkowski reported that the APC members regularly attended the university-wide committee meetings about the new University Center. He remarked that David Lewis had done fabulous work chairing the APC and noted that the APC’s role in participating in the UFC meetings and the university at large was an essential opportunity. Marcinkowski was impressed by the extent to which the APC’s suggestions had been considered and incorporated into future plans for the new facility. He suggested looking at the APC’s engagement and collaboration with other university committees as a model for other subcommittees. It was brought up that this model only worked if comparable university-wide committees existed. The importance of working together with the administration was pointed out, and a suggestion was made that the Senate looked into other university committees to explore collaborations and build bridges across The New School’s structure.

IT/Wireless concerns:
The discussion went on to the security of the school’s wireless network and whether it was the Senate’s responsibility to address this issue. It was reiterated that the committees are empowered to ask for external help if the members do not have the necessary expertise, especially regarding technical questions such as IT security. It was mentioned that a university-committee dealing with this issue already existed - the P-3. In response to the questions as to whether the P-3 was engaged in any policy formulation, it was clarified that P-3 does not address any policy issues. Richard Boukas, a member of the P-3 committee, noted one issue this committee had was the small amount of meetings, making it difficult for the committee members to examine issues and find appropriate solutions. The discussion then moved to the earlier topic of online learning initiatives as an important issue for the Senate to weigh in on. It was reiterated that the TT/Wireless concerns are two-fold: 1) hardware/software issues and, 2) policy issues. It was pointed out that this was a good opportunity for the Senate to increase its
involvement with the administration to create policies. The Co-Chairs suggested continuing this conversation after the official Senate meeting.

**Faculty Affairs Committee:**
Committee Chair Aleksandra Wagner stated that she hopes to find committee members who are truly invested in the issues of this committee.

Faculty Handbook: Wagner reported that she had been invited to join Jim Miller’s committee to revise the Faculty Handbook. They met the new NSGS Executive Dean who appeared to be very invested in faculty affairs and concerns, which she found very positive. It was clarified that Jim Miller is a former Senate Co-Chair who now also works in the Provost Office moving things forward. It was noted that the Faculty Handbook revisions have to be approved by the Board of Trustees as the revisions have budgetary implications. The importance of hearing different voices in this committee was pointed out, and it was felt that this was a good opportunity to broaden its membership across the divisions.

Compensation: Ken Stevens mentioned the importance of examining pay equity across divisions, considering workload and the degree of faculty-student contact outside classes. It was stated that it was difficult to find a general salary amount that fits the wide variety of teaching structures at The New School, given nontraditional courses and classes, e.g. lecture vs. studio at Parsons. It was reiterated that the workload question was a big issue and that it was difficult to find a common definition both within and across divisions.

**Governance Committee:**
It was pointed out that this committee needed more members. Committee responsibilities include by-laws revision, such as enabling divisions to have representatives from part-time faculty on the Senate, representation of the new division, and representation from the Jazz division, which traditionally had a small representation on the Senate. Another important charge of this committee was to define and oversee the roles of officers and how this body functions. Committee Chair David Loeb addressed the prior discussion of lengths and staggering of Co-Chair assignments. It was reiterated that no more than one member at a time from each division is allowed to serve as Co-Chair. Moreover, the conversation was referred back to last year’s discussion on the total number of Co-Chairs. Loeb further addressed the issue of term limits, and whether the Senate should keep the two-term limit or find alternatives. It was agreed that this issue needs to be examined by the committee.
Moreover, Loeb noted a bylaw that allowed for the dismissal of a Senator who missed three or more consecutive meetings.

Co-Chair Alexandra Chasin reminded the Senators of the important role of the Governance Committee, pointing out that this body also addressed internal issues of the Senate. David Loeb inquired whether questions of benefits, such as retirement plans, would be added to his committee’s responsibilities.

Other business

- Outstanding Teacher Awards: the Senate congratulated Peter Eisinger and Richard Boukas, who both received this year’s Outstanding Teacher Award.
- Leadership: it was announced that David Scobey was appointed as Executive Dean for the newly restructured NSGS division.
- Student Senate liaison: the divisions are putting together their own student representatives of the Student Senate, a growing body. A suggestion was made that the Senate explore new ways of collaborating with the Student Senate under the new University leadership.
- Online evaluation committee: Howard Steele and Gary Vena represent both the Senate and the Drama division on this school-wide committee. It was pointed out that this committee might change. Gary Vega offered to look into the committee changes and report back to the Senate.
- Committee building: The Co-Chairs asked the new Senators as well as those who currently do not serve on any committee to state their interests in the standing committees. Stated interests include:
  - Faulty Affairs Committee: Elaine Abelson, Susan Yelavich, Katarzyna Gruda
  - Governance Committee: Rose Rejouis, Paul Hardart, Steven Kennedy, Paula Stuttmann

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 am. The Senators were encouraged to stay and talk to the Committee Chairs. The next meeting will be held on October 12, 2010. In the meantime, the Committee Chairs will call individual meetings.