Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes # 445

February 9, 2018

Faculty Senate

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Hon. President
Micki McGee, President
Andrew H. Clark, Vice President
Christopher GoGwilt, Secretary

William Baumgarth
Fran Blumberg
Martin Chase, S.J.
Jeffrey Colon
Edward Dubrovsky
Marcia Flicker
Ralf Hepp
Janna C. Heyman

Judith Jones
Eve Keller
Winnie Kung
Mark Mattson
Matthew M. McGowan
Patricio Meneses
Haim Mozes
Diane Rodriguez

Berish Rubin
Aditya Saharia
Henry Schwalbenberg
Grace M. Vernon
Sarah Zimmerman

Excused: Senators Flicker, Mattson, Rodriguez, Saharia

Guest: Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer, Academic Affairs

Meeting: O’Hare Special Collections, Walsh Library, Rose Hill campus.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Micki McGee at 11:38 a.m. in the O’Hare Special Collections, Walsh Library, Rose Hill.

2. Invocation

Senator Dubrovsky delivered the invocation.

Following the invocation, Senate President Micki McGee shared the sad news that 2-time former Senate President Joel Reidenberg is battling a serious illness.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the January 26, 2018 meeting were approved by a vote of 14 – 0 – 2.

4. Report of the University President – Fr. Joseph McShane, S.J.

The President shared some information about the spending bill just passed by Congress and its implications for American higher education, referring to an article in Politico, “New higher education funding up for grabs.” The Budget deal includes an additional 4 billion in funding for higher education, but this has set off a fight over how the funds should be allocated. The budget is top heavy on defense spending, so there is less in the budget for everything else. The President had just been to a meeting in Washington with other Presidents of Catholic colleges and universities (a total of 235 schools) and the issues uppermost in their minds were:

1) funding for education, and specifically funding for Pell, SCOG, and Work Study.
2) demographic changes
3) the great digital divide
4) need for a clearer articulation of the value proposition behind the education we offer

The President noted that our own admissions numbers are still strong and bucking regional and national trends.

The President concluded by wishing everyone a happy Mardi Gras.

5. Report of the Provost — Dr. Stephen Freedman

The Provost reported on five issues:

1. SEIU. The Provost’s office is working hard to provide SEIU representatives with a significant amount of data. Elaine Crosson is the primary representative in the ongoing conversations with SEIU. Dr. Crystal reported that the target is to have an agreement in place by Fall 2018. There’s a long way to go yet and currently things are still in the information-gathering stage, which includes talking to Deans about contingent faculty and
academic needs.

In response to this portion of the report, one senator raised three concerns about the ongoing discussions with SEIU: 1) the need to consider department’s perspectives on matters of hiring contingent faculty; 2) the need to consider unusual categories like scholars-in-residence; and 3) the need to consider graduate student instructors.

2. Community Engaged Learning. The Provost spoke briefly about Community Engaged Learning, the term now being used for service learning. He reported on a joint meeting between the Mission Integration Committee and Academic Affairs, at which several faculty members had been present; and spoke about plans for closer engagement between Academic Affairs and Mission Integration and Planning leadership. He knows there are concerns and welcomed discussion. Dr. Crystal spoke of the report from the Task Force on Service Learning that had been circulated to all faculty. The report consisted of recommendations only, and now discussions have been ongoing with the Deans and with the Dorothy Day Center. The idea is to expand opportunities for students, to reduce logistical burdens for faculty proposing community engaged learning courses, and to provide training for faculty. No final decisions are yet in place. We are currently well below our peer and aspirant universities in terms of number of courses and number of students involved in community engaged learning. The target is to have 10% of our undergraduate population taking these courses – still low given our location and commitment to mission.

A number of senators responded to this portion of the report. One senator spoke of students’ lamenting the marginalization of the Dorothy Day Center as a resource that used to provide community, that used to address their needs, and that used to provide them the tools to work on social justice activism and community engagement. One senator asked whether reducing logistical burdens on faculty proposing community engaged learning courses was really going to address the underlying cause of our low numbers of engagement in such courses; and suggested that time and resources might be more relevant. Another senator asked about the role of Campus Ministry in promoting service learning. Yet another senator noted that a year is a long time for students and that it would be important to find ways to address students’ concerns right away, since they would not see the effects of the proposed recommendations and ongoing discussions.

3. Diversity. On diversity, the Provost reported that he’s very pleased to be working with the new Chief Diversity Officer, Rafael Zapata, and hopes the CDO will have a chance to attend a meeting of the Senate. The Provost is encouraging Deans and Chairs to work closely with him. The intention is to work more proactively and assertively on diversity in hiring. He noted the need to prepare a year in advance and to develop clearer guidelines for search committees. He emphasized that it will be important to preserve a greater portion of the recruitment budget to hiring faculty from underrepresented groups. Noting this might be controversial for some, he invited feedback on this issue. During later discussion, positive feedback was offered in support of such an allocation of resources.

4. On the President’s Budget Planning Task Force, the Provost deferred to Senator Schwalbenberg who was due to give a report on this matter later.

5. 2-U Discussions. On the matter of arrangements with 2-U, the Provost noted that conversations were ongoing; that he had listened to feedback from the last meeting, had been in discussions with the Executive Committee, and would continue discussions with the two Deans involved. He also agreed to schedule a meeting on this matter with the Salary & Benefits Subcommittee.


Senator Schwalbenberg’s report covered four points:
1) this is his third time serving as faculty representative on this type of an ad hoc budget committee

2) there are five goals for the committee, as presented by Huron Consultants:
   i) to ensure that strategic planning drives the annual budgeting and long-range planning
   ii) to create “bottom-up/top-down capability” (accountability) – Senator Schwalbenberg hoped that by “accountability” this meant people working in the weeds had input into what was going on at the top, although he suggested a less optimistic reading was that they might be thinking of a top-down model
   iii) to integrate a system for activity-based costing – Senator Schwalbenberg thought this meant providing incentives for innovative programming, but noted this is not what they actually say
   iv) to better match revenues and expenses
   v) to check the validity of data

3) Senator Schwalbenberg’s meeting with the University President in late December focused on two issues:
   i) adding faculty members to the committee – two additional faculty members were added to the committee: Nestor M. Davidson (Law); and Meng Yan (Gabelli). There was concern to get representation from Lincoln Center, and Dr. Davidson has been an Associate Dean and works in real estate and property law. Meng Yan has expertise in managerial accounting.
   ii) Senator Schwalbenberg pointed out areas of overlap (and potential conflict) with the Statutory University Budget Planning Committee (as defined in 3-09.01 and 3-09.02). Since the President is an ex officio member of this committee, Senator Schwalbenberg suggested the President should attend at least one of those meetings and should listen to input from that committee.

4. Addressing Faculty Participation, Senator Schwalbenberg noted, besides the addition to the Task Force of the two faculty members noted above, the Task Force plans to interview:
   i) the Senate Executive Committee [note: instead, the Consultants held a meeting on February 26 open to all members of the Faculty Senate]
   ii) all members of the University Budget Planning Committee
   iii) Ms. Vickie Kenny, Senior Director, A&S Finance and Administration
   iv) a wide sampling of department chairs, area chairs, and directors of programs; across all campuses, schools, old-timers and new-timers, and those with experience from other universities

Senator Schwalbenberg concluded by noting not much happened either during the summer or during the fall. January 30 the faculty members of the Task Force met; and a joint meeting of faculty on the Task Force and on the University Budget Planning Committee is planned for February 13. The Task Force next meets February 27.

Following the report, one senator asked if there was anything the Task Force is empowered to do that the Statutory Budget Planning Committee cannot do. There was a discussion about the size and composition of the University Budget Planning Committee. One senator asked what the real motivation for the Task Force was. The suspicion is this Task Force may be used to draw funds from the operating budget to create a surplus fund for big projects the University cannot afford. Senator Schwalbenberg stated that his criterion would be to ensure that the operating budget can meet regular needs, and only once those demands are met should one consider putting revenue toward surplus funds. Discussion continued to return to concerns about how the Task Force might compound the problems that already exist in terms of the lack of faculty consultation on the budget process. It was noted that faculty should seek out and pay attention to information on the capital budget, and to monitor the extent to which money is being diverted from the operating budget.
There was some discussion about the allocation of funds from large grants. It is expected that this will be a topic for consideration, and that Huron Consultants would provide a couple of models from other institutions. There was also discussion about models for school-based budgeting. One senator expressed concern that underserved/marginalized schools are not being represented on either the Task Force or the University Budget Planning Committee. Another senator raised the issue of the lack of flexibility to reallocate money from one budget line to another within a given year and within a given School.

7. Report from the Salary and Benefits Committee – Senator Clark, Chair

Senator Clark reported on the following issues:

1) the need for follow-up on the resolutions passed last time in the Senate. It’s great that the Provost has agreed to meet with the Salary and Benefits Subcommittee. He hopes that meeting will go well. Besides the immediate issues surrounding 2-U, there is a need to discuss long-term goals and to set up procedures for negotiating other contracts, and other forms of compensation as higher education undergoes transformations.

2) it appears some faculty who have a spouse or LDA at Fordham were told by Human Resources in the summer/fall that if they signed up for individual health insurance in the beginning of the school year and then opted out in January in order to go on the health insurance plan of their Fordham spouse or LDA that they would be eligible to receive the $8,000 rebate for opting out of insurance. If this communication were indeed made to faculty, there is obviously a big problem. Senator Clark asked senators to let him know if there are others who were told this incorrect information. It is Senator Clark's understanding that there is no rebate for a faculty member who opts out of her or his Fordham insurance plan to go on the insurance plan of her or his Fordham spouse or LDA.

3) UHC has been responsive to problems escalated through Senator Clark and has reached out to see if there are any new issues or problems. Senator Clark has asked that faculty contact him if they are experiencing problems that haven't been resolved by HR.

In discussion following Senator Clark’s report, the Senate President explained that a memo is being prepared by the Chair of Salary and Benefits and the Faculty Senate President to explain reimbursement from the hardship fund, as well as to explain the new Discovery Benefits card which can be used for the new HRA for the "Enhanced Standard Plan" and replaces Payflex for flexible spending accounts.

8 Senate President’s Update on Ongoing Business

Senate President Micki McGee prefaced her report by asking for volunteers for:
   i) an upcoming Student Conduct Review Council
   ii) a faculty focus group regarding challenges with reimbursements or other finance operational issues
   iii) someone to take the minutes at the next Senate meeting (March 16)

She then offered an update addressing the following items:

1) the preparation of a document to outline the terms of the arrangement for student journalists to attend Senate meetings. The summary of guidelines for student journalists attending meetings will be completed in advance of the March meeting. In the meantime, student journalists will receive the agendas of upcoming meetings.

2) the matter of reimbursement of funds for those who contributed to the Senate’s special funds. Issues regarding the medical hardship fund have required legal consultation related to last year's contract negotiations, and the intellectual property concerns related to the online contracts at two schools have required time with our legal counsel. The letter to fund contributors is expected to go out in advance of the March Senate meeting.

3) the Senate Executive Committee’s scheduled meetings with the Chief Diversity Officer, Rafael
Zapata, and the Provost
4) the matter of two Senate traditions that have fallen by the wayside: the luncheon for past Senate Presidents; and the end of the year dinner for the Senate and administrators. Neither of these important events were scheduled in the past year: the luncheon due to the funeral for the Senate President's mother; and the dinner owing to the challenges in concluding the salary and benefits agreement last May.

5) the President’s report to the Board on faculty achievements. The President reported that at the request of Chair of the Board of Trustees that she has been profiling faculty members and their achievements during her 15-minute Board presentations. She asked for recommendations and volunteers to be profiled.

6) the importance of senators serving on Board of Trustees committees. The President thanked the many faculty and senators who serve on committees of the Board of Trustees and noted how important it is for us to work in tandem with our trustees.

7) the President noted the excellence of the recent Fordham AAUP Chapter's memo on the importance of governance issues and the statutes and suggested that a workshop and/or series of short documents on the history and importance of the statutes is a faculty service we may wish to undertake.

8) the President noted that preparations for a faculty event in the spring are commencing, and queried the senate on their ideas and preferences. She inquired about the senators' preference between inviting Dr. Howard Bunsis, AAUP's financial analyst to return and discuss Fordham's budgets, or holding a forum or workshop on the statutes. The consensus was that the Senate should invite Howard Bunsis to return to Fordham to speak on the university's budget.

On a motion from Senator Baumgarth, seconded by Senator Keller, the Senate voted by acclamation to adjourn at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Chris GoGwilt, Secretary