Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes # 409

January 23, 2015

Faculty Senate

Ombuds Committee: Dr. Leonard Nissim/FCLC (ext. 8-6331) nissim@fordham.edu
Dr. Berish Rubin/FCRH (ext. 1-3637) rubin@fordham.edu
Dr. Aditya Saharia/BUS (ext. 8-6286) saharia@fordham.edu

Meeting: Twelfth-Floor Lounge, E. Gerald Corrigan Conference Center, Lincoln Center Campus

Guests:
Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost
Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean, Graduate School of Social Service

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Mary Ann Forney at 12:36 p.m. in the Twelfth-Floor Lounge, E. Gerald Corrigan Conference Center, Lincoln Center Campus.

1. Invocation

Senator Nissim delivered the Invocation.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the December 12, 2014, Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The Senate approved without change (16-0-1) the minutes of the meeting of December 12, 2014 (Saharia/Park-Taylor). [Editor’s Note: It was later discovered that the minutes of the meeting contained a misstatement and an ambiguity with regard to the death of the spouse of Dr. Elaine Congress, who is a current Professor and Associate Dean at the Graduate School of Social Service, not of a professor emerita. The Senate and its Secretary apologize for the error.]

3. Matters Presented by the President of the University

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President of the University, addressed the Senate. He indicated that his remarks would fall into three areas: admissions, the Outcomes Project, and events inside and outside the University that deserve collective attention.

With regard to admissions, Fr. McShane presented the latest set of data on applications, which numbered 42,418 for the undergraduate colleges, an increase of 5% over last year. The University’s goal is to have a traditional undergraduate entering class of 2105 students total. Three of the four undergraduate programs showed increases in applications, 13% at Fordham College at Rose Hill, 10% in the Gabelli
Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes # 409

January 23, 2015

School of Business at Rose Hill, and 14% in the Gabelli School of Business at Lincoln Center. Applications for admission to Fordham College at Lincoln Center are down 14% over last year, but still up significantly over two years ago. Fr. McShane said that the applications we have received are of good quality and reflect growth in a number of key geographic markets, including Florida, Texas, California, and international students. In response to a question from a Senator, Fr. McShane indicated that international applicants have come this year from a wider range of countries than in the past. Responding to a question from another Senator, Fr. McShane indicated that many international students pay full tuition.

With regard to the Outcomes Project, Fr. McShane reported that the Administration remains interested in collecting data on the outcomes that Fordham students experience after graduation. As of the date of the Senate meeting, a recent survey had received responses from 98.1% of undergraduate alumni from 2014. Of these, only 12.6% continue to seek employment; the other 87.4% are fully employed, in graduate school, or in volunteer service. Numbers are less readily available for the graduate and professional schools, but the best data are from the School of Law, where 82% of recent graduates are employed. Fr. McShane asked the other graduate schools, especially the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, to try to develop similar data on their graduates. In response to a question from a Senator, Fr. McShane said that he and the Provost would ensure that the flow of data on outcomes went both ways. Other data that have been gathered include information on graduates’ starting salaries, which range in the undergraduate colleges from an average of $38,500 for Fordham College at Rose Hill to $60,000 for the School of Professional and Continuing Studies. One Senator observed that graduates’ salaries five to ten years after graduation would be a more meaningful metric, but Fr. McShane responded that starting salary is the variable that both New York State and federal bureaucrats have focused upon. He also observed that data on the income of alumni/ae is much more difficult to gather after the first year.

Next, Fr. McShane spoke about developments within and outside the campus community. He described events such as those in Ferguson and Staten Island as unnerving and discouraging for many members of the Fordham family. He noted that the U.S. has yet to achieve its dream and promise with regard to race relations. Therefore, he announced that within the next week he would be sending out a University-wide message and that he would be asking the deans of the colleges and schools to plan a week of reflection on these issues to coincide with Lincoln’s Birthday. He asked faculty to be willing to adjust their syllabi in order to engage in this conversation.

Finally, Fr. McShane asked Senators and members of the faculty to be aware that both Albany and Washington are proceeding more deliberately than in the past with regard to higher education. The New York State commissioner of education has departed, and therefore program approvals will be slower still. In Washington, the College Scorecard and support for junior colleges are key agenda items. Fr. McShane characterized the present moment as critical for Fordham, a time when we must make the case for undergraduate and graduate education such as we offer.

4. Matters Presented by Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost

Dr. Freedman next addressed the Senate. First, with regard to searches for deans, he announced that the search for the next dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences recently began; he noted that two Senators are on the search committee and expressed hope that the process would be complete by the end of the semester. Dr. Freedman reported that the search for the next dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill remains in progress, with a good number of applications having been submitted. That process he expects to finish by late March or early April. Dr. Freedman said that within the next few weeks, he hopes to make an announcement with regard to the deanship of the unified School of Business. Finally, he
announced the successful completion of searches for the deans of the School of Law (Matthew Diller) and the Graduate School of Education (Virginia Roach).

Next, Dr. Freedman spoke about the status of online student evaluations, especially in the Gabelli School of Business. He noted that he was aware that there were issues to be addressed and asked Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer and Associate Vice President in the Office of the Provost, to speak further. Dr. Crystal said that the Provost’s Office had not mandated that all schools shift from analog to digital student evaluations. Dr. Crystal said that there had been some miscommunication between the Provost’s Office and the deans, for which he and Dr. Freedman took responsibility. With regard to the Gabelli School of Business, Dr. Crystal said that Dean Rapaccioli had convened a faculty group to develop recommendations with regard to the use of online evaluations, which would be piloted this calendar year. In the meantime, faculty members will be able to choose whether or not to include the fall 2014 electronic student evaluation results in their personnel dossiers. Dr. Freedman thanked Dr. Crystal and said that he was satisfied with this outcome.

Dr. Freedman next addressed the issue of course releases for the President and Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. He announced that he had formalized the existing teaching reductions for the President of the Senate and that he would shortly be sending Senate President Forgey a communication memorializing their agreement on this matter. Dr. Freedman said that his office and the Executive Committee of the Senate remain in conversation about the appropriate quantity of reductions for the President and members of the Executive Committee. He spoke of the need to maintain equity among the various ways in which faculty serve the University. Dr. Freedman said that he would want to consult with deans and faculty members throughout the University before finalizing course releases for Executive Committee members. Senate President Forgey also noted that another critical factor to consider as part of this decision making process is the extent of service required of the President of the Senate and Executive Committee. To this end the Executive Committee had been asked and will provide information concerning the extent of their service.

Next, Dr. Freedman announced the retirement on March 6 of Dr. Jerome Contee, Assistant Vice President in the Office of the Provost. Dr. Freedman said that he was taking part in a range of conversations about the best way to provide support to deans and faculty who are engaging with the New York State Education Department. He will begin a process to replace Dr. Contee and will expand the portfolio of his position to include matters such as institutional research, compliance, state applications, and planning.

A Senator asked whether there had been faculty input in the development of the academic calendar. Dr. Crystal responded that there is a committee that oversees the calendar and that a representative of the Senate would be welcome to attend. Senate President Forgey said that any Senators interested in serving in this capacity should contact her, so that she could nominate a representative to the committee.

Another Senator asked whether the arrangements that Dr. Freedman and the Executive Committee have been discussing would result in a greater teaching load for the Senate President than occupants of that position have previously had. Dr. Freedman responded that it would not.

5. Online and Blended Learning Task Force

Senate President Forgey introduced Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean of the School of Social Service and Chair of the President’s Task Force on Blended Learning.
Dean McPhee indicated that she had been asked to address the Senate with regard to the work of the Task Force. She thanked the members of the Task Force for their service and characterized their work as the beginning of a process of examining online and blended learning and the technology necessary to support it. She said that the Task Force’s report outlines the landscape facing higher education and notes what Fordham is already doing. With regard to next steps, she said that the report contained two recommendations, that a strategic body be created that would provide ongoing assessments of technology needs, and that communications should be centralized in an office or body that can disseminate information and recommendations. Dean McPhee characterized the Task Force report as laying out a decision tree, presenting the pros and cons of various possible courses of action, but noted that there remains a need to gather additional information. She said that the purpose of the Task Force was not decision-making but information-gathering.

Senators thanked Dean McPhee and the Task Force for their work. One Senator noted that the Senate remains concerned about the future of the Center for Teaching Excellence and noted that the Task Force’s report should be part of a package of initiatives with regard to pedagogy. Another Senator asked Dean McPhee what the timeline for the decisions outlined in the Task Force report would be. This Senator said that with so much hype and worry about online education, people might be tempted to rush decision-making. Dean McPhee responded that decisions were not hers nor the Task Force’s to make. She noted that with regard to technology, institutions are almost always behind, so she conceives of the Task Force’s work as about strategic planning at least as much as about technology. Dean McPhee said that, in her view, now is the time to put together the next group of colleagues to make decisions, including decisions about online vendors.

Another Senator observed that significant costs are involved in online and blended education, and that the Task Force’s report requires additional data about costs. This Senator also urged the separation of conversations about online and blended education at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Dean McPhee responded by saying that the report of the Task Force is aimed primarily at the education of graduate students and adult learners.

Another Senator thanked Dean McPhee for her report and noted how exciting it is for us to consider creative new ways to teach. This Senator noted that there can be “paralysis by analysis” if too many choices are made available. Rather than focusing on the technology, this Senator asked, shouldn’t we be thinking about what informs good teaching and learning? Dean McPhee responded by saying that she agreed that these decisions are mostly about pedagogy, not technology. The Senator said that with regard to the Task Force’s recommendations, renaming the Center for Teaching Excellence a center about technology and online teaching seems to shift the focus away from excellence. This Senator asked what the role of the Faculty Senate Technology Committee would be, as well as whether the University would allocate any additional funding for these matters. Dean McPhee responded that Fordham already has dedicated a number of resources to the area of technology.

Dean McPhee summarized the two recommendations of the Task Force: the establishment of an advisory body to determine strategy in these areas, and the creation of an office or center to facilitate more coordinated decision-making. A Senator observed that these recommendations do not make it clear what the University’s vision for online and blended learning is. The relationship between the University’s mission and these initiatives seems vague.

Another Senator noted that the Task Force’s recommendations both involved administrative matters, the establishment of a committee that would primarily have non-faculty members and the establishment of an administrative center. Where in the report is there room for faculty input? Dean McPhee assured the
Senate that indeed faculty would be at the table and have significant input at all stages. A different Senator, who had served on the Task Force, queried a change that seemed to have been made in the report between the version approved by the Task Force and the version distributed to the Senate: whereas the report had previously recommended an Office of Technology and Learning, it had been changed to an Office of Online Learning. Dean McPhee responded that the change was not significant. The Senator observed that already Fordham has several committees and offices involved in teaching and technology and that faculty already feel that the process involved is somewhat “silooed”. How does the Task Force believe that the work it is proposing for the university community to undertake relates to existing governance structures?

Senate President Forgey indicated that the Senate was out of time on this issue, but that at its next meeting the Senate would consider formal responses to the Task Force’s recommendations.

Dr. Freedman thanked Dean McPhee for her report and recommendations. He observed that there is no doubt that the Task Force has to do with the graduate and professional schools, rather than undergraduate education. He said that with regard to the Task Force’s recommendations, he would be asking each school to set up a strategic planning committee that would include matters related to blended and online learning. With regard to the recommendation of a new office, Dr. Freedman said that he would use structures already in place. He also said that he had asked Dr. Ron Jacobson, of the Office of the Provost, to reach out to the Faculty Technology Committee and to Law faculty members who specialize in intellectual property to address the intellectual property issues related to online education. Finally, Dr. Freedman said that rather than looking to a significant new structure at Fordham, he would consider outside vendors going forward. He said that he would not hire any vendor without the support of the faculty, including the Faculty Senate.

Senate President Forgey noted that the Senate had not yet voted to support the Task Force’s recommendations. She asked Dr. Freedman whether the Senate could be assured that he would not act without the Senate’s approval. Dr. Freedman said that no decisions were imminent and that he would continue to seek Senate input before signing contracts or moving forward on specific recommendations.

6. Presentation on the Impact of Salaries and Financial Aid on the University Budget: A Faculty Perspective

Senator Berish Rubin, a member of the University Budget Planning Committee, delivered a presentation on the impact of salaries and financial aid on the university budget.

Following some discussion of Senator Rubin’s presentation, Senate President Forgey asked Senators to send specific questions to her, so that they can be addressed at an upcoming meeting of the Senate. She said that faculty representatives on the University Budget Planning Committee are currently asking for additional information about the budget, so that they can more effectively represent the perspective of the faculty. Senate President Forgey said that additional time would be set aside at the February meeting of the Senate to address this topic.

7. Announcements

Senate President Forgey announced that Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President for Enrollment, would be addressing the Senate at its February meeting. She asked Senators to review a list of questions for Dr. Stace and to send her any additional questions for him to address.
Senate President Forgey said that she had attended a meeting with members of the Executive Committee and the Retirement Subcommittee of the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to learn information about upcoming changes to the University’s TIAA-CREF retirement funds. Her impression is that the proposed change is favorable to faculty. A full presentation on these changes will occur at either the February or March Senate meeting.

Senate President Forgey observed that the National Labor Relations Board had recently released an opinion favorable to the prospect of unionization among private college and university faculty members. She will be sending Senators more detailed information about this opinion.

Senate Vice President Andrew H. Clark, in his capacity as chair of the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee, reported that some faculty members had raised concerns about the implementation of new medical insurance coverage through UnitedHealthcare. Senator Clark said that concerned faculty should write to Mr. Donald Perretti, Director of Benefits, copying Senator Clark if they wished the Senate to take notice of their concerns.

8. Old Business

(a) Business School Online Evaluation Process

The Senate noted with thanks the Provost’s action with regard to ensuring that faculty views are sought with regard to online student evaluations before those evaluations are deployed. There ensued a discussion about the viability of current online evaluations, including the SEEQ system used in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as about the validity of student evaluations in general. One Senator suggested that the Senate should gather information about how the various academic units of the University obtain and use student evaluation data. Senate President Forgey said that she would contact the Provost’s Office about this matter.

(b) Law School Access Policy

Senate President Forgey noted that the Executive Committee had raised with the Provost and his staff the Senate’s resolution (Minutes #408) concerning access to the Law Library. She said that Dr. Freedman had described the situation as a communication problem. Access to the Law Library is now limited to Law students and faculty only during final examination periods.

In ensuing discussion, one Senator observed that the Law Library had recently changed its access policies, with the Law librarian stating that these changes had been approved by the Provost. The Senate noted that there was some confusion about who is responsible for policymaking in this area.

(c) Course Release Request for Executive Committee

Senate President Forgey noted that Dr. Freedman had provided the Senate with an update about conversations between himself, his office, and the Executive Committee of the Senate about course releases for the President of the Faculty Senate and members of the Executive Committee. She reported that those conversations had led to an agreement that the existing course reductions for the Senate President be normalized and made permanent, with the funding coming from the Provost’s Office. Several Senators objected that this process made the course releases for the Senate President a matter of agreement rather than Statute. Senate President Forgey replied that once she received Dr. Freedman’s promised letter regarding this matter, the Senate could revisit this conversation. One Senator proposed that it could be helpful to link this conversation with the matter of compensation for department and area
chairs and program directors.

(d) New Website Implementation

Several Senators noted that while progress has been made on the updated university website, the current website remains not good enough. Senators objected that the work of updating the site has been pushed onto faculty members, a major labor shift; that there is no easy way to transfer content between the previous and current content management systems; and that there appear to be too few web staff for the needs of the institution. Several Senators observed that some of these failures may have arisen from a failure of administrators to communicate across areas of the university, including the academic area, development, and IT.

In response to these concerns, Senate President Forgey suggested that the Senate should take up agenda item (b) under New Business, namely, the development of an organizational chart describing some of the ways in which faculty are already required by statute to participate in university governance. She distributed a draft of the chart, indicating that she had shared it with Fr. McShane and that, with the Senate’s approval, she intends to share it with the vice presidents of the University. The draft of the chart appears as Appendix I to these minutes.

One Senator suggested that the Senate should draft a motion expressing its concerns with the development of the new website; another Senator suggested that the motion should call upon the President of the University to intervene. After discussion, Senator Vernon proposed, and Senator Cohen seconded, the following motion:

In light of the many problems concerning Fordham’s new website, the Faculty Senate requests that the President take action to resolve such issues as the lack of availability of key items of content (e.g., academic calendar), the lack of migration of key pages from the legacy site to the new site, the lack of adequate staffing and training, the way in which the burden of updating the website has been placed on faculty, and the failure to consult with the Faculty Technology Committee about the process. The Senate recommends that, if necessary, the University hire short-term subcontractors to assist with the urgent need to update the website.

The motion carried, 19-0-0.

(e) Additional Fall 2014 Teaching by Category Data from Provost Office

Senate President Forgey distributed a document prepared by Dr. Benjamin Crooker, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, indicating the number of credit hours taught in fall 2014 by members of the faculty, instructional staff, administrators, graduate students, and adjuncts.

9. New Business

(a) Enrollment and Financial Aid: Questions for February Meeting

Senate President Forgey distributed a list of questions to be asked of Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President for Enrollment, when he comes to address the Senate at its February meeting. She asked that Senators email her with additional questions for this list.

(b) Review and Discussion of Faculty Governance Organizational Chart
Building upon the discussion already begun, Senate President Forgey asked Senators to email Senator Hornbeck with the names of committees with faculty representation that are not mentioned on the draft chart due to them not being statutory committees. Committees immediately named by Senators included the Website Planning Committee, the Lincoln Center Planning Committee, the Council on Undergraduate Education and search committees for school and college deans.

(c) Monitoring of UnitedHealthcare Implementation

Building upon the discussion of UnitedHealthcare that took place under Announcements (see above), Senator Clark announced that Senate President Forgey had requested that the Administration automatically enroll faculty in the Cigna Elite International Plan when the faculty member registers for international travel for University purposes on the University’s new mandatory travel registry. Until this process becomes automatic, faculty members planning overseas travel should email Mr. Perretti to obtain information about this plan and to be added to the plan during the dates of their travel.

Upon motion of Senator Park-Taylor, seconded by Senator Vernon, and adopted by unanimous consent, the Senate was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary
Appendix I
Faculty Governance Organizational Chart

Shared Governance through Faculty Committees
Presidential / Vice Presidential Areas and University-Level Committees with Faculty Representation

**Color-Coding:**
- Presidential Committees
- Committees Appointed by Faculty Senate
- Committees Elected by Faculty Senate

**Board of Trustees**

**Faculty Members of Board Committees (4-06.05):**
- Educational Quality Committee
- Advancement/University Relations Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Student Development/Athletics Committee
- Finance and Investment Committee
- Mission and Identity Committee
- Facilities Committee

**President**

**Faculty Senate (4-06.02)**

**Senate Committees:**
- Elections Committee
- Handbook Committee
- Hearing Committee
- Salary and Benefits

**Provost Area**

- University Research Council (4-06.06)
- Board of Fordham University Press (4-06.06)
- Faculty Development Committee (4-06.06)
- Faculty Life Committee (4-06.08)
- Faculty Library Committee (4-06.08)
- University Tenure Review Committee (4-06.09)
- Tenure and Reappointment Appeals Committee (4-06.09)
- ROTC Advisory Committee (4-06.06)

**Finance Area**

- Budget Planning Committee (3-09.01)

**Student Affairs**

- Athletic Advisory Board (4-06.06)
- Student Life Committee (4-06.08)
- Other Committees (4-06.06)

**Fordham IT**

- Computer Advisory Committee (4-06.06)
- Faculty Technology Committee (4-06.08)

**Other VP Areas:**
- Lincoln Center • Administration • DAUR • Mission/Ministry
- Enrollment • Facilities