Meeting: Bepler Commons, Faber Hall, Rose Hill Campus

Guests: Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost
Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Brian Byrne, Vice President for Lincoln Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Mary Ann Forgey at 12:45 p.m. in Bepler Commons, Faber Hall, Rose Hill Campus.

1. Invocation

Senator Hornbeck delivered the Invocation.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the March 27, 2015, Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The Senate approved (16-0-3) the corrected minutes of the meeting of March 27, 2015 (Fernald/Cohen).

3. Matters Presented by the President of the University

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President of the University, welcomed the Senate to Bepler Commons, a recently renovated space in Faber Hall that used to serve as a Jesuit community dining room. He thanked Senator Hornbeck for his invocation featuring a prayer of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., the sixtieth anniversary of whose death the Society of Jesus recently marked.

Fr. McShane thanked Senate President Forgey for being the first Senate President to address the Board of Trustees, which she did on April 23. Fr. McShane indicated that he had asked the Board to permit the Senate President to speak at each of the Board’s quarterly meetings, and the Board agreed to do so.

Fr. McShane announced three major administrative appointments. He first shared with the Senate the appointment of Ms. Martha Hirst as Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Hirst currently serves as Chief Financial Officer of St. John’s University in Queens and has served in four successive New York City
administrations. Fr. McShane indicated that her experience in the public sector and in private higher education would be invaluable to Fordham. He also announced the appointment of Dr. Eva Badowska as permanent dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and of Dr. Maura Mast, special assistant to the provost at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, as dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill. Fr. McShane shared with the Senate the biographies of Deans-designate Badowska and Mast that were being distributed to the University community. He thanked the members of the search committees that helped identify the two new deans. He also praised the officer of the Faculty Senate who had applied for the position of dean of Fordham College at Rose Hill.

Next, Fr. McShane addressed the issue of admissions, which remains an ongoing concern. As of the close of business on April 23, 1055 undergraduate students had submitted deposits as members of the incoming class of 2019, compared to 1029 who had done so the previous year. Fordham College at Lincoln Center saw the greatest increase in deposits, from 204 to 285, a 33% jump. Fr. McShane said that the increase in deposits at Lincoln Center was due to the new facilities and new academic programs there. With regard to the graduate and professional schools, there have been a higher number of enrollments this year than last year in the Graduate School of Business, the Graduate School of Education, and the School of Law, but declines in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, and the Graduate School of Social Service.

Fr. McShane also spoke about University-wide planning. He noted that the environment of U.S. higher education is now changing more rapidly than in the past, and therefore traditional, five- to ten-year strategic planning may not deliver the necessary degree of agility. Fr. McShane will be instituting a continuous university strategic plan (CUSP) that will seek to engage broadly with all stakeholders, will include a mix of localized and centralized planning, provide for annual reviews and renewal of the plan, and encourage each unit to focus on marketing and business models. Fr. McShane described the changes at Fordham that have taken place since the development of the University’s previous strategic plan (e.g., the unification of the Schools of Business and the restructuring of leadership in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences). He said that the vice presidents and deans had been meeting monthly to discuss planning and that a University-wide planning committee (the CUSP Committee) would soon be established, followed by divisional and school committees. Senate President Forgey encouraged the leaders of the CUSP process to make use of the committees already defined in the University Statutes, rather than to create more new committees than are necessary. Fr. McShane provided a general outline of the planning process, noted that the University had engaged AKA Consulting to help manage the process, and thanked Senate President Forgey for being part of the process to date.

Fr. McShane said that his vision was that Fordham would become a model urban Jesuit university for the twenty-first century. He said that Fordham’s urban identity was dual, including both the poorest congressional district in the United States and one of the top ten richest ZIP codes in the country. Fr. McShane encouraged those involved in planning to take advantage of existing studies on major economic sectors in New York City. He said that he hoped that CUSP would shatter administrative silos and encourage interdisciplinary exchanges, such as take place at the University of Chicago. Fr. McShane mentioned several committees that he would recommend to emerge from CUSP, including committees on Ignatian endeavors, civic engagement, educational innovation, technology and pedagogy, technology and the economy, international education, and character education. Senate President Forgey asked whether these committees would be statutory, and Fr. McShane responded that he was recommending the creation of these committees as a way to get beyond the silos that currently exist between schools and divisions. Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost, added that he liked the idea of setting up committees that would allow multiple schools to work together. Fr. McShane said that his goal in proposing committees such as these was to help reach across administrative boundaries, allowing the University to unlock and
unleash the creativity of the faculty.

One Senator asked Fr. McShane if CUSP would permit multi-year planning for personnel. Fr. McShane responded by noting that Senate President Forgey has advocated for a new budget planning process.

Another Senator thanked Fr. McShane for his ideas about planning but wondered if the notion of “agility” seemed to be overly defensive, being something that is prized only when budgets are tight. Fr. McShane said that he was trying to convey the idea that the University should be nimble in the face of ongoing and tectonic changes in higher education, as well as able to speak the language both of the academy and of the people Fordham serves.

Another Senator said that continuous planning is warranted by the circumstances Fr. McShane had mentioned but that it would be necessary for the University to have a long-range plan as well. Fr. McShane said that part of the CUSP process would be to develop a long-term vision. The Senator mentioned Fr. McShane’s analogy with the University of Chicago and asked whether, as in Hyde Park, Fordham would be in a position to provide faculty housing. Fr. McShane responded that the University does not have the money to do so. In his eyes, one of our greatest failures in the previous strategic planning process was the failure to grow the endowment beyond $1 billion. However, the financial crisis of 2008 derailed this plan.

Finally, a Senator asked Fr. McShane about the future of Mr. Frank Simio, Vice President for Finance, who has been serving as interim Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Treasurer. Fr. McShane said that Mr. Simio is one of the great citizens of the University and an extraordinary colleague. Mr. Simio will be remaining at Fordham, although not as Chief Financial Officer.

4. Matters Presented by the Provost

Dr. Freedman began his presentation to the Senate by wishing Senators a successful end to the semester.

He noted that he, Senate President Forgey, and Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer, had agreed to emphasize interdisciplinarity by creating a pool of funds for the support of interdisciplinary research. Senate President Forgey asked whether Dr. Freedman had determined an amount for this fund, and Dr. Freedman replied that the amount would be under $20,000 to begin with, but could increase in future years.

Dr. Crystal spoke briefly about the University’s faculty capacity initiative, which includes the provision of ten new tenure-track faculty lines in the 2016–2017 budget. Searches to fill these lines, will begin in the coming academic year. Depending on the cost of starting salaries, it is possible that fewer than ten lines will be created.

One Senator observed that at the Board of Trustees meeting that had taken place the previous day, the Board approved a faculty salary increase of 1.9%. Dr. Freedman noted that his office is not involved in the determination of faculty salaries, and that the lines Dr. Crystal had spoken of would come out of a different pool of funds from the regular salary pool.

Another Senator noted that the total number of faculty that the University reported to the American Association of University Professors had dropped by approximately 20 in the past year and said that, even with the new lines Dr. Crystal had announced, the faculty would be smaller next year. Dr. Crystal responded that the AAUP numbers do not include all faculty. The Senator observed in reply that the
University’s total expenditure on faculty is also less this year than last year.

Another Senator thanked Dr. Freedman and Dr. Crystal for the news about these new faculty lines and asked what ratio of tenured/tenure-track faculty to students Dr. Freedman considered appropriate. Dr. Freedman responded that he and the new Chief Financial Officer would work together with the President and others to make these determinations.

Another Senator asked Dr. Crystal what happens to faculty lines when members of the faculty retire. Dr. Crystal responded that the lines remain available and can be moved between departments and schools.

Dr. Freedman also spoke to the Senate about international education. He noted that Fordham has a privileged relationship with Peking University, the most highly regarded academic institution in China. Dr. Freedman is aware of concerns that have been expressed about academic and religious freedom in China and shares these concerns. One Senator asked about the risk Fordham was taking on by admitting so many full-paying students from China. Dr. Freedman said that the risk would be if visa requirements were to change or the relationship between the Chinese and U.S. governments were to deteriorate. Senate President Forgey observed that there is not a faculty committee specifically dedicated to international education.

With regard to Fordham’s presence in London, Dr. Freedman observed that the London Dramatic Academy is now at full capacity, that the Gabelli School’s undergraduate program is strong, and that the Arts and Sciences undergraduate program is operating at a good level. Dr. Freedman noted that difficult decisions remain to be made about the future of Fordham’s London Centre in the wake of changes at Heythrop College. He is, nonetheless, very serious about Fordham’s long-term presence in London, with his goal being to ensure that the programs in London grow, especially in collaboration with other Jesuit institutions in the U.S. and abroad. He asked the Senate for its assistance in ensuring that academic priorities are taken into account.

5. Committee Reports (Part 1)

Senate President Forgey asked the Senate for its permission to rearrange slightly the published agenda for the meeting. She proposed, and the Senate agreed, next to take up the report of the Faculty Development Committee, of which Dr. Crystal serves as a co-chair.

(a) Faculty Development Committee

Dr. Crystal reported that the committee had considered the Senate’s recent motion with regard to best practices for the administration of student evaluations. He said that the committee was somewhat confused about what the Senate was asking it to accomplish. Senate President Forgey suggested that student evaluations could be discussed at the Senate’s next meeting, in September. Several Senators reported on the experience that their schools had had with electronic student evaluations.

Dr. Crystal also reported that the Provost’s Office had received from the Faculty Library Committee a letter with regard to cuts in library budgets, and that the Provost’s Office would shortly respond.

At the end of Dr. Crystal’s report, one Senator urged him and Dr. Freedman to consider the concerns about the academic calendar that had been expressed by students and faculty. Senate President Forgey observed that at a previous meeting, Dr. Crystal had offered to include a Senate representative on the University Calendar Committee. She asked if there were any volunteers for this position, and Senator
Baumgarth agreed to serve.

6. Dr. Brian Byrne, Vice President for Lincoln Center: Status Report

Dr. Brian Byrne, Vice President for Lincoln Center, addressed the Senate with regard to the University’s plans for building projects at the Lincoln Center campus, including at 45 Columbus Avenue and the former Law School building.

Dr. Byrne said that the intent behind the University’s acquisition of 45 Columbus Avenue was to consolidate in Fordham-owned property the offices currently scattered around five leased properties in Manhattan. The total cost of the leased properties is approximately $6 million per year, and the costs associated with the leases are increasing every year. Therefore, when the former headquarters of the College Board came on the market, the University acted quickly to purchase the building. Fordham took possession on April 1, 2015, and offices will move into the building in July. The cost of managing the building will be approximately $5 million per year, and there will be a further benefit to consolidate University operations into a single location.

Dr. Byrne said that the Lincoln Center Space Planning Committee has allocated space in the new building according to the amount of space being vacated in the leased properties. Space is configured differently in the new building, but departments and divisions will have the same number of offices and workstations as they used to have. In addition, 45 Columbus Avenue will now include two classroom spaces and an additional “Bloomberg” room that will help alleviate congestion at Lincoln Center.

One Senator asked whether the outdoor garden area at 45 Columbus Avenue will be made available to members of the campus community. Dr. Byrne said that he would consider this suggestion, but that it was unlikely that food service could be provided.

Senate President Forgey asked whether any faculty offices from the Leon Lowenstein Building would move into 45 Columbus Avenue. Dr. Byrne said that the Gabelli School of Business offices in Lowenstein would move into 140 62nd Street (the former Law School building). Some faculty offices will move to 45 Columbus Avenue temporarily, then to 140 62nd Street.

With regard to 140 62nd Street, Dr. Byrne said that he expects the building to be ready in fall 2016. It will contain three components: a student center, a new library, and offices for the Gabelli School of Business. The project has run over budget, due to upgrades in systems, insulation, and reinforcement; the total budget for the project is now approximately $70 million. Dr. Byrne characterized this sum as an investment for the next thirty to forty years.

One Senator noted that there is a rumor among the faculty that space allocations for 140 62nd Street have been changed. Dr. Byrne said that this rumor was untrue. He also said that he has worked with the Lincoln Center Space Planning Committee, which includes five faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate. Recently, the committee has been keeping minutes of its meetings. The Senator followed up by asking whether the atrium in 140 62nd Street is structurally sound. Dr. Byrne said that it was.

Another Senator noted that space constraints are affecting the possibility of growth in the University’s academic life. This Senator also asked whether or not the total square footage to be made available to the Gabelli School will be significant larger than the space the School currently has. Dr. Byrne replied that space always lags behind the academic mission of the institution. He pointed to the built-up capital needs of the University, including the need for a science building at Rose Hill, and he said that the Gabelli
School would be receiving the same number of floors as it currently has. Dr. Freedman added that he is sensitive to the concerns of Arts and Sciences faculty members about space allocation and will do everything he can to help the Dean of the Gabelli School recognize that the allocation of space between Business and Arts and Sciences is a neuralgic issue. Dr. Byrne noted that the whole sixth floor and part of the fifth floor of Lowenstein would become available for Arts and Sciences.

Senate President Forgey asked about the future of the Lincoln Center Space Planning Committee, noting that the issue of term limits for faculty members of the committee has not yet been resolved. She also asked if the committee’s minutes were being made public. Dr. Byrne said that at present the minutes are distributed to members of the committee and their delegates, along with the vice presidents and deans. He said that he and Senate President Forgey should talk about what distribution pattern would be best.

7. Committee Reports (Part 2)

The Senate agreed to resume discussion of committee reports.

(b) Subcommittee on Contingent Faculty

Senator Fernald, in her capacity as chair of the Senate’s ad hoc committee on contingent faculty, delivered the committee’s report. She said that the committee had met and discussed its goals for the coming academic year, and she also said that she had met with Dr. John Harrington, Dean of Arts and Sciences Faculty, about the issues that the committee had been discussing.

In the coming year, the committee will seek to accomplish three things: first, to identify the range and diversity of contingent faculty appointments; second, to improve the working conditions of non-tenured/tenure-track faculty, especially those of part-time contingent faculty; and finally, to advocate for the centrality of full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty to the mission of the University.

Senate President Forgey thanked Senator Fernald and her committee for their report.

(c) Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee

In the absence of Senator Clark, Chair of the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee, Senator McGee delivered the committee’s report. She summarized the course to date of negotiations between the committee and the administration over salaries for academic year 2015–16, noting that most recently, on April 21, the committee had rejected the administration’s most recent offer of a 1.8% salary increase. Senator McGee indicated that the committee was recommending to the Senate that the administration’s offer should not be accepted and that no further meetings should take place until the administration agreed to meet the committee’s proposal of a 3.6% salary increase.

Senator Cohen moved, and Senator Nissim seconded, adoption of the committee’s recommendation. In discussion, one Senator observed that the faculty is not legitimately involved in the annual budget planning process, even though it appears that faculty salaries are comprising a smaller proportion of the total budget each year. Another Senator asked Senator McGee what the next steps in the negotiation process should be. Senator McGee said that the committee believes that it will be more effective to negotiate with the new Chief Financial Officer rather than the interim holder of that position. Another Senator observed that it would be a waste of faculty time to negotiate during the summer months. Senator McGee agreed that the rancor of the negotiations and the quantity of wasted time are demoralizing. She said that she, and many members of the Salary and Benefits Committee, would prefer to reach agreement
on a three-year contract.

Another Senator observed that over the past ten years, faculty salaries had increased only slightly above the Consumer Price Index measure of inflation. Several Senators observed that the administration’s tone had not changed since the departure of the previous Chief Financial Officer. Several other Senators agreed with Senator McGee’s recommendation that the faculty should seek a multi-year agreement with regard to salaries.

One Senator opposed the Salary and Benefits Committee’s recommendation not to continue negotiations during the summer months, saying that to do so would be to reinforce the narrative that the faculty is not acting in good will. Another Senator said that to negotiate over the summer, while the faculty are not being paid, would cause the faculty to have less power.

Senators Cohen and Nissim accepted several friendly amendments to their motion, which assumed the following final form:

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate rejects the Administration’s latest salary offer of 1.8% and directs the Salary and Benefits Committee to communicate to the Administration that negotiations will be suspended between Commencement and the start of the new academic year.

The motion carried, 19-0-1. Senate President Forgey said that she would communicate this resolution to the administration. Since no agreement on salary and benefits had been reached, Senate President Forgey called a special meeting of the Senate to convene at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2015, in Room 041 of the Walsh Library, Rose Hill.

8. New Business (Part 1)

Senate President Forgey again asked the Senate for its permission to rearrange the meeting agenda. She proposed, and the Senate agreed, next to take up a request from a group of faculty members with regard to the submission of an agenda item for the Board of Trustees.

(a) Request from a Faculty Group

Professors Jeanne Flavin (Sociology and Anthropology) and James Kim (English) addressed the Senate, beginning by thanking Senators for their attention and time. They described the work of seven faculty members who had started a petition urging the Board to revoke the honorary degree conferred on Mr. John Brennan, an honorary degree which Professors Flavin and Kim described as an egregious insult to the values of the University. Over 700 individuals, including 120 faculty, have to date signed the petition. Professors Flavin and Kim said that it was unclear to the initiators of the petition whether the proper procedures were followed in the selection of Mr. Brennan as the recipient of an honorary degree and as Commencement speaker. They asked the Senate to request that the petition be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board; they noted that they had made the same request of Fr. McShane.

In discussion, Senators observed that the name of the current year’s Commencement speaker has not been released and that members of the faculty appear not to have been involved in the selection of this individual, despite multiple reminders from the Senate and from Senate President Forgey.

Senator Fernald moved, and Senator Jackson seconded, the following motion:
The Faculty Senate recommends that the Board of Trustees give serious consideration to the petition concerning the revocation of the honorary degree given to John Brennan in spring 2012.

The motion carried, 14-0-1.

Because the meeting was approaching the conclusion of its third hour, Senator Hornbeck moved, and Senator Fernald seconded, that the meeting continue until all business had been completed. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

9. Committee Reports (Part 3)

The Senate resumed discussion of committee reports.

(d) Tenure and Reappointment Appeals Committee

Senator Chase, as a member of the Tenure and Reappointment Appeals Committee (TRAC), delivered the committee’s report and explained the committee’s proposal for a change in the Statutes concerning procedures for the reconsideration on appeal of applications for reappointment. The purpose of the changes is to require departments where a negative decision on an application for reappointment had been appealed and where TRAC had found procedural violations to reconsider the application in full using the correct procedures, rather than simply to re-vote on the application.

Senator Baumgarth moved, and Senator Hornbeck seconded, that the committee’s proposal be accepted. The motion was carried, 15-0-0.

10. Old Business

(a) University Research Council: Proposed Changes to Statutes

Senate President Forgey reminded the Senate that proposed changes to the Statutes concerning the Faculty Research Expense Program had been tabled at a previous meeting due to concerns about funding for interdisciplinary research. Even though interdisciplinary funding has now been made available, Senate President Forgey said, questions remain about how these funds will be distributed. Therefore, Senate President Forgey recommended that the proposed statutory changes remain on the table, and the Senate concurred.

(b) Update on Continuous University Strategic Planning Process

Senate President Forgey summarized for the Senate the history of the University’s continuous strategic planning process, which Fr. McShane had discussed earlier in the meeting. She said that on April 13, she had been included in a meeting with the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, and external consultants. Fr. McShane has designated Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Service, and Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President for Enrollment, as two of the three co-chairs of the Continuous University Strategic Planning (CUSP) Committee. The co-chairs and Senate President Forgey met with members of the Board of Trustees’ strategy committee on April 20, and the full board discussed the planning process on April 23. The timeline for the planning process remains a work in progress, and Senate President Forgey has recommended to Fr. McShane the appointment of Senator Hornbeck as the third co-chair for the process.
Senate President Forgey said that she was concerned about the process in which the proposed new committees described by Fr. McShane at the beginning of the Senate’s meeting would be considered. She reiterated her view that the strategic planning process should include a reconsideration of the University’s committee structure and that any proposed changes to the statutory committees would require the Senate’s approval.

11. Announcements

Senate President Forgey described her presentation to the Board of Trustees and indicated that the Board had given her a cordial reception. Senators thanked Senate President Forgey for advocating for the faculty with the Board and expressed their satisfaction that the President of the Senate is being given the opportunity to address the Board at each of its meetings.

Senate President Forgey announced that the elections for the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee and the Tenure and Reappointment Appeals Committee will not be able to take place at this meeting of the Senate, due to a lack of volunteers to serve on both committees. Slates of candidates will be presented for the Senate’s consideration at its special meeting on May 4.

Senate President Forgey congratulated those colleagues who have been elected to the Senate for two-year terms beginning in May 2015: James Cohen (Law), Aimee Cox (FCLC), G. Larry Farmer (GSSS), Anne Fernald (FCLC), Christopher GoGwilt (FCRH), Richard Gyug (FCRH), Patrick Hornbeck (FCRH), Margo Jackson (GSE), Dorothy Klotz (Business), Micki McGee (FCRH), Berish Rubin (FCRH), and Aditya Saharia (Business).

Finally, in advance of the elections of Senate officers for academic year 2015–16 that will take place on May 4, Senate President Forgey announced that, for personal reasons and in order to devote more time to her scholarship and teaching, she does not intend to seek election to a second term as Senate President. Senators applauded Senate President Forgey for her work on behalf of the faculty.

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary