Faculty Senate Meeting

Minutes # 416

October 2, 2015

Faculty Senate

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Hon. President

Dominic Balestra

Richard Gyug

Jennie Park-Taylor

William Baumgarth

Hugh Hansen

Berish Rubin

Anne E. Fernald, President

Martin Chase, S.J.

Margo Jackson

Aditya Saharia

James A. Cohen

Judith Jones

Henry Schwalbenberg

Andrew H. Clark, Vice President

Aimee Cox

Eve Keller

Esther Solomon

G. Larry Farmer

Dorothy Klotz

Grace M. Vernon

J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary

Mary Ann Forgey

Micki McGee

Micki McGee

Harry Nasuti

Excused: Senators Cohen, Farmer, Forgey, GoGwilt, and Hansen

Meeting: O’Hare Special Collections Room, Walsh Family Library, Rose Hill Campus

Guests: Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost

Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President for Enrollment

Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean, Graduate School of Social Service

Dr. Anthony Knerr, President, AKA|Strategy

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Anne E. Fernald at 12:41 p.m. in the O’Hare Special Collections Room of the Walsh Family Library, Rose Hill Campus.

2. Invocation

The Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President of the University, delivered the Invocation.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the September 11, 2015, Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Senator Jackson moved, and Senator McGee seconded, the adoption of the minutes of the September 11, 2015, meeting of the Senate. The motion carried, 15-0-1.

4. Matters Presented by the President of the University

Fr. McShane addressed the Senate. He began by noting several developments in Washington, D.C., among them the resignation of the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Fr. McShane characterized Mr. Duncan’s resignation as an occasion not of great sorrow but of hope. He noted, separately, that the Perkins loan program appears to have died on the floor of the Senate; this is very bad news for families and students, although the precise impact on Fordham is yet to be determined. However, Pell grants appear to be safe in the current round of budget talks, a development that is very important from the perspective of Fordham’s mission.

Fr. McShane reflected at some length on the recent visit of Pope Francis to the United States. He noted
that he was at the White House when President Obama welcomed the pope. He also attended the Vespers service at St. Patrick’s Cathedral here in New York, and along with a hundred others, including James Bond actor Daniel Craig, he attended as the guest of the Holy See when the pope addressed the United Nations. Fr. McShane noted that in Pope Francis’s very well received talks here in the United States, the pope followed a characteristically Jesuit three-part approach: engaging his audience by claiming identity with them, praising the audience for what they had done well, and challenging them for their work in the future. Fr. McShane noted that the pope surprised many people by championing the sacredness and dignity of life at every stage, commenting especially on the death penalty and on nuclear disarmament. Fr. McShane was at Madison Square Garden for Mass with Pope Francis, along with many other members of the Fordham community, including Senate President Fernald.

Fr. McShane thanked the members of the Fordham faculty who provided commentary in the news media during the papal visit. He singled out Senator Hornbeck, who appeared on Al Jazeera America; theology professor Michael Peppard, who was on MSNBC; and McGinley Chair Fr. Patrick Ryan, S.J., who appeared on CNN. For his own part, Fr. McShane appeared as a guest of Chris Matthews on MSNBC.

Asked by a Senator why the pope made a surprise visit to St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Fr. McShane replied that on every foreign trip, the pope makes a surprise visit to a work of the Jesuits. In Philadelphia, he was staying at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, which is down the road from St. Joseph’s, and his visit to that university followed naturally from the proximity of the locations. The pope is very close to the Jewish community, and at St. Joseph’s he blessed a statute commemorating the sibling relationship between the church and the synagogue.

Turning to the issue of enrollment, Fr. McShane distributed three documents characterizing the status of enrollment in the colleges and schools of the University at the close of the census period, on September 25. Fordham College at Rose Hill is 86 students ahead of its projected enrollment; Fordham College at Lincoln Center 19 students ahead; and the Gabelli School at Business 63 ahead. In total, we have roughly 140 students more than projected, with a total of 8,069 undergraduate students enrolled. With regard to the graduate and professional schools, all but the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences have reported totals of credits that are lower than projections, with a total deficit of 1438 credit hours excluding the School of Law, which has 37 fewer full-time students than projected. The School of Professional and Continuing Studies is 481 credits under budget. Fr. McShane discussed several dynamics within and across schools that are affecting enrollment numbers.

Asked whether the increased number of credits in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences suggested that revenue from that school has also increased, Fr. McShane indicated that it is not yet possible to determine precise revenue numbers. Indeed, he noted, higher enrollments in funded graduate programs, especially at the doctoral level, can sometimes mean less net revenue.

Asked whether the increased enrollment at the undergraduate level offsets the deficits in most of the graduate and professional schools, Fr. McShane responded that Fordham has allowed the undergraduate student body to expand for this reason. On the undergraduate level, Fordham is financially secure because the numbers of undergraduates are holding steady and the quality of our students is increasing at the same time as the discount rate has fallen slightly. Fordham receives roughly $38,000 in net revenue per student and spends roughly $38,000 per student. Among many other institutions, apart from the “super-elites,” undergraduate populations are down and universities are having difficulty meeting class sizes. Fr. McShane said that the future of Fordham lies in continuing to invest in the quality profile of our undergraduate students.
There being no further questions, Fr. McShane concluded his presentation.

5. Executive Session

On the motion of Senator Chase, seconded by Senator Baumgarth, and with unanimous consent, the Senate entered executive session at 1:17 p.m. The Senate emerged from executive session at 1:30 p.m.

6. Matters Presented by Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost

Dr. Freedman, joined by Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, addressed the Senate. Senators thanked Dr. Freedman for sharing a summary of his remarks in advance of the meeting. Dr. Freedman thanked Senate President Fernald and the Executive Committee for time on the agenda.

Dr. Freedman noted that he had been meeting with a variety of faculty groups to share with them his priorities for the coming academic year and to get their feedback. He asked Senators for their feedback so that he could continue to refine his ideas. Dr. Freedman spoke broadly under several headings.

First, with regard to research, Dr. Freedman said that he wished to emphasize research and to shift priorities, resources, emphases, policies, and procedures to reorient the structures of the University toward faculty research. Dr. Freedman noted that he had recently met with the Council of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and received feedback from its members. Part of the recent reorganization of the leadership of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences involved separating the positions of Dean of GSAS and Chief Research Officer. Dr. Freedman wishes to take advantage of this transition to provide faculty with more opportunities to participate in student-engaged research. He suggested mechanisms such as shortening the length of time between Faculty Fellowships or increasing the level of support provided to faculty on fellowships. He asked how we might put in place opportunities for faculty who have been less active to restart their research. He suggested that Fordham should provide tools and support for faculty members to develop grants and relationships with grantors. He spoke as well of the possibility of making more resources available to the most research-active faculty, to enable them to develop networks of scholars and achieve greater success in external funding competitions. He hopes that the most research-active faculty will be able to have more opportunities to focus even further on their research and to achieve greater impact.

Next, with regard to interdisciplinary programs, Dr. Freedman spoke of the need to enhance and give greater priority to interdisciplinarity. He said that he believes that Fordham can be more creative as an academic community in working across programs, departments, and divisions. He seeks to achieve greater collaboration between members of the faculty, within departments, across departments, and ultimately across schools. Dr. Freedman hopes to break down barriers between schools, for instance by allowing the School of Law and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to work together more effectively. He asked whether it might be possible to make joint appointments easier. Dr. Freedman said that this is not only about bringing in additional revenue, but about becoming more nimble as an institution.

Third, Dr. Freedman talked about globalization, noting that he is very committed to Fordham’s identity as an international university.

Dr. Freedman also indicated that he wanted to talk about the subjects of engagement and diversity. He said that for the purposes of this meeting, he would be postponing discussion of other important priorities, including technology and liberal education. He described a conversation that he recently had
with members of the task force on faculty diversity and retention recently authorized by the Senate. Dr. Freedman said that he hoped to begin a conversation with the Senate about how Fordham could be more proactive with regard to diversity in all its aspects. He asked whether it might be acceptable to permit departments with two strong candidates for a faculty position to hire both candidates if one could enhance the diversity of the faculty, wondering what the implications might be for the autonomy of the faculty and the authority of the provost. His hope, ultimately, is to help Fordham develop a culture of inclusion that brings out the best of the institution.

Dr. Crystal added that with regard to Dr. Freedman’s comments on research, many decisions about research take place within the University Research Council and the Faculty Development Committee. He noted that the process by which the University Research Council recently submitted changes to the Statutes for the approval of the Senate is the appropriate process.

One Senator observed that the priorities Dr. Freedman had articulated were in line with Fordham’s need to become more interdisciplinary and to engage with diversity in a mission-specific context. Dr. Freedman responded that several of the deans have already begun to show leadership in this regard.

Another Senator observed that a recent report in the New York Times asked college alumni/ae what made their college experience fulfilling. Answers included diversity, involvement in a student activity, and mentoring by faculty. This Senator noted that former dean Michael Latham had created symposiums for students and faculty to work together on research and said that it would be good if undergraduate research programs could continue. Dr. Freedman responded by describing several recent successes with regard to undergraduate research, including an event sponsored by the Bronx Science Consortium. His question was how the University could create a culture of this sort on an ongoing basis.

Asked how Dr. Freedman saw the relationship between his goals and University planning processes, Dr. Freedman responded that he had presented his goals at a retreat of the President’s Advisory Council. He observed that academic planning and the strategic planning process have to be aligned. He said that he has a set of priorities that will guide academic planning at the institution, which will work collaboratively with the Continuous University Strategic Planning (CUSP) committee. Very shortly, Dr. Freedman said, he will ask the deans to set up planning committees within each school, which will feed into a provost’s planning group and then into CUSP. Planning will be a collaborative process.

Another Senator observed that in the Gabelli School of Business, there is not a single African-American faculty member. This Senator observed that if the provost declared a preference for appointing candidates of color and said that he would do so against the preferences of departments and areas, departments and areas might not advance qualified candidates to finalist status. Dr. Freedman responded that there are important equity issues at work. He said that he would prefer to have funds available to hire colleagues of color, especially African-Americans. Dr. Crystal added that the provost’s office would never go against the recommendation of a department or area with regard to hiring, but might be willing to hire two finalists rather than one. Dr. Freedman asked the Senator whether he would have the support of the faculty to ask departments to go back to the beginning of a hiring process if necessary.

Another Senator observed that she appreciated Dr. Freedman’s courage to engage the important issues surrounding the diversity of the faculty. A different senator noted that with regard to his department, it has long been a goal to achieve diversity, but successful candidates of color receive more attractive offers from other institutions and end up leaving Fordham. Dr. Freedman responded that retention is indeed a serious concern. Another Senator asked whether retention should be a factor in considering initiatives related to faculty research. Separately, this Senator observed that diversity is an important issue with
regard to the composition of the undergraduate student body as well.

Another Senator observed that this is a difficult conversation and acknowledged being a person of color in the room. This Senator applauded Dr. Freedman’s focus on retention, noting that research and interdisciplinary both provide avenues to connect members of the faculty to the institution and to overcome the sense of disconnect that many individuals feel. This Senator noted that if colleagues better understood each other’s work, better connections could be forged with respect to research, and this would lead to greater quality of life for faculty. Dr. Freedman responded that our students are looking to us for leadership and that it is incumbent upon us to come together as a faculty.

Senate President Fernald concluded this discussion by noting that junior faculty perceive the disconnect between increased expectations for research and service and increasing numbers of undergraduates. She noted that junior faculty from underrepresented groups often do more service and therefore have less time for additional research. Another Senator added that with regard to Dr. Freedman’s concept of “superstar” researchers, there is a risk of creating a tier system among faculty and, thus, a very different kind of culture at Fordham. Finally, a Senator asked Dr. Freedman how the priorities he had articulated related to the University’s mission as an institution of liberal education.

Senate President Fernald thanked Dr. Freedman for his presentation.

7. Matters Presented by the CUSP Co-Chairs

Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Service, and Dr. Peter Stace, Vice President for Enrollment, appeared before the Senate in their roles as co-chairs of the Continuous University Strategic Planning (CUSP) process. Senator Hornbeck, as the third co-chair of CUSP, joined them.

Senator Hornbeck noted that the CUSP co-chairs had come to the Senate in order to receive the Senate’s feedback and support with regard to two issues: first, the CUSP process to date and any outstanding questions or concerns about the process, and second, Senators’ views on the most important strategic challenges facing the University.

By way of background, Senator Hornbeck noted that he had been recommended by former Senate President Mary Ann Forgey to be one of the co-chairs of CUSP, and that Senate President Fernald had appointed two additional members, Senators Clark and Saharia. Senator Schwalbenberg is also a member of CUSP.

Senator Hornbeck drew the Senate’s attention to its motion of March 27, 2015, in which the Senate offered Fr. McShane six recommendations with regard to university-wide strategic planning. He noted that all six of the recommendations had been adopted: (a) and (b) the Senate President has appointed three members to the committee, including one of the co-chairs; (c) faculty members of CUSP are fully included in meetings; (d) existing planning devices such as annual reports are being consulted; (e) there is a mechanism for members of the community to voice their suggestions anonymously; and (f) a CUSP website has been set up to provide the University with regular updates on the planning process. Senators expressed delight that their recommendations had been accepted.

Senator Hornbeck described work on the CUSP process to date, including the nomination of members of the CUSP committee; the selection of the final committee, including nine full-time faculty in addition to three administrators with faculty status; the initial meeting of CUSP on September 8; and the two Fall Convocations that took place on both campuses. Dr. Stace added that more than thirty-three individuals
have responded to the online anonymous feedback mechanism, and more than 80 ideas for strategic initiatives have been put forward. Senator Hornbeck noted that all this feedback would be shared with CUSP at its meeting of October 13.

Asked about the diversity of the CUSP committee, the co-chairs responded that the committee is diverse in a variety of ways, with regard to academic fields, schools/colleges, rank, race, ethnicity, gender, and so forth. Dr. Stace noted that each member of the committee brings not only experience within her or his own school but also experience in a thematic area that crosses the University.

Senator Hornbeck described the goals of the CUSP process, which are two: to develop a strategic framework to guide decision-making at Fordham into the future, and to offer recommendations about the processes that the University uses to make decisions. Senator Hornbeck then introduced Dr. Anthony Knerr, President of AKA|Strategy, the consulting firm that the University and CUSP have retained to help with the strategic planning process.

Dr. Knerr introduced himself briefly to the Senate, noting his prior roles at the City University of New York, Yale University, Columbia, and elsewhere. He described his approach as a consultant to the work of strategic planning. He noted that the notion of continuous planning is an innovation, one designed to produce a new kind of strategic “DNA” for Fordham. He offered to answer questions from the Senate.

One Senator asked if it was appropriate to characterize the planning process as a significant cultural reorientation. Dr. Knerr responded that the goal is to enable Fordham to anticipate and respond to a challenging environment for higher education.

Another Senator asked Dr. Knerr what he saw as the University’s strengths and the areas in which we need to improve. Dr. Knerr responded that he was quite impressed with how Fordham has grown and changed. He believes Fordham is now a more prominent institution in New York higher education. It is clearer than it was before about its Jesuit identity, rather than its Catholic identity. Dr. Knerr said that he believes Fordham is too tuition-dependent. It has not really grappled with tensions with regard to the connection between research and instruction. He said that Fordham has made terrific strides in terms of having two campuses with different focuses, noting that it is very difficult for any institution to have multiple campuses. The work of bringing Lincoln Center and Rose Hill together has begun, but it is not yet finished. The University is experiencing changing enrollment patterns, and it is not as nimble, coherent, and un-siloed as the current higher education landscape demands.

Another Senator noted that we can always be planning, but it is necessary to take action as well. What will it look like when decisions are made? Dr. Knerr responded that he believed that it would be wise for CUSP to take account of other planning processes within the University that are already underway. He and his firm believe that a planning process of this sort should show results as soon as possible. Clarifying what he had said in response to the Senator’s question, Dr. Knerr said that the CUSP committee will continue over a period of time and will have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the new planning spirit is in place.

Another Senator asked about the relationship between the CUSP planning process and fundraising: how will the new initiatives identified by CUSP be paid for? This Senator observed that we already do not have enough endowment funds to recruit many desirable students. Senator Hornbeck observed that the purpose of the CUSP process is to develop a strategic framework for decision-making, although operational decisions will continue to be made at the appropriate levels. In this process, we will be thinking about Fordham makes decisions in general. Dr. Stace added that his hope is that as a result of
the CUSP process having gotten underway, people may already be thinking differently about the sorts of things that they do every day. Dr. McPhee added there is a distinction between planning and strategic thinking, and the goal of CUSP will be to help make planning decisions more consistent and uniform across the university.

A Senator noted that the budget planning process is among the least transparent processes at Fordham. Will faculty be involved earlier in this process? Dr. Knerr responded that with regard to budget planning, changes will likely happen incrementally, over a three- to five-year period of time. Dr. Stace suggested that budget planning should not take place in a silo, distinct from enrollment projections, for instance.

Another Senator thanked the CUSP co-chairs for providing such detail about their thinking and about the process. This Senator asked how the co-chairs hoped to get to the initial understanding within the CUSP committee and within the University community at large about what long-term strategic priorities should be. Senator Hornbeck responded that the CUSP committee is already taking advantage of existing data sources, such as the Middle States process and the annual reports. He noted that in some cases, there is agreement with regard to the terms to be prioritized, but disagreement about how those terms, such as “Jesuit mission,” are understood. Part of the CUSP process is to identify the multiplicity of understandings that already exist.

One Senator asked whether the purpose of the planning process is to develop a plan for the administration. She asked who the CUSP committee is accountable to. Senator Hornbeck responded that the CUSP process is everyone’s process. If planning is only for the administration, that defeats the point of an inclusive process.

Senate President Fernald observed that the 45 minutes allotted to the CUSP co-chairs had expired, but Dr. Knerr had not been able to ask Senators about their ideas about the University’s strategic needs. Dr. Knerr said that he would have asked what Senators’ aspirations for Fordham are, what its best strategic opportunities might be, what is best about the University’s current culture that should be enhanced, what the external challenges to the university are most pertinent. Senator Saharia, as a member of the CUSP committee, suggested that the CUSP committee send a survey to the Senate about these questions. One Senator suggested that a question be added about the Senate’s proper role in the CUSP process. The co-chairs agreed to provide Senate President Fernald with Dr. Knerr’s questions.

8. Announcements and New Business

Senate President Fernald announced that she would be soon having lunch with Ms. Martha Hirst, Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Treasurer, and that she and Senator Clark, in his role as chair of the Salary and Benefits Committee, were seeking a second meeting with Ms. Hirst as well. Senate President Fernald indicated that she and Ms. Hirst were seeking to arrange a time for Ms. Hirst to deliver a longer presentation to the Senate.

In light of the need for Ms. Hirst to address the Senate, and for the Provost’s Office to deliver its annual report on faculty composition, Senate President Fernald suggested, and the Senate agreed, that the next discussion of the CUSP process be deferred to January, but that the results of a survey of the Senate about strategic planning would be made available to the CUSP committee in the interim.

Senate President Fernald reported that she had spoken with the Board of Trustees during its recent meeting and noted that she had distributed copies of her remarks to the Senate.
Senate President Fernald also announced that she was hoping to invite to the November meeting of the Senate a group of student leaders who were concerned about racism on campus. Her goal is to provide an opportunity for students and faculty leaders to connect on this important matter. Several Senators noted that racist incidents are not isolated but are instead part of a culture and that in this context it is especially important to provide time for students to be heard.

At 3:34 p.m., Senate President Fernald requested, and the Senate granted by unanimous consent, a short extension to the duration of the meeting.

Senate President Fernald distributed the results of a survey that she had conducted about the Senate’s priorities in the year ahead. Twelve of twenty-five Senators had responded. Topics that received significant attention were budget planning, benefits, the role of contingent faculty, CUSP, and Middle States. With regard to contingent faculty, Senate President Fernald reported that she and Senator Jones would be meeting with Dr. Crystal and Dr. Benjamin Crooker, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, about what might be possible for the most vulnerable contingent faculty members, those currently paid less than $4000 per courses. Her hope is the to work with Ms. Hirst’s staff to establish a financial model for these faculty appointments.

Senator Clark, in his role as Chair of the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee, reported that there is effectively complete silence from the administration with regard to open topics such as salary compression, changes to the retirement plan, mental health benefits under UnitedHealthcare, the role of Mercer as the University’s insurance broker, and so forth. He has yet to receive a substantive response on any of these issues.

By unanimous consent, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary