Excused: Senators Hansen, Keller, Park-Taylor
Absent: Senator Cohen
Meeting: O’Hare Special Collections Room, William D. Walsh Family Library, Rose Hill Campus
Guests: Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost
Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer and Associate Vice President, Office of the Provost
Dr. Peter Vaughan, Dean Emeritus, Graduate School of Social Service; and Chair, President’s Task Force on Race and Campus Climate
Dr. Christine Firer Hinze, Professor, Theology; and Member, President’s Task Force
Mr. Keith Eldredge, Dean of Students, Lincoln Center; and Member, President’s Task Force
Mr. Michael Trerotola, Assistant University Secretary and Member, President’s Task Force

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Anne E. Fernald at 12:38 p.m. in the O’Hare Special Collections Room, William D. Walsh Family Library, Rose Hill Campus.

2. Invocation

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

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings of January 22, 2016, and February 19, 2016

Senator Baumgarth moved, and Senator Balestra seconded, the adoption of the minutes of the January 22, 2016, meeting of the Senate. Discussion ensued. Senator Balestra moved, seconded by Senator McGee, that the approval of the minutes be tabled until an amended copy could be produced. The motion to table was adopted, 19-0-0.

Senator Clark moved, and Senator Vernon seconded, the adoption of the minutes of the February 19, 2016, meeting of the Senate. The minutes were adopted, 16-0-3.

At the request of Fr. McShane, and by unanimous consent, the Senate entered executive session at 12:47 p.m. The Senate permitted Dr. Stephen Freedman, Provost, and Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Associate Chief Academic Officer and Associate Vice President, Office of the Provost, to remain, by a vote of 18-1-0.
The Senate emerged from executive session at 2:04 p.m.

4. Governance Issues

Senator McGee moved, seconded by Senator Baumgarth:

Resolved, That this Faculty Senate, as guardian of the University Statutes and Faculty Handbook, supports and encourages efforts by its members to voice at meetings of the Senate concerns respecting policies and procedures inimical to the nature of academic shared governance, without fear of internal or external constraints, intimidation or retaliation.

The motion was adopted, 20-0-0.

5. Update from the President’s Task Force on Race and Campus Climate

Dr. Peter Vaughan, Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School of Social Service and Chair of the President’s Task Force on Race and Campus Climate, addressed the Senate. He was joined by three members of the Task Force: Dr. Christine Firer Hinze, Professor of Theology and Director of the Francis and Ann Curran Center for American Catholic Studies; Mr. Keith Eldredge, Dean of Students at the Lincoln Center campus; and Mr. Michael Trerotola, Assistant University Secretary.

Dr. Vaughan thanked the Senate for inviting him to speak and introduced his fellow task force members. He noted that as the task force is doing its work, it is dividing into teams to visit with various bodies at Fordham, to gather as much information as possible about Fordham, our community, and the impact of diversity issues. The committee’s role is to ask what serves our best interest to become a diverse and inclusive university. Its charge from Fr. McShane falls into three parts: first, to study the current campus climate; second, to review and report on diversity-related programs in place; and third, to develop recommendations for the President and his Cabinet to address the obstacles that we face.

Dr. Vaughan noted that the timing for such a task force is right, given the number of academic institutions around the country that are confronting similar issues. He said that many institutions have it worse than Fordham, which is not to say that Fordham has it good. The task force is currently in the process of reviewing recent reports and initiatives at universities such as Harvard, Brown, and Georgetown.

In the next period of time, the task force is hoping to meet with as many constituent groups as possible. Undergraduate students on the task force are organizing four community meetings, and a separate meeting will be organized by graduate students on the task force for other graduate students. In addition, the task force has identified a number of units to talk to, in order to learn about current practices and achievements.

Senate President Fernald thanked Dr. Vaughan for his presentation and noted that she has charged the Senate’s Student Life Committee and Faculty Life Committee with making recommendations to the task force. To date, the Student Life Committee has prepared a set of draft recommendations. The Faculty Life Committee is continuing to analyze the results of a faculty life survey recently administered electronically. Senate President Fernald said that both committees would be reporting to the task force.
Dr. Vaughan added that the first group that the task force had met with was the faculty-led Task Force on Gender and Race Equity and Faculty Diversity and Retention, whose report will be incorporated into Dr. Vaughan’s task force’s final report.

A Senator asked Dr. Vaughan if the community meetings being organized by the undergraduate student members of the task force would be open to all. Dr. Vaughan responded that originally those meetings had been envisioned for students only, but the task force decided to open them to all members of the campus community, to take advantage of the opportunity of hearing from everyone in the same room. However, since it is apparent to the task force that graduate students face a particular set of challenges with regard to race and diversity, the task force will be meeting with them separately.

Another Senator recommended that the students of the School of Professional and Continuing Studies and maintenance and clerical workers be especially invited to the community meetings. Dr. Vaughan responded that two of the four meetings have been scheduled in the evenings to accommodate the schedules of students from PCS. The task force desires to meet with members of the maintenance and clerical staff, especially since staff often serve as important vehicles of support for students of color.

Another Senator asked how members of the campus community might submit input to the task force. Mr. Trerotola responded that an email message would soon be sent to the campus community as a whole, along with an invitation to the community meetings. The email message would contain an email address to which feedback and questions for the community meetings can be submitted. Dr. Vaughan added that all such input would be kept confidential.

Senate President Fernald again thanked Dr. Vaughan and the task force members for their time and their service, noting that she looks forward to hearing back from them in due course.

6. Governance Issues

Following a brief recess, the Senate considered revisions to the minutes of its meeting of January 22, 2016, but not finding the revisions sufficient, the Senate left the motion to approve those minutes on the table.

By unanimous consent, the Senate returned to executive session at 2:33 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary