Roger Williams University
Faculty Senate Steering Committee
Minutes for November 28, 2018
2:00-3:00 PM - GHH 200

Committee Members in Attendance: MacPhee, Schlinke, Topf, Van Schepen
Absent: Greg, Leavitt, Ozer, Sawoski, Tait

Guests: Bob Shea, Vice Provost, Lisa Bauer, Associate Director, Student Accessibility Services, and Adam Moore, Assistant Professor of Education

Brief Updates:
- Response from Public Safety regarding campus classroom surveillance
  - Motion approved at November 7, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting: *The Steering Committee requests that the Faculty Senate make inquiries to Public Safety and other administrative offices about the extent of classroom surveillance on campus and about policies regarding the rights of faculty and students observed in the process of this surveillance.*
  - Senate Executive committee sent an inquiry to Public Safety
  - Steven Melaragno, Director of Public Safety, responded by email on November 15, 2018:
  - Security cameras are in common areas and places where there is a concern about theft, but not in every classroom on campus. The surveillance practices are primarily for recording purposes rather than active monitoring of all cameras. Public Safety is willing to provide screen shots of every camera before to show the Faculty Senate exactly what is being covered.
  - Committee will follow up on this issue in spring 2019
- Comprehensive Campus Master Plan – Bill Seymour is seeking one faculty member to represent the Faculty Senate on the working group that will meet with the Ayers Saint Gross consultants on a monthly basis.
  - Motion approved at December 5, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting: *The Steering Committee nominates Anne Tait to represent the Faculty Senate on the university working group that will meet regularly with ASG consultants on the Comprehensive Campus Master Plan project in 2019-2020. The Committee nominates Dale Leavitt as an alternate member of the working group.*
  - ASG Consultants will hold additional listening sessions with the Faculty Senate and the faculty at large in addition to meeting with the working group.

Discussion:
Vice Provost Bob Shea, Lisa Bauer (Associate Director, Student Accessibility Services) and Adam Moore (Assistant Professor of Education) met with the committee to follow up on a motion approved at the November 7, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting.
- Motion from Admissions & Enrollment Committee: *the Faculty Senate requests that SAS bring a speaker, or host a workshop series, for faculty, focusing on best practices for pedagogy and strategies for working in classrooms with "students on the spectrum" and other learning disabilities and that this topic be addressed at the Fall Faculty Conference. (Topf/Soto)*
- Follow-up Questions and Responses
  1. What are the current numbers and types of students who qualify for Student Accessibility Services? (e.g., physical disabilities, behavioral/developmental challenges, learning disabilities).

- The number of students using SAS fluctuates over the course of the academic year because some have temporary eligibility (e.g., from an injury) and others register for accessibility services mid-year.
- Currently 575 students, including 170 first year and transfer students are registered for educational accommodation in some form.
- Roughly 15% of the student body receives SAS assistance and this number is likely an underestimation of eligibility. According to Dr. Moore, concerns about social stigma discourage some students from seeking accommodation even when they qualify for it.

2. Discussion at the November Faculty Senate meeting indicated that faculty are noticing more students with behavioral/developmental challenges, including students in the autism spectrum. How has the number of these students changed over time?
- Between 2013 and 2018, 15 students with this diagnosis have enrolled at RWU.
- Unlike Curry College or Lynn University, RWU has no special program for students with learning differences or challenges. Instead, the university follows a service model that includes subject-based tutoring, extended time for testing, a limited-distraction testing location, note-taking support, and learning strategy assistance.
- SAS is part of the Center for Student Academic Success (CSAS), which also provides the subject-based tutoring and peer mentoring services to all students.
- SAS relies on students to self-identify after they have been admitted to the university. This practice prevents discrimination in the admissions process but also makes it impossible to plan ahead for any special needs in the incoming class.

3. What ideas do you have for faculty training on teaching students with learning differences and creating a more inclusive classroom for students with special needs?
- Staffing at SAS and CSAS is stretched beyond capacity. Shae and Bauer appreciate faculty interest in accessibility services and are highly motivated to collaborate on planning training opportunities in the near future.
- RWU has gained a favorable reputation in the higher education market for students with learning differences and other special needs. Enrollments in SAS are likely to increase, which makes the need for faculty training more urgent.
- Types of training recommended
    i. Universal design – a method of structuring courses with a variety of assignments, methods of delivery, and activities to meet learning outcomes.
    ii. Guidelines for communicating instructions for assignments and tests
    iii. Overview of SAS procedures, policies, and services
    iv. Overview of ADA requirements in comparison to faculty/university rights
    v. Recommendations for working with students with autism diagnoses
- Resources
    i. RWU staff and Education faculty have the expertise and resources needed to implement training workshops for faculty.
    ii. Jane Brown was proposed as an additional outside speaker. She has served in the past as a consultant for faculty working with students with autism.
- Timing
    i. January 2019 – near beginning of the semester
        1. Short workshop to provide a brief overview of SAS procedures, policies, and services, and give faculty a chance to ask questions and make suggestions for future trainings.

        2. The workshop could also include a presentation from the Counseling Center on their procedures, policies, and recommendations for helping students with anxiety, depression, and other psychological concerns.
- ii. Fall 2019
  1. The agenda for the 2019 Fall Faculty Conference was set prior to the Faculty Senate motion in November, but Ame Lambert has offered to devote time at the conference to assess faculty experiences related to student accessibility and the range of needs/desires for more training and support. Adam Moore and Marybeth MacPhee have agreed to follow-up on organizing the assessment.
  2. Results of the assessment will serve as a foundation for designing a longer workshop later in the semester.
  3. Lisa Bauer recommends that faculty keep notes on their experiences related to accessibility and learning differences in their classes to help tailor the trainings to specific needs at RWU.

4. Dates for spring semester meetings will be announced before the start of spring semester.