

Roger Williams University
Faculty Senate Minutes
September 5th, 2018

Roll call:

Present: Bosco, D'Amore, Emmer, Engvall, Fenske, Gumb, Knights, MacPhee, McCormack ,
McKinley, Pearce, Quezada-Grant, Roberts, Sawoski, Soto, Stevens, Tehrani, Topf, Updike,

Absent: Rebelo, Thangaraj

Open Seats: SAHP, SSNS:MNS

Guests: A. Workman, R. Cole, J. Dunseath, J. Speakman, D. O'Driscoll, P. Prado

President Bosco called the meeting to order by asking for a moment of silence in memory of President Donald Farish, who passed away in July.

Announcements:

Future meetings of the Faculty Senate will be in Mary Tefft White.

Welcome to our new senators, Lindsey Gumb, Minoo Tehrani, Gail Fenske, Rachel McCormack, Marybeth MacPhee

Introductions – asked each Senator to introduce themselves, including how long they had been on the Faculty Senate.

Reminder that there are two Faculty Senate listening sessions with the Presidential Search Committee and the search firm, Isaacson Miller. Please reach out to your faculty to gather input, and please attend.

Also, there are general faculty listening sessions with the Presidential Search Committee and the search firm, Isaacson Miller.

Senate Resolution:

Move that the President of the Senate shall send the following resolution by letter to Maia Farish on behalf of the Faculty Senate (Topf, Updike):

“The Faculty Senate expresses our sorrow on the passing of President Donald J. Farish and our condolences for his loss. We are grateful for President Farish’s leadership, integrity, achievements, and the respect he showed for everyone he worked with. His extraordinary service contributed greatly to the transformation of Roger Williams University.”

Discussion:

Should “his” be changed to “her” in the first sentence. Topf, Updike agree.

Passed: 20 – 0 – 0

Updates from Interim President Andrew Workman:

Expression of difficulty of past months with the unexpected passing of President Farish. Reminder that there will be a celebration of his life on 9/12, focusing on who he was and what he meant to the institution. It will take the shape of a performance interspersed with speeches and quotes, followed by a reception. President Farish’s impact on RWU was transformative, and he brought ethics, seriousness, and intellectual depth to the President’s Office.

Students are settling in well. We have a strong incoming class.

Our target enrollments were off by 3%, but we had a larger than ever incoming transfer – 95 students (goal was 60). Some came from Mt. Ida.

Retention is up over last year, throughout all years.

Financial difficulties are still real, and he will discuss in depth at State of University Address on 9/26.

He is interested in increasing revenue paths (including transfer and international students), and rethinking pricing model.

This year’s theme is relevant – Ocean State - State of the Ocean – and sea level rise.

There is a related common reading, a process which involved faculty. Faculty can connect classes and projects to the theme.

President Bosco had requested an update on the state of the University’s rentals in Bristol –

No changes. There is a clay studio at Reynolds School, and two classrooms at the Byfield School. The spaces are not accessible, but they offer students space to mix with community of artists downtown. The President also referred to the HawksWorks space used by the Engineering School. Is this space is still functioning in Bristol for our students?

Response from Acting Provost Cole: Hawkworks (255 Franklin St, Bristol) is the off-campus facility used by the School of Engineering, Computing and Construction Management for fabrication activities. The 5600 sq ft facility is divided into one section approximately 3600 sq ft in size and the remaining section is approximately 2000 sq ft. The larger area contains a tool room and wood shop. It is primarily used for the Construction Management program’s Methods and Materials laboratories. Usually four-five laboratory sections are offered in the fall (CNST201L) and four-five laboratory

sections in the spring (CNST200L). The smaller section houses a welding area, metal working tools and assemblies and serves as the fabrication areas for engineering senior capstone projects as well as club activities (such as the concrete canoe.) To the best of my understanding, the current lease expires on April 30th, 2020.

The *Bristol Phoenix* recently ran some unfavorable articles about RWU students, issues that were brought in front of town council. Conversations have been ongoing, and communications are going well. The town might fine landlords in places where negative behavior happens; goal is partnership, not punishment. (Ordinance from Town of Bristol attached)

There was a question on the status of a bike path between campus and town.

President Workman noted that he has been having conversations with Bristol about that, but that the state is cash-strapped and funneling resources to things like fixing bridges. He is working with them on the possibility of writing a federal grant to connect campus to East Bay bike path.

Updates from Acting Provost Cole:

He was asked to take on Acting role to provide stability. His task this year is to carry out the operational aspect of things without shift in philosophy or policy: he brings stability.

He will be trying to bring people together within resources and means that we have

He is looking forward to working with Senate sub-committees to bring desires and ideas to fruition. Especially interested in working with the Faculty Development Committee, in hopes of doing a better job of nurturing talent on campus.

Not interested in “handcuffing” future provost to initiatives, though pilots may be possible.

The Dean’s Council has been re-named the Provost’s Council, and while meetings are scheduled weekly, that schedule may be adjusted such that meetings may be held less often/used for other purposes

E-mail him directly or come by if you want to talk.

Senator Soto asked where he is residing in his term as Acting Provost. He is on the 2nd floor of the Admin building., in the Provost’s Office;

Senator Tehrani mentioned that possibility that Saudi Arabia will reopen pathways

President Workman noted that VP Brian Williams is keeping an eye on those things

Senator Knights asked if, related to ASEM, people should reach out to him directly.

Provost Cole noted that he will have discussions about various approaches; he wants to nurture good ideas. He will work on processes that lift obstacles to proposals/creativity without harming integrity of review (business plan, for example, will be done away with).

Senator Soto asked if new programs would still move through curriculum committees, or be tapped to rapidly move forward

President Workman and Provost Cole both noted that curriculum committee review would be expected. But Provost Coe noted that he did not want to let bureaucracy stop good ideas. There is a timetable in place to have certain new programs already in the pipeline (directly related to ASEM/otherwise) in place for Fall 2020 to also coordinate with recruiting efforts next fall.

Senator Updike asked about the Engineering accreditation report –

President Workman noted that it achieved the best score you can get, as did Architecture and Computer Science.

President Workman and Provost Cole depart.

President Bosco distributed a Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart – as a way of trying to be inclusive and mindful of folks who might not be sure how debate and motions happen.

She re-affirmed recognition of the concerns raised about Faculty Senate transparency – and wants all Senators to let the people they represent know what is discussed in a timely manner. She recommended that Senators get on the agenda for school or division meetings, to keep people updated and informed.

Senator Pearce asked for confirmation of the 10-minute debate limit rule.

President Bosco confirmed, and agreed to hold stricter to that limit. Requests to continue debate would need to be made as motions, and passed by 2/3 majority.

Motion to accept the Minutes from May 2, 2018 (Stevens, Duffy)

Passed 17 – 0 - 2

Motion to accept the report of Executive Committee meeting from May 8, 2018 (Roberts, Updike)

Passed 17 – 0 – 2

Reminder of open Senate positions – let's fill them

Request that committee chairs send their member list to their VP reps, and openings, so a call can be sent out

Old Business:

Report from the SCS Working Committee – Jennifer Pearce and Mel Topf have been working with Jamie Scurry and Bob Cole. Last spring the Faculty Senate asked for a September proposal. In light of President Farish’s passing, the workflow got interrupted and they didn’t have time. Request to move to report on that in October. No objection raised.

Report from Registrar, Dan O’Driscoll: There are two new systems that affect faculty; one related to the catalog, and one related to the curriculum process. The catalog is 4 weeks behind schedule (due to turnover with DigArc, the company they are working with). The curriculum system feeds into that catalog. As such, the whole process has been delayed.

The 2017-18 version of catalog went live on the RWU website today (September 4th). They are working on conversion to 18-19 catalog, hopefully by mid-September. Then they will kick off implementation of curriculum system. Next year, they expect to have the 19-20 catalog live by July.

The Registrar is doing drop in training sessions, also having dedicated meetings with departments in SNSS and SJS. Reach out - he is willing to set up trainings with departments, would be willing to train the Faculty Senate.

Senator Fenske asked what procedure to follow when there are typographical errors

O’Driscoll said we can let the Registrar’s Office know.

Senator Updike noted that sometimes, catalog descriptions for majors reflect incorrect title for Intro Physics class

O’Driscoll noted that he can fix that.

President Bosco announced that we need a Senator to attend Dean’s Council on Tuesdays from 10am to 12pm.

Senator Pearce volunteers, and will send a weekly report.

President Bosco asked that Senators send requests for changes to their bylaws before the next meeting, so that we can add them to the agenda for al vote at the October meeting.

Senator Knights clarifies that bylaws need to be first approved by the majority of the committees’ members.

Motion to reorder agenda to begin with (K, f) Referrals to committees (Roberts, Duffy)

Passed: Unaminously

Brief discussion of Career Center staffing and services as a topic for Faculty Senate to investigate.

Motion to refer concerns about the Career Center staffing and services to Steering Committee (Topf, Knights)

Passed: Unanimously

Brief discussion about concerns about faculty input related to Academics 101.

Motion to refer to concerns about Academics 101 to Admission and Enrollment (Roberts, Updike)

Passed: Unanimously

Brief discussion about concerns related to Commencement ceremony style last May.

Motion to refer concerns about Commencement ceremony to University Life (Tehrani, Emmer)

Passed:
Unanimously

Brief discussion about concerns related to how students are charged tuition for online courses in summer v fall?

Motion to charge Admissions & Enrollment with investigating policies, costs, and other issues surrounding enrollment in single classes in different terms (Roberts, Soto)

Discussion: Senator Stevens asked if it was a policy, not enrollment issue (and thus right for Academic Standards and Policies)

Passed: Unanimously

Motion (Topf, Roberts)

“(1) The Faculty Senate finds that the Board of Trustees has established a search process for the next president that:

- (A) is unacceptably secretive;
- (B) improperly suppresses the opportunity for faculty to meet and talk with finalists, or even to know who they are;
- (C) signals a disregard for faculty that offends the dedication and commitment to RWU that the faculty has always shown;
- (D) shows disrespect for faculty by failing to justify this process.

(2) This finding should in no way signal mistrust of the service and integrity of the two faculty members who were selected to represent faculty on the search committee.

(3) This resolution, upon passage, shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees, which shall be asked to respond by September 20.”

Senator Topf offers brief comments related to his motion.

Senator D’Amore enters a substitute motion:

Motion (D’Amore, Updike)

“The Faculty Senate finds that the Board of Trustees has established a search process for the next president that:

- A) is unacceptably secretive;
- B) suppresses the opportunity for most of the faculty to meet and talk with finalists, or even to know who they are.
- C) has failed to justify, or even explain, the rationale for this new process.

This should in no way signal mistrust of the service and integrity of the faculty members who have already been selected to represent the faculty. This resolution, upon passage, shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees.”

Senator D’Amore notes that the substitute motion does not change the core message of Topf’s motion, but removes subjective language, the assumptions about what the process signifies, and the erasure of the roles of the two faculty members invited to serve on the search committee.

A brief pause is taken to ensure that the group understands how to debate and vote on a substitute motion, before debate begins.

Debate ensues, involving Senators Emmer, D’Amore, Topf, Tehrani, Pearce, Roberts, Updike, Knights, MacPhee, Sawoski, Soto, Fenske, and Engvall. Topics include the strength and necessity of language, the specificity of language, the desired message of the motions, the history of search firms’ influence on searches (and on Board decisions about how to run them), the nature of the slippery slope, combative stance v expression of displeasure, faculty reps to search committee having been selected by BoT, the importance/challenge of representing a diversity of opinions, the sense that faculty are angry and the message needs to be forceful, and questions about whether the faculty senate should not only disagree but refuse the Board’s proposal for a closed search.

After ten minutes of debate,

Motion to close debate (Topf, Stevens)

Passed 16 – 2 - 0

Vote on substitute motion

Senator Topf called for a closed ballot. Members of the Elections Committee collect, tally, and report the vote results.

Failed: 5 – 13 - 0

Debate resumes on original motion

Motion to call the question (Roberts, Sawoski)

Failed: 8 – 10 - 0

Senator Topf called for a friendly amendment to his motion, to change “improperly suppresses the opportunity for faculty to meet and talk with finalists, or even to know who they are” to “for all but two faculty” (Topf, Roberts)

Senator Updike asked whether there is something between an open and closed search.

President Bosco requests a friendly amendment to change “Board of Trustees” to “search committee,” and the date from “September 20th,” to “September 23rd.”

Senator Topf declines, explaining that the motion is explicit about laying the blame for this process on the Board of Trustees

Senator Soto asks Paola Prado, a guest and a faculty member appointed to the search committee, if she has comments.

Paola Prado explains the way she came to be on the search committee – she did not seek it out, she was invited by a Trustee, and she is there as an advocate for diversity. She noted that she takes the role as someone with the best interests of faculty and the institution very seriously.

After 10 minutes of debate,

The vote is called (Roberts, Tehrani)

Senator Topf called for a closed ballot. Members of the Elections Committee collect, tally, and report the vote results.

Passed: 17 – 1 - 0

Motion to change faculty constitution (Topf,Knights)

Add to Senate Constitution, Art. VI, Sec. (1) (A):

In the event that a school or division fails to select a representative to a committee herein listed by September 15, the chair of the committee shall notify the faculty of that school or

division that its seat on the committee is vacant unless the faculty selects a member within five workdays. If the school or division fails to fill the seat by that time, the chair shall so notify the Senate Executive Committee, and proceed to select a faculty member to fill the seat from among all RWU full time faculty. The selection process is at the discretion of the chair. The selection shall be approved by a majority of committee members. The chair shall promptly inform the Executive Committee of the selection, and shall certify that a majority of the committee approved. This provision shall apply only to the following committees:

Admissions and Enrollment
Diversity
Steering
University Life

Passed: 17 – 1 – 0

New Business:

Senator Tehrani raises concern about the Writing Placement process for incoming students, particularly in students' ability to choose WTNG 100 or WTNG 102, and requests that Academic Standards and Policies be tasked with investigation.

Senator Stevens asks if this is overstepping the bounds of Faculty Senate, as it sounds like an issue with the way an academic department is choosing to lay out a program.

Senator Topf notes that the Faculty Senate certainly *can* investigate, but wants to table the motion.

Senator D'Amore recalled that clear explanation was given to advisors working with incoming students at Orientation about the writing placement process, that faculty from Writing Studies were present there to work with students and go over the options, that writing is an outcome of an RWU education that she doesn't want to shortchange, and that it may be that some students are getting the message externally that WTNG 100 is burdensome to their academic career (completing majors on time, etc).

Move to table the motion (Topf, Pearce)

Passed: 15 – 1 - 1

President Bosco reminds that Board Liaisons need to be appointed by October.

Motion to adjourn (Roberts, Topf).

Respectfully submitted,
Laura D'Amore, Recording Secretary