Minutes

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING

December 7, 2011

L. Laby (student senator), M. Rooney (student senator)

Absent: L. Procaccini, R. Woodruff

Guests: President Farish, Interim Provost Potter, Dean Cole, Sr. Vice President of Enrollment Management & Communications Lynn Fawthrop, Assistant Vice President University Communications Judi Connery

Announcements: President Topf’s announcements:

1. Starting in spring, the Senate will meet two Wednesdays per month to be able to respond quickly to the President Office.
2. Lynn Fawthrop and Judy Conner are the Senate guests to address the issues that were raised by some of the senators.

Items on the agenda:

1. Approval of the Senate minutes of November 2.
   Minutes were approved unanimously with a change of word “dissolved” to “withdrawn”:
   “The motion to dissolve the General Education Committee was not seconded and it was withdrawn “ (p. 5, # 8).

2. Acknowledgement of receipt of standing committee minutes.
   a. Admission and Enrolment – Minutes of Nov. 30
   b. Curriculum Committee – Minutes of Nov. 16
   c. University Life Committee – Minutes of Nov. 16
   d. Diversity Committee – Minutes of Oct. 12 and Nov. 30
   e. Faculty Development Committee – Minutes of Oct. 19 and Nov. 16
3. Executive Committee report on November 9th meeting with President Farish and Provost Potter.

(a) Senate motion of November 2 on selection of adjuncts.

- Provost Potter stated that at the Deans’ Council, the deans indicated that they followed this process. If there are specific issues in particular schools, he would follow up with those deans. The President and the Provost agreed that there would be transparency and consistency in this matter in the future.

(b) General education: President Farish stated that:

- NEASC will visit in 2016. For general education, NEASC expects to see learning outcomes, assessment of those outcomes, and a continuous improvement model.

- General education should be a common learning experience that contains:
  - Communication;
  - Critical thinking;
  - The ability to synthesize information from diverse sources;
  - Higher order thinking skills.

- Dr. Farish will propose a timeline and a charge to the Senate. In his view, a new Senate committee should be constructed OR the existing Core committee should become a Senate committee and empowered to develop a set of learning outcomes for the Core and to conduct an evaluation of the Core as measured against those outcomes.

- Whatever major changes are to be undertaken must be in place by 2013.

- The President will provide a narrative of his expectations and the charge to the Senate by 11/14.

4. Accuracy and appropriateness of website information. (Pursuant to the motion passed November 2, inviting Lynn Fawthrop and Judy Conner to the Senate to address certain matters.)

Lynn Fawthrop stated that she and Judi had reported to the Senate last year as to the construction of the new website. The web reconstruction is being conducted in two phases: Phase I included creation of website and the fundamental information on the web; and Phase II, which is currently going on, includes more detailed information.
Judy Conner addressed the issues raised by the senators during the last meeting of the Senate:

- **Issue:** What are the sources of website information? In at least one academic area, no one approached the faculty for information for the website or asked them to review information for accuracy and appropriateness. A concern was expressed that some claims on the site may create liability.

  **Response:** The source of information was the catalogue and such information was reviewed by the appropriate dean’s office.

- **Issue:** The difficulty of accessing information, including lack of adequate location signs and links.

  **Response:** Phase II is ongoing and any issues in regards to accessing information will be addressed.

- **Issue:** The extent to which the website design facilitates access by internal audiences as well as external: No link to individual websites; directory needs to be more user friendly; and the chairs did not review the information in regard to their majors.

  **Response:** The external audience has been the focus of the ease of access to the information on the website. If there are any links that the internal audience feels are important, those links can be accommodated. The information regarding majors was reviewed by the respective dean.

5. Two alternative motions regarding the search committee for a provost. (Pursuant to President Farish’s announcement on Nov. 2 that the committee is to be comprised primarily of faculty members, and that he charges the Senate with the selection of these faculty.)

   (A) Alternative 1.

   **Motion:** The Faculty Senate select members of the provost search committee by charging each school and division with electing one of their Senate representatives to the committee. (M. Emmer). **Motion did not move.**

   (B) Alternative 2.

   **Motion:** The Faculty Senate selects members of the provost search committee by charging each school and division with electing a faculty member from their respective school or division to the committee. (M. Topf).

   **Friendly amendment to the above motion** (J. Stevens, J. Fobert) The election for such committee to be conducted by the Faculty Senate Election Committee for all 10 schools and divisions (including the library) and election to be conducted in a way to include full-time junior and senior faculty. **Motion carried unanimously.**
6. **Motion** (M. Tehrani, R. O’Connell): The Faculty Senate affirms the creation of an ad hoc committee to review and recommend guidelines for faculty-led programs abroad. The ad hoc committee will be composed of volunteers from the faculty who lead programs abroad in addition to a representative from the Global Center and a representative from the Finance Office. The committee will report to the Senate. **Motion carried with one opposed and 3 abstentions.**

7. General education.

   (A) *Move* that the Faculty Senate accept the charge from President Farish entitled “The Issue of General Education: A Proposed Charge to the Senate.” [The document is attached to the email accompanying this agenda.] (M. Topf)

   (B) *Move* that, whereas the charge of President Farish includes creation of a subcommittee on general education, the Senate hereby creates this subcommittee; *and further* authorizes its membership to be selected from among the faculty as follows (M. Topf):

   1. One member from each school and division, to be elected by the faculty of the respective schools and divisions; *and*

   2. One member each from (a) the Department of Mathematics and (b) the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition, the member to be elected by the faculty of the respective departments; *and*

   3. A chair, to be elected by the Faculty Senate from among RWU faculty; *provided that* the chair be granted compensation commensurate with the magnitude of the work involved, including a summer stipend, and reasonable secretarial support.

A lengthy discussion ensued as to the nature of this committee, its charge, its composition and the election of its chair. President Topf stated that the process had to be a legitimate one in regards to the clarity of the charge to this committee and also that the Senate would have authority over this committee.

**Motion (T. Soroger, R. O’Connell): To accept President Farish’s charge.**

More discussion ensued: Senate accepts the responsibility of creating such committee; current Gen Ed and Core Committee to be combined; Core has been assessed previously; not all Cores were assessed consistently; current Gen Ed Committee should take a strategic role and the current Core Committee should take a tactical role in regard to the general education at our campus; do we need 2 committees or one? We need to look beyond the assessment and into the future regarding the general education as whole.
In regard to the word “charge”, President Farish stated that the line of authority in a university is from the Board of Trustees to the President’s Office and then down. At this time, there is the opportunity for the Senate to take the ownership of reviewing the general education.

President Topf recognized a non-senator to speak. L. Barry asked for the chair of such committee to be elected by the senators and the members of the committee. L. Barry asked for a motion that the chair for such committee be elected by the Faculty Senate and the elected members of the newly formed committee (R. O’Connell, R. Spritz).

President Topf stated that the order of the agenda is to first accept President Farish’s charge to create such committee and asked the vote on this item to be conducted via secret ballots. In response to the question as why the secret ballots, President Topf stated that any senator could ask for a vote to be conducted via secret ballots.

**Motion (R. O’Connell, T. Soroger)** The Faculty Senate accepts the charge from President Farish to create a new Senate committee, General Education Committee. **Motion via secret ballot carried (Approved: 33, Opposed: 1, Abstained: 0)**

T. Hollingsworth moved that the chair of the committee to be elected by the senate (seconded by R. Spritz). Motion did not carry (Approved: 14, Opposed: 14, Abstained: 3).

President Topf asked to discuss the composition of the committee before moving to the topic of election of the chair of the committee. As a result, the motion asked by L. Barry was tabled (R. O’Connell, R. Spritz). The senators discussed the composition of the committee that should include a representative from all schools and divisions (10) and also a representative from each Core area (Core 1- Core 6 and the Senior Seminar, total 6).

President Topf asked for a motion to extend the meeting for ten minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Motion (D. Moskowitz, M. Sawoski)** The new General Education Committee will be elected and composed of full-time faculty as depicted below:

1. One member from each school and division to be elected by the faculty of the respective schools and divisions; and

2. One member each from (a) the Department of Mathematics and (b) the Department of Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition, the member to be elected by the faculty of the respective departments; and

3. One member per each Core (Core 1-Core 5 and Senior Seminar) from the full time faculty who teach Core 1 – Core 5 and the Senior Seminar (6 members altogether).

**Motion carried with one opposed and one abstention.**
R. Spritz asked to un-table the motion forwarded by L. Barry:

**Motion** (R. O’Connell; R. Spritz): The chair of the new General Education Committee to be elected by the Faculty Senate and the elected members of the newly formed committee. Motion carried (Approved: 12, Opposed: 10, Abstained: 1).

Meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Submitted respectfully,

Minoo Tehrani
Submitted 12/8/2011