Minutes
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
March 7, 2012


Guests: President Farish, Interim Provost Potter

Announcements: President Topf’s announcements:

1. The duration for discussion of each motion on the Faculty Senate agenda shall be ten minutes.
2. The motions that are tabled during the previous meeting of the Senate need to be requested to be put back on the following Senate meeting agenda if they are to be discussed.

Items on the agenda:

(1) Minutes:
   A. Approval of the Senate minutes of February 1, 2012.
      Minutes were approved unanimously.

   B. Acknowledgement of receipt of standing committee minutes.
      a. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee of February 14
      b. Faculty-led Program Abroad Report of January 25
      c. University Life Committee minutes of February 15
      d. Faculty Senate General Education Committee minutes of February 29

   C. President Topf stated that the Senate Executive Committee minutes of February 22, 2012 were not completed yet.

(2) Executive Committee Report:
   a. Drafting the Student Academic Integrity policy is under process.
   b. Authority of the faculty to recommend one honorary degree: President Farish stated that the Board felt that it was their call to do the nominations for
the honorary degree recipients, but liked the idea of a role played by the faculty. The President will discuss the idea of a faculty member joining the nomination committee to vet the candidates.

c. Matters arising from votes at the February 1 meeting of the Faculty Senate:

   (1) Motion passed recommending that the Dean’s Council publish minutes of its meetings in a manner similar to that of the faculty Senate:
       Interim Provost Potter stated the minutes would be posted online. Interim Provost Potter will check with the IT as to creation of a database of the recipients.

   (2) Motion passed recommending that membership on the Deans’ Council be expanded to include a liaison from the Faculty Senate who will serve in a non-voting capacity:
       Interim Provost Potter stated that for the time being (starting in March 2012) a faculty liaison can attend the Deans’ Council meeting twice a month until a rapport is created. The term for next year starts July 3rd. The faculty liaison to the Deans’ Council will report to the Faculty Senate.

d. Matters regarding faculty liaisons to Board committees:

   (1) Terms of the faculty liaisons will normally begin July 1 and end June 30. For the recently elected liaisons however, their terms will begin March 1 and extend to June 30, 2013:
       President Farish stated that the terms were fine.

   (2) We request that President Farish ask the chairs of the Board committees which have liaisons to communicate with their liaisons about the workings of their respective committees:
       President Farish stated it was fine to do so.

   (3) The liaisons should report to the Faculty Senate. (We contemplated a motion at the March Senate meeting requiring liaisons to report in writing regularly to the Faculty Senate.):
       President Farish stated that it was fine to do so.

(3) Discussion with President Farish and Interim Provost Potter (15 minutes):

   a. President Farish shared a report on Collegial Learning Assessment (CLA) that was conducted in fall 2011 with the Senate. CLA includes testing of students on Analytical Reasoning and Evaluation, Writing Effectiveness, Writing Mechanics, Problem Solving along three dimensions: Performance Task, Make-on-Argument and Critique-on-Argument. These measures were taken in freshman year, two years after and then during the senior semester. The test was administered to 200
students. According to this report, forty percent of freshman and senior classes did not score high on CLA. Communication and analytical skills showed improvement among our freshmen and juniors. President Farish stated that these scores should be taken into consideration when reviewing our General Education program. In addition, more data and measurements are needed to indicate how we can improve our students’ academic performance.

b. President Farish stated that the feedback from Accepted Students’ day was very positive and there were 50 more students that participated in the first Accepted Students’ Day. President Farish said that he hoped we can convert these accepted students to admits.

c. President Farish shared a financial report with the Senate that included the percentage of graduation and funds spent on each student and other financial statistics of twenty one private and public universities. According to this report, RWU’s graduation rate is 62%, which is below the graduation rate of eleven of the studied universities. RWU student’s aid of $10,000 per head is above public schools, but below most of the private schools included in this report. RWU net cost is high since we graduate only 62% of our students. In addition, one third of RWU students do not qualify for federal grants. As for the Pell grant, only 6% of the bottom percentile of private schools’ students are eligible. President Farish stated that the challenge for us was how much financial assistant RWU needed to provide, how influential such financial aid was to get students to come to RWU, and how to improve the rate of graduation, retention, and on-time gradation.

(4) Report from Provost Search Committee (J. Stevens):

J. Stevens reported that the Committee had received numerous applications and had narrowed them to ten. The Committee would invite six candidates to campus. The final list shall include three candidates and those names will be forwarded to the President.

(5) Faculty liaisons to Board Committees: Reports to the Senate

Motion 1 (M. Topf, D. Moskowitz): Moved that faculty liaisons to Board committees shall report in writing to the Faculty Senate within ten days after each meeting of their respective committees. The liaisons may report at such other times as they believe the Senate should be informed of their respective committees’ activities. If a Board committee has not met for three months, or if a Board committee has barred its faculty liaison from a meeting, then the liaison shall so report to the Senate.

Motion passed unanimously.

(6) Board of Trustees policy on rejecting faculty liaisons

Motion 2 (M. Topf, R. Woodruff): Moved that whereas the Board of Trustees reportedly has a policy stating that it is “under no obligation” to accept the faculty liaisons duly elected by the faculty, and furthermore it may request “another candidate” at “its sole discretions”; resolved that the Faculty Senate hereby
respectfully objects to this policy as an offense to the dignity and trustworthiness of the Faculty of Roger Williams University. Further, resolved that the Faculty Senate respectfully requests that the Board of Trustees repeal this offensive policy, and so notify the Faculty Senate.

Discussion centered on if, 1) the Senate needed to take a proactive stance or 2) not considering such motion since in the past the Board of Trustees had not rejected an elected Faculty Senate representative. The comments opposing the motion: Why take an action when the Board has yet to reject a Senate representative. The comments in support of the motion: We needed to take a proactive stance since the history of such representation on the Board was very short. 

**Motion failed with 7 approved, 14 opposed and 3 abstentions.**

(7) Frequency of Senate meetings:

[Note: The constitution provides that the Senate “shall meet monthly” (IV, 5). I propose that this be amended to say the Senate “shall meet twice each month.” The purpose is not to increase the amount of time the Senate meets, but rather to increase the frequency of meetings, so that a whole month or more need not pass between meetings.] [M. Topf]

**Motion 3 (M. Topf, M. Tehrani): Moved to approve an amendment to the constitution to permit the Senate to hold two regular meetings per month. (M. Topf)**

Discussion: The concerns were raised as to the number of meetings that each senator needed to attend, the number of missed meetings and conflicts with other tasks. 

**Motion failed with 12 approved, 13 opposed and 2 abstentions.**

(8) Senate Communication with RWU Board of Trustees:

[Note: President Farish has informed the Executive Committee that in order to establish a means of direct contact between the Senate and the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Board has agreed to have the President of the Senate contact him on Senate business relating to the Board. By the motion here, the Senate would formally recognize this means of contact.]

**Motion 4 (M. Topf, M. Stein): Moved that the duties of the President of the Faculty Senate shall include communication with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. In accordance with the recent agreement of the Chair, such communications to be as needed and as instructed by the Senate or by its Executive Committee.**

President Farish said that he was in favor of this motion. Dr. Farish stated that he would feel comfortable for the President of the Senate to be in communication
with the Board of Trustees and he knew that this communication line would not be abused.

**Motion passed with 1 opposed.**

(9) Size of the Senate: removal of at-large members:

[Note: Below are four amendments to the constitution intended to reduce and to stabilize the size of the Senate. Presently the size of the Senate expands as the RWU faculty grows. (The Senate has nearly doubled over the last 15 years.) The proposed amendments would, (1) reduce its size somewhat and, (2) provide for a stated number of Senators so its size is not subject to change from year to year. The amendments would do this in three ways: First, they eliminate the five at-large members. There seems to be no difference in the actions or views of members elected at large and those elected by schools and divisions. It would affirm that we are elected representatives of specific constituencies; second, they omit the membership of the immediate past president, who is the only unelected member of the Senate; third, they set the Senate at a stable number of members (30), with representation of the schools and divisions in proportion to their respective sizes, parallel to the U.S. House of Representatives.]

**Motion 5** (M. Topf, R. O’Connell: Moved to approve the following amendments:

(A) **Delete** II, 4 and III, 3 (providing for five at-large members).

(B) **Delete** II, 5 (providing for membership of the immediate past president).

(C) **Add** to II, 1: “The Faculty Senate shall have thirty members.”

(D) **Delete** II, 2 and **replace** with a new II, 2: “Representation of each school or division shall be in the same proportion as the faculty in the school or division is in relation to the total RWU full-time faculty. (For example, if a school or division has 10% of the faculty, it shall have 10% of the thirty seats on the Faculty Senate.)

President Topf stated that by mistake the Senate now had 10 at-large members. The at-large members should be clearly the representatives of their constituencies. Discussion ensued as to deleting Item B from the amendments. Friendly amendment (M. Tehrani, R. O’Connell) to remove Item B from the motion. Friendly amendment was accepted.

A point of discussion was if the Education Program was part of the CAS or not. The final result was to vote on items A, C and D. **Motion failed with 1 vote to approve.**
(10) Faculty evaluation of deans:

M. Tehrani stated that based on the feedback from the faculty, the motion was revised as follows:

**Motion 5** (M. Tehrani, D. Moskowitz): Moved that

(A) The full-time faculty in each school or college shall have the opportunity to evaluate their respective dean annually;
(B) The items on the evaluation form shall be developed by the Faculty Senate after soliciting feedback from the faculty of the schools and college. The evaluation shall be conducted to protect the identity of faculty members who submit an evaluation form;
(C) The results of the evaluations of the deans shall be shared with the faculty of the respective schools and college and administration.

Discussion ensued as to: 1) The number of entities that would have access to the results of the evaluations, 2) who would be in charge of developing the survey questionnaire, 3) If there were other institutions that conducted similar surveys.

The motion was tabled until the next meeting of the Senate for the Steering Committee to explore the above issues.

(11) Eight-week online courses:

**Motion 6** (S. Varano, D. Moskowitz): Moved that whereas the President has previously stated that he believes it is appropriate for the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee to consult regarding all matters relating to curriculum, and whereas, at least one member in the School of Justice Studies is on record as opposing the further implementation of the eight-week online graduate program, move that all eight-week online graduate programs be reviewed by said committee in order that the committee may make any and all appropriate recommendations regarding the program’s implementation and/or expansion.

Discussion: To regularize the 8-week courses, minors and other programs such as online delivery of courses and process them through the procedures already in place in FSCC. **Motion to table for further discussion carried with 17 approved, 6 opposed and 6 abstentions.**

(12) Program and curricular review [tabled at the February 1 meeting]

**Motion 6** (D. Moskowitz, T. Sorger): Moved that any review of, or proposed changes to current curriculum, or program including but not limited to where programs and majors are housed, not proceed until all affected full time faculty have been consulted and the proposed change reviewed by the Faculty Senate.”

Discussion focused on the issue of intellectual property, accreditation issues that could be serious and the governance issue. **Motion carried with 2 opposed and 2 abstentions.**
(13) Review of special topics courses:

Motion 7 (M. Tehrani, D. Moskowitz): Moved that Special topics courses in their initial offering be reviewed and approved by a majority vote of the full-time faculty members of the relevant department/group.

[The motion is intended to provide a uniform process for the initial offering of special topics courses.]

The word “vote” in the motion was changed to “consensus”:

Motion 7 revised (M. Tehrani, D. Moskowitz): Moved that Special Topic courses in their initial offering be reviewed and approved by the majority consensus of the full-time faculty members of the relevant department/group.

M. Tehrani stated that at this point in time the only policy regarding special topic courses was after the third time that such a course is offered, it needs to follow the procedures in place for the approval of a new course. At the initial stage of offering a special topic course, there are diverse procedures across campus (e.g., approved by the department/group, approved by chair) before being sent to the relevant Dean’s office. Motion carried with 7 opposed and 2 abstentions.

Submitted respectfully,

Minoo Tehrani
Submitted- Executive Committee-3/19/2012