Minutes
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING

May 2, 2012


Absent: Senators S. Bosco, M. Emmer, B. Spritz, A. Tait, C. Timpson, L. Turner

Guests: President Farish, Interim Provost Potter, Interim Associate Provost Cole

Announcements: President Topf’s announcements:

1. President Topf added two items added to the agenda, Item #11 (University Life Committee) and Item #12 (Steering Committee).
2. President Topf announced that he would not be seeking another term as president or vice president of the Faculty Senate. President Topf took the opportunity to thank the senators and President Farish.

Items on the agenda:

(1) Minutes:

A. Approval of the Senate minutes of April 4, 2012.
   Minutes were approved unanimously.

B. Acknowledgement of receipt of standing committee minutes.

   a. Core Curriculum Committee minutes of April 11
   b. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee minutes of April 18
   c. University Life Committee minutes of April 18
   d. General Education Committee minutes of April 25
   e. Faculty Professional Development Committee minutes of March and April
   f. Steering Committee minutes of April

C. The Senate Executive Committee meeting minutes have not been distributed at this time.
(2) Executive Committee report:

J. Speakman reported the items discussed in the Executive Committee meeting:

1. The Center for Teaching and Learning: There is nothing in the budget for this center for next year. The earliest it could be launched would be fall 2013. Planning can begin in fall 2012.
   a. What is the cost?
   b. Would the director be a faculty member with release time?
   c. How to select the director?

Provost Potter’s response: There are now various resources to assist faculty in this area, including Instructional Design and the Advising Centers, both of which hold workshops that are under attended. There will be a New Faculty Teaching Workshop led by Dr. Potter. The date is June 3-6.

2. Online courses
   a. Is there a policy in place that regulates how many online courses a student can take and which courses? Is it appropriate for day students to take courses such as Core 101 online? Current policy is that they can take one online RWU course each semester.
   b. How to ensure the quality of online courses? And how to determine which faculty should teach those courses? Should the faculty member have to be certified to teach such courses?
   c. Need to avoid an ad hoc approach to this issue.

3. General Education
   a. What should be done about governance?

4. Marketing of summer and winter sessions.
   a. Not very aggressive.

Response: President Farish will seek information and report to the Senate.

5. Students’ evaluations of teaching

Response: President Farish agreed that the last two weeks of the semester was the appropriate time. Provost Potter stated that RWU would not go back to paper surveys but we needed to find a way to increase student participation.

6. Policy manuals

Response: President Farish asked what the status was of his request to have faculty participation in the writing and setting of university policies. President Topf stated that the Faculty Senate would elect three senators to assist in this effort over the summer.
7. Finals

Response: Provost Potter would like to see finals week eliminated and replaced by one additional week of instruction time to be used as the instructor sees fit.

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

a. President Farish report: As of May 2nd, the number of paid applicants is 1,090, which is thirty short of the target of 1,120. There are thirty four international students, four more than last year and 103 minority students compared to 77 last year. RWU has received 9,343 applications and might still get more. However, factors such as shrinking university age population in the Northeast, financial difficulties and other universities that have started calling on their waiting list and some of the RWU applicants being on such lists are factors that are working against us.

There are some universities that have made SAT optional. Based on research, 20% of students do not do well in standardized tests. SAT is seen by some universities as a barrier and not necessarily a measure of success at the university level.

The challenge for RWU is to distinguish itself in several areas. According to AACU, the future for universities is to marry the liberal arts with professional degrees. Liberal arts schools are partnering with businesses to prepare students for careers. We need to have minors in professional fields to enhance the percentage of success for our students.

There were questions as to the approach to transfer admission, strategies to enhance the retention rate, and data on geographic distribution of our students.

Response: RWU has hired a person to address the admission of transfer students. The geographic data are not available.

(4) Manual of University policies

Motion 1 (J. Speakman, M. Tehrani): The Faculty Senate selects three faculty members to a committee proposed by President Fairish to create a policy manual. The committee is to work over the summer with compensation. One committee member will be elected from the Senate and the other two faculty members will be elected at large.
Motion carried with 2 abstentions.

[Note: President Farish discussed this at the April 4 meeting, noting that the committee would have six members, three from administration and three from faculty. The committee would be co-chaired by Mr. Hale and a faculty member. See minutes, Senate meeting of April 4, item (3) (b).]
(5) Senate Contact with Chairman of the Board: Required second reading of the proposed Amendment.

Motion 2 (D. Moskowitz, F. Hunter): To amend the Senate constitution, Article IV, Section 1, to add the following as a second sentence: *The President shall also communicate with the Chair of the RWU Board of Trustees, such communication to be as needed and as instructed by the Senate or by its Executive Committee.*

Motion carried with 1 abstention.

(6) General Education Committee: End-of-the-year report:

R. Van Schepen report: The Gen Ed Committee has been divided into seven subcommittees and each is to have a mission and a timeline to complete the assigned tasks.

There were several questions:

a. The purpose of subcommittees having mission rather than goals and objectives;
b. The way that committee was divided into seven subcommittees and the purpose of subcommittees, such as liaison committee;
c. The overlapping tasks of some subcommittees;
d. If the committee is assessing the published outcomes or is it developing new outcomes to assess the core;
e. What is the meaning of integration?
f. Are you inferring outcomes for objectives?
g. Plan for fall 2012?

R. Van Schepen response: The mission defines the purpose of the subcommittees. The first task would be the assessment of the current core and then developing new outcomes. The sub-committees report to the committee as a whole. The outcome development shall be completed in a week or two. The integration is reading the catalogue and interpreting the outcomes and goals from description of the courses. The outcomes will focus on how they relate to the course. The outcomes will be inferred from the stated goals and objectives. There is no change planned for fall 2012.

(7) Provost’s proposal regarding final exams:

Report from Academic Standards and Policies Committee.

[Note: At its February 1 meeting the Senate charged the Standards and Policies Committee with researching and making recommendation regarding the Provost’s proposal to eliminate a final examination period. See minutes, Senate meeting of February 1, item 7.]
J. Stevens report: The Academic Standards and Policies Committee unanimously rejected the proposal based on the collected responses from a large number of faculty members. There were several concerns:

a. The message that is sent to students that there would be no final exam.

b. There are numerous faculty members that have final exams.

c. Final exam is used as part of the overall evaluation of the performance of students and does not comprise the entire grade for the course.

Provost Potter discussed the number of contact hours for accreditation and stated that the lack of final exam for some courses would not fulfill the required hours of contact. The response to this concern was that the faculty members spend hours of contact with students beyond the classroom through emails, phone calls, extra meeting times and working on projects, etc. In addition, the concern over a week of finals does not correspond with the push for online course offerings.

(8) Eight-week online courses

Motion 3 (S. Varano, D. Moskowitz): 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 of the School of Justice Studies is on record as opposing the further implementation of the eight-week online graduate program, 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.

A long discussion ensued as to the process and if the language needed to be changed to clarify the process. There was also discussion about whether the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee could take up a proposal not being processed through the channels in place. Another point of discussion was that if the approved courses delivered under different methods needed to go through the process of approval each time. President Topf stated the FSCC can review such programs.

Motion carried with 3 abstentions.

(9) Technical catalog changes

Motion 4 (R. O’Connell, J. Speakman): Technical catalog changes may be effected by the chair of the department responsible for the course, the appropriate dean, and the chair of the school curriculum committee. Such changes include non-curricular minor adjustments to course descriptions, titles, semesters offered, and prerequisites that do not have an impact on other programs, and those changes necessary to align or reconcile conflicting information in the published catalog.

T. Hollingsworth stated that the having different procedures for technical versus non-technical and other curricular proposals would not be appropriate. All curricular procedures should go through the same process. M. Tehrani stated that two years ago a discussion ensued in the FSCC as to the validity of the catalogue information per each
major/program. The issue was discussed in the Senate and the decision was confirmed by the Provost at the time that all curricular changes would be forwarded from the FSCC chair to the Provost Office and all catalogue information regarding a major/program shall be reviewed by the chair/representative/coordinator of that major/program before publication.

**Motion failed with 1 abstention.**

(10) **General Education Committee**

J. Speakman requested to renumber the items on the agenda and discuss Item 10 after items 11 and 12. The request was granted.

(11) **University Life Committee**

**Motion 5** (J. Roberts, M. Tehrani): The Faculty Senate recommends to Dr. Farish that a designated, comfortable, suitably sized, and multifunction space be created, preferably in the center of campus, to allow for the social, academic, and professional use by the faculty on campus.

**Motion carried with 2 abstentions.**

(12) **Steering Committee**

**Motion 6** (T. Sorg, D. Moskowitz): The Faculty Senate recommends the formation of a joint committee comprised of equal numbers of administrative and Faculty Senate members.

**Motion 7** (T. Sorg, D. Moskowitz): The Faculty Senate charges this committee with the tasks of establishing the purposes, time lines, and processes for conducting faculty evaluations of administrators, and for designing the questionnaire.

**Motion 8** (T. Sorg, D. Moskowitz): The questionnaire shall be administrated beginning in April 2013 and repeated no later than April 2015.

**All three motions carried with 2 opposed and 1 abstention.**

(10) **General Education Committee**

**Motion 10** (J. Speakman, J. Roberts): To make the General Education Committee a standing committee of the Faculty Senate.

[Parliamentary notes: (1) Standing committees are permanent committees provided for by the Senate’s constitution. Hence creating (or abolishing) a standing committee requires a constitutional amendment. Special committees are formed to complete an assigned task and may be created by a simple Senate vote. The Senate created the General Education Committee as such a special committee. (2) Amending the Senate constitution requires that the amendment be proposed at one meeting and voted upon (with a 2/3 majority) at the next.]
Motion (R. O’Connell, J. Speakman) tabled on April 4. That Article 4, Section 6 of the Faculty Senate constitution be amended as follows:

   **Add:** General Education Committee. This committee shall develop, oversee implementation, and assess the general education program for RWU.

Discussion: Discussion ensued as to the language “standing” versus “permanent’ and the composition of the committee to stay as it is currently. The time was extended beyond 4:30. **Motion failed to achieve 2/3 of the present senators approval required for a change in the Senate Constitution** (15 approved, 6 opposed and 2 abstentions).

Submitted respectfully,

Minoo Tehrani
Submitted- Executive Committee-5/4/2012
Submitted- Faculty Senate-5/7/2012
Submitted- Faculty Senate-5/8/2012