

MINUTES
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING

November 6th, 2013, 2:00 P.M.
Library Seminar Room

Attendance: Senators E. Adams, P. Alfieri, S. Bosco, C. Carrington, G. Celik, J. Coon, A. Espinosa, S. Esons; G. Graham, T. Hollingsworth, H. Khan; T. Langdon, A. Leguizamo, B. Marlow, C. Menton, H. Noussi Kamdem, D. Reynolds, A. Rhyne, J. Robert, L. Rossi, M. Sawoski, F. Schroth, A. Shelton, V. Sloan, J. Speakman, M. Stein, M. Tehrani, M. Topf, L. Turner, Y. Warnapala, M. Wu

Absent: J. Campbell, K. Gentles-Peart, J. Platania

Guests: President Farish, Provost Workman

Items on the agenda:

- 1. Motion:** (S. Bosco, J. Speakman): Approval of the Faculty Senate minutes of September 4, 2013.

Minutes were approved unanimously.

- 2. President Farish:**

- A new Vice President for University Advancement has been named, Lisa Raiola. The Office will be staffed accordingly.
- President Farish thanked the faculty who attended the open houses. This fall, there were three Open Houses. The president estimated some 300 additional families attended the open houses.

- 3. Provost Workman:**

- Provost Workman attended a meeting of the Council of Independent Colleges with around 400 colleges. It seems that RWU is out in front in several initiatives such as Experiential Learning. One of the issues discussed was the retention rate from sophomore to junior class. Advisement seems to be a major factor that affects this retention rate. The national survey indicates that thirty three percent of students cite lack of satisfaction with advisement. The loss of students in this category is the second largest loss of students. The Provost Office will be looking into this issue.
- Provost Workman provided a handout to clarify the reimbursement processes that was for Foundation Grants discussed in the last Senate meeting.
- Provost Workman stated that the registration was going fine; the degree audit is up and running and there will be intense training to make the faculty familiar with the new system.

Questions: There were questions about issues in releasing the hold and moving from one advisee to the other.

Response: Provost Workman asked the issues to be sent to him so the IT Group can address them.

4. Executive Committee Report

a. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes (attachment)

President Stein reviewed the Executive Committee report. Provost Workman did not agree having faculty in a particular division of the University appoint their own search committees for the faculty position as recommended by the Senate.

b. Request to attend spring semester meeting via Skype

President Stein stated that a senator who will be on sabbatical has asked to participate in the Senate meeting via Skype.

Discussion: Several senators said that the senators are representative of their constituencies and when a senator is not present, it changes the dynamic of the conversation and discussions.

c. CPC Steering Committee Election (attachment)

Motion (M. Stein, S. Bosco): To elect three members from faculty at-large for the CPC Steering Committee.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Representative Reports

a. Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees (attachment)

There are three senator representatives to the Board of Trustees, Senators Esons, Topf, and Speakman. Senator Speakman requested to make her report in December.

Senator Esons: Senator Esons stated that being on the retention sub-committee of the Board of Trustees is a great opportunity for faculty. The discussion in his meeting centered on student retention and how the retention rate could be improved. Senator Esons asked for ideas regarding this matter to be sent to him.

b. Dean's Council (attachment)

Senator Espinoza reported that the new changes and Cloud Computing were the focus of the discussion at the Dean's Council. In addition, the graduate studies and Continuing Education were discussed.

6. Standing Committee Reports

Steering Committee motions to amend the constitution

President Stein asked the motions to be considered one by one and the ones that are approved to have the second reading during the Senate meeting in December.

Discussion: There was a lengthy discussion regarding the proposals by the Steering Committee.

Comments: During the Faculty Conference in the fall, faculty approved a motion to consider changes to the constitution outlined by the former senate presidents. In turn, the Senate charged the Steering Committee to consider the issues and make proposals.

Some senators suggested the Steering Committee is presenting piecemeal amendments rather than a comprehensive proposal. The Steering Committee members disagreed with that characterization.

The Steering Committee has reviewed the Constitution and has worked on the parts that needed change. However, some of the suggestions (e.g., inclusion of adjunct faculty in the Senate) were not noted.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee had not received any proposal regarding inclusion of the adjunct faculty.

The Steering Committee asked the faculty for input and ideas. The proposed motions are the final recommended changes to the Constitution.

a. Motion (M. Topf, C. Menton): New office of Recording Secretary. Amendment to Article III, Section 5:

The Faculty Senate shall elect annually from among its membership four officers: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Recording Secretary.

The Recording Secretary shall take and keep minutes of Senate and Executive committee meetings, and shall publish them in accordance with the rules and policies of the Senate. He or she shall keep files of the minutes of the Senate committees, and shall compile and publish the memberships of the Senate, the Executive Committee, and the committees.

No action was taken on the motion.

Discussion: The role of the VPs needs to be clarified.

New Motion (M. Stein, P. Alfieri): To send the motion back to the Steering Committee to clarify the roles.

Motion carried with 26 in favor and 5 opposed.

b. Executive Committee Motion (M. Topf, J. Speakman): Amendment to Article III, Section 5:

Delete the last sentence of the second paragraph (“The officers of the Senate shall comprise the Executive Committee”) and add a new third paragraph:

The Faculty Senate shall have an Executive Committee, comprising the four officers. The Executive Committee shall meet as required, but at least once each month from September through May, except January. In addition to such other duties as provided herein, the Executive Committee may take such actions as is necessary to be taken before a meeting of the Senate. It shall report such actions to the Senate within three workdays of such action. The Executive Committee shall not take such actions unless in its judgment the actions cannot feasibly wait until a Senate meeting.

Motion carried with 28 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention.

Discussion: What happens if a decision is made between the Senate Executive Committee and the Administration and the Senate would hear about it after the fact? We need to understand the consequences. Does the Senate have the power to challenge such decisions afterward? What is an example of an action that this committee needs to make that is so urgent that cannot come to the Senate?

President Farish: The Board of Trustees empowers its Executive Committee to take actions when the need arises. The Board of Trustees needs to ratify such actions. Sometimes, there are deadlines that need to be met and the Senate Executive Committee can deal with them. In some past instances, administration has not sought faculty input because of the expectation that the senate cannot respond quickly. President Fairish would like to see this changed.

c. Motion (M. Topf, G. Graham): Executive (closed) sessions. Amendment to the last sentence of Article IV, Section 5 by adding the provision here in boldfaced italics:

Meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be open to all members of the University community, except *(1) that at the discretion of the president, an executive session may be placed on the agenda at the request to the president from any senator, such sessions normally to be held at the end of a regular meeting; or (2)* when a two-thirds vote of those senators in attendance calls the Senate into executive session.”

Motion carried with 28 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention.

d. Motion (M. Topf, S. Bosco): Size of the Senate. Amendments reducing the size of the Senate to approximately 21 - 23 members.

Abolish the five seats for at-large members.

Delete Article III, Section 3 (providing for five at-large members).

Motion failed with 7 in favor, 23 opposed and 1 abstention.

Discussion:

We need to be careful as to reducing the size of the Senate. There are many Senate committees and filling them is already difficult. There may be more than one dynamic individual in the same department and the at-large position allows more than one person from the same department to run for the Senate. We should have more faculty on the Senate rather than less. Why we are trying to make the Senate a less democratically elected body?

e. Motion (M. Topf, A. Sheldon): Increase the number of faculty per senator from seven to ten.

In Article II, Section 2, in the phrase “one senator for every seven fulltime faculty members,” replace “seven” with “ten”.

Motion carried with 17 in favor, 13 opposed and one abstention.

Discussion: The above motion is reduction in numbers rather than proportion. The Steering Committee was asked to provide the table of senators per schools/programs based on the new tabulation. Senator Graham circulated the following table via email during the meeting.

School	Lines Occupied	by 7	by 8	by 9	by 10	
FCAS - Hum	43	6.1	5.4	4.8	4.30	4
FCAS - MNS	31	4.4	3.9	3.4	3.10	3
FCAS - SOC	34	4.9	4.3	3.8	3.40	3
SAAHP	29	4.1	3.6	3.2	2.90	3
GSB	27	3.9	3.4	3.0	2.70	3
SED	10	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.00	1
SECCM	17	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.70	2
SJS	15	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.50	2
LIB	7	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.70	1
CC	2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.20	
Total Teaching Lines:	206	29.4	25.8	22.9	20.6	22
Total Non-Teaching Lines:	9					
TOTAL COMBINED LINES	215					

f. Motion (M. Topf, A. Sheldon): Senate Curriculum Committee. Amendments that would allow for an FSCC membership familiar with school and decision curricular matters.

Amend Article V, Section 3, adding the boldface text: “***Except as provided herein***, each school may elect one representative to each of the standing committees.” [This allows an exception to be made for FSCC membership.]

Amend Article V, Section 2, para. 2, adding the following text:

“The Curriculum Committee membership shall comprise the chairs of the School curriculum committees. The FSCC chair shall be chosen from the Senate. The committee shall normally meet on the third Wednesday of each month of the academic year, in addition to other times as it may choose.”

Motion failed with 1 in favor, 26 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Discussion: There will be an appearance of the conflict of interests if the chairs of the school curriculum committees are also part of the Senate Curriculum Committee. We have a great deal of experience on the Senate Curriculum Committee. The FSCC has worked hard to have a very clear procedure for the approval of the curricular proposal and there is no need to change them.

g. Motion (M. Topf, A. Espinoza): The phrase “full-time faculty.” Amendment to the constitution and by-laws to replace all occurrences of the phrase “full-time faculty” with *“tenure-track and tenured faculty.”* (This relates to one faculty member who is tenured but not full-time.)

Motion failed with 2 in favor, 27 opposed and 2 abstentions.

h. Motion (M. Topf, S. Bosco): Absences of senators from meetings. Amendment to Article IV, Section 8 that would reduce the number of absences a senator may have per year from six to three, before the seat is declared vacant. The proposed amendment also removes the provision (the whole second sentence) requiring the Senate minutes to note when a senator is absent for two consecutive meetings. The proposed new Article IV, Section 8 is as follows:

“Absences of senators shall be recorded in the minutes of the Senate. When a senator has missed three regular Senate meetings in an academic year, the office shall be declared vacant.”

Motion carried with 27 in favor, no opposition and one abstention.

Curriculum: CurricUNET evaluation report:

Senator Alfieri reported that the training session with the new system and the response to it was very positive. It is a better system than what we currently have.

Motion (P. Alfieri, M. A. Espinoza): The Senate recommends adoption of the new system.
Motion carried with 28 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

Discussion:

Question: How does the cost of the system compare to the old one?

Answer: Provost Workman stated that the cost difference is not significant.

Question: Did the Curriculum Committee contact other schools that use this system?

Answer: No, the Curriculum Committee did not do so.

7. New Business

- a. **Motion (J. Speakman, S. Esons):** The Faculty Senate charges the Admission and Enrollment Committee to review administrative agreements regarding cohorts of international students.

Motion carried with 25 in favor, 2 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Discussion: Senator Speakman stated that as a matter of information, cohorts of international students (e.g., Brazilian, Japanese, Chinese, Saudis), how are they retained and incorporated to the academia?

Provost Workman stated that he would be happy to provide the information.

Senator Hollingsworth stated that the Admission and Enrollment Committee has been charged with quite a few arduous tasks. The above questions can be simply answered by contacting the Provost Office.

President Farish stated that not everything has to come through the administration via the Senate. President Farish would welcome phone calls to clarify issues.

Senator Turner stated the asking about issues in a public forum could inform everyone.

- b. **Motion (J. Speakman, C. Menton):** The Faculty Senate charges the Executive Committee to seek the details about the Administration's strategy for design of the summer schedule.

Motion was withdrawn.

Discussion: Some faculty courses were rejected because they did not fit the strategy for offering summer courses. There were courses to be offered by full time faculty, but they were replaced by courses taught by adjunct faculty. Apparently, a strategy for offering summer courses was discussed in the Dean's Council, but not all faculty were apprised of it.

Provost Workman stated that the strategy communicated to the dean's council was "Devise an offering of summer courses to serve the need of students and increase enrollment during the summer time. "

- c. **Motion (J. Coon, V. Sloan):** Request the Office of the Provost implement the following items to streamline student advisement by faculty:
- a. Revert back to the Spring 2013 process or develop a new procedure for lifting the academic hold for advisees
 - b. Provide printed course catalogs (full or abbreviated version) for faculty
 - c. Provide stapled copies of student academic evaluation forms at least one week prior to the advisement period

Motion failed with 7 in favor, 21 opposed and 2 abstentions.

Discussion: There were printed catalogs for the office of the deans, but not for the faculty. There were issues in advisement and review of program of study of students and access to the degree audit. Following the catalog online is not an easy task. Other senators expressed complete satisfaction with the online information and saw no need for the Registrar Office to provide hardcopies that necessarily become stale as soon as they are printed.

Provost Workman expressed the intention to survey the faculty about the registration process. He stated that he would be happy to receive the issues that the faculty encounters with the new advisement system. The IT and the Registrar's Office will work to debug the system. We can have an intense training for the faculty. The faculty can print whatever parts of the schedule or catalog that they want.

8. New motions from the Senate Diversity Committee:

- a. **Motion (A. Leguizamo, S. Bosco):** To charge the Diversity Committee to work with Associate Provost Cole and Dean McMahon to design a diversity conference at the Fall Faculty Conference.
Motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Motion (A. Leguizamo, S. Esons):** To charge the Diversity Committee to bring forth a proposal to add an element of diversity into the First Year Experience.
Motion passed unanimously.

9. Meeting adjourned at 4:30.

Submitted respectfully,
Minoo Tehrani
November 11, 2013—Executive Committee