

MINUTES OF  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
February 26, 2019

The third Faculty Senate meeting of the 2018-2019 academic year was called to order by Prof. Jonathan Karp, Judaic Studies, at 11:47 am.

1. Minutes

After no discussion, the minutes of the December 4, 2018 meeting were approved.

2. Resolution on Gender Neutral Language in all SUNY correspondence

Prof. Barry Jones, chair of FSEC, explained that this resolution came from the Diversity and Equity committee of the University Faculty Senate. The resolution calls for the Chancellor and SUNY System administration to adopt gender neutral language (she/he, they/their) for a more fluid conception of gender. We hope that our own administration will adopt this also. This is a positive step and we ask that the Senate endorse this resolution.

Prof. Fernando Guzman, Mathematics, and chair of Diversity Committee, noted that the Diversity Committee supports this resolution. They feel this is a small but important step in the right direction. The committee does have a concern about the administration thinking that this small step is sufficient to deal with the issue of diversity. There are much bigger steps that need to be taken, like the hiring of faculty from underrepresented minority groups.

Prof. Andrew Walkling, Theatre, supports this as the first step to a much greater institutional commitment to gender equality. One concern is that there was no chance to canvas departments ahead of time which could be a problem. How can we understand this as more than a grammatical issue?

Prof. Christopher Hanes, Economics, questioned the fact that the resolution does not specify avoiding the use of gender specific pronouns but recommends use of the generic plural pronoun "they". There are many ways to structure a sentence to avoid the use of gender specific pronouns. Why would the SUNY Diversity committee want this solution? Other universities have adopted a number of different solutions. Why did SUNY Central pick this one? Prof. Barry Jones, Economics, and chair of the FSEC, responded that it is University Faculty Senate that suggested this, not SUNY Central. There are several other constructions, but some people use alternative pronouns or ones that are less gender-specific. The committee may have decided that this is the standard way others are moving, but we cannot say this for sure.

Prof. Karp clarified by reading the entire resolution and reminded all that this is not a resolution requiring all faculty communicate in this manner.

Prof. Karp also reminded Senators that it is important for them to talk to their departments about Senate business. The Senator is the representative of faculty in their department.

After no more discussion, this was approved by a vote of 378 in favor, with 1 opposed and 6 abstentions.

3. Learning Management System Pilot

Provost Donald Nieman reminded everyone that the Blackboard contract will be expiring in 2020. Some faculty members have been experimenting with three different Learning

Management Systems. Faculty input is needed, and Provost Neiman asked that Senators spread the word to their colleagues and departments for input.

4. Fast-Track Professional MBA (NYC) deactivation

Prof. Sara Reiter, SOM, and chair of EPPC, noted that the Faculty Senate has to vote on discontinuances and deactivations of programs. This particular program will be restarted at different site so the program in New York City must be deactivated.

Prof. Olivia Holmes, English, asked if BU was involved with this. Yes, SOM is involved in the New York City location.

After no discussion, this was approved by a vote of 41 in favor with 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

5. Reports – University Faculty Senate Plenary

Prof. Sara Reiter, University Faculty Senator, reported on the highlights of the University Faculty Senate Plenary meeting that was held in Cobleskill, January 17-19, 2019.

There are several issues for campuses to consider -- a bylaws revision to the UFS bylaws concerning the duties of the Vice President/Secretary, input into the sexual harassment and consensual relationship policies (although it is not clear what role the campuses, as opposed to the Unions, have in these policies), and a resolution on Maintenance of Effort for SUNY and CUNY.

Discussions of particular interest to the campus include:

- General Education – Proposals will come at the Spring Plenary. There are many issues under consideration, such as alignment with Middle States standards and allowing gen ed courses in the junior and senior years (which is already part of gen ed on our campus). The goal is to develop a flexible framework.
- Seamless Transfer – A process to review the transfer paths is underway with identification of faculty on each campus associated with each transfer path. The plan is to conduct a survey this spring and then formulate a plan for review of transfer paths.
- Budget items – Partial restoration of the retroactive pay increase is in the Governor's budget as are proposed cuts to University-wide programs such as EOP.
- PRODI-G is the Chancellor's new program for supporting hiring of under-represented minorities and women in STEM fields. It will provide partial salary support. A conference on the PRODI-G program is planned at the Downtown Center March 1 and 2, 2019. Prof. Thomas Sinclair, Public Administration, gave more detailed information about this conference.

SUNY Provost Tod Laursen reported on the SUNY Online initiative (which has subsequently issued a White Paper). The focus is on students in fully online programs. SUNY currently has 26,000 students in fully online programs, and the goal is to grow that number through online graduate programs and partnerships with corporations, governments, and nonprofits. SUNY System plans to develop resources that campuses can use in addition to contracting with Online Program Managers.

The University Centers asked the Chancellor how SUNY System can provide leadership in sustaining the humanities in the face of increasing demand for STEM degrees. The Chancellor pointed to her fellowship program which supports graduate students in a variety of fields.

The two resolutions passed were:

- Increase the minimum length of time in rank to five years and the minimum length of service at the nominating campus to three years for Distinguished Professors.
- A call for maintenance of effort (better funding) for SUNY and CUNY.

6. New Business

- a. Discussion of Transdisciplinary Areas of Excellence (TAE) Evaluation committee report and Joint Task Force on Transdisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Work Report and Recommendations

The Transdisciplinary Areas of Excellence (TAE) Evaluation committee was chaired by Prof. Sinclair, and the Joint Task Force on Transdisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Work was co-chaired by Dean Elizabeth Chilton, Harpur College, and Prof. Peter Knuepfer, Geological Sciences. Prof. Karp expressed the Senate's appreciation for the tremendous amount of work that went into both these reports.

Prof. Sinclair thanked everyone who served on the committee, spending hundreds of hours on the evaluative review, forming focus groups, doing interviews with stakeholders and constituents, and gathering information from the TAE's and the Provost Office. He also thanked Prof. Scott Craver, Electrical and Computer Engineering, for designing a survey that gathered much more detail.

The TAE's have had a significant impact on hiring between 2013 and 2016. We had 96 net hires, 83 of which were affiliated with TAE's. The TAE self-study report shows that one in five members are engaged in TAE research and have had a notable impact on research activities in some areas, but it was also found that it was difficult to determine if the impact was consequential. There is wide dissatisfaction with the role of faculty governance. We currently have a well-established process to assess programs and their relationship to the University but none of this was happening with the TAE process. Procedures were never established for addressing how a TAE is formed or discontinued. There are concerns with steering committee governance -- who becomes chair, how members are recruited and retained. There is uncertainty as to the role of the TAE in the promotion and tenure evaluation process. There needs to be a process to address TAE termination. There are areas we think we may be able to coalesce into high profile work but not all those are going to pan out, and different TAE's have different metrics on how they measure success. It is felt that this should be addressed by a permanent TAE committee.

Prof. Knuepfer reported that the Joint Task Force on Transdisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Work examined what if any impediments there were in interdisciplinary and disciplinary teaching. Several recommendations were made. We need support for

faculty as they engage in teaching/research in these programs, and we need to set up areas for faculty development to focus on network-based mentoring. We need to look to senior faculty who work across disciplinary boundaries, and who can help navigate across these boundaries. How do we access evaluation to recognize transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work when it affects the tenure and promotion process? Improvements in the process are needed to support the development for transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs. We need to look at the graduate level and take courses across department boundaries.

Dean Chilton outlined what has happened since the report. Deans and Directors have reviewed the major recommendations from both reports and have held many discussions about supporting transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work in recruitment, incorporating this into the tenure and promotion process, and in program development. Creation of a template has been discussed for when we hire joint hires across departments, or of a possible MOU-type document that outlines what expectations are for services, etc. A committee has been formed to address these types of issues. We will be determining how colleagues can move forward in a network-based mentoring program to see if changes can be implemented in mentoring people working across disciplines.

- b. A resolution comes from the FSEC to create a joint committee on transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work issues to begin implementation of some of the specific recommendations from both reports, look at what changes can be implemented, and determine if a permanent committee should be established. FSEC did not want to jump to a permanent committee immediately as some of the work may be able to be done quickly without a permanent committee.

Prof. Guzman thanked everyone for all the work done on these committees. The survey that was done identified one of the TAE's that was regarded in a negative way. We do not have a mechanism to deal with TAE's that are not working. He strongly supports the formation of this committee that will oversee the TAE's and determine which ones are working.

Prof. Hanes was a member of the TAE review committee and agrees that we need a permanent committee to address issues that have come up with TAE's that may not be going away. He does not, however, understand why we are using a two-step solution of a temporary committee, then a permanent committee. Will we form a permanent committee in Spring 2020? Prof. Karp responded that a permanent committee will be formed if it is recommended by the temporary committee.

Prof. Melissa Zinkin, Philosophy, pointed out that she is in favor of a committee for TAE review. Our main job is to teach and do research.

Dean Chilton responded that the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary task force spent time talking about the TAE's and knew there were areas of transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work that takes place outside of the TAE structure. This resolution does not review just the TAE's, but also transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work more broadly. Prof. Karp noted that the TAE report talks about overlap of TAE and transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary work, and sometimes hinders that work.

Prof. Sinclair questioned whether the temporary committee might add to its charge termination of a TAE? Was this discussed or decided? Introduction of a TAE and termination of a TAE is essential. Also, the composition of the steering committee needs to be regularized and more transparent. The faculty governance component needs to be introduced. We need faculty governance balance.

Prof. John Starks, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, noted that he was FSEC chair when both reports were done. How are problems with the TAE's addressed? He is glad that we are strengthening transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs to help all disciplines to move forward together. This discussion adds to that. He wants to see all disciplines interlock and interlace more substantially in the future. Kudos to both the Task Force and the Review Committee to help us move forward.

Prof. Barry Jones, Economics, and chair of FSEC, thanked the TAE chairs for their work. He noted that both reports highlight the tenure and promotion process. This temporary committee will have time to decide what it will do and consider. The committee charge will be developed by the temporary committee. Formation of new TAE's and dissolution of a TAE will be part of this committee's discussions. The temporary committee will do their work in the fall of 2019 and will come back in spring 2020 with recommendations and a decision on a permanent committee.

After no more discussion, the resolution was approved by a vote of 40 in favor with 0 opposed and 2 abstentions.

After no more business, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Present: Christina Balderamma-Durbin, Robin Best, Cassandra Bransford, Seokheun Choi, Leon Cosler, Jill Dixon, Patrick Doyle, Mark Fowler, Ann Fronczek, Leslie Gates, Neyda Gilman, Christof Grewer, Fernando Guzman, Christopher Hanes, John Havard, Norah Henry, Olivia Homes, Sharon Holmes, Mattias Iser, James Jentsch, Barry Jones, Jonathan Karp, Bryan Kirschen, Adam Laats, Leslie Lander, Michael Lewis, Harold Lewis, Carl Lipo, Tarun Mastana, Marcin Mazur, Thomas McDonough, Natalija Mijatovic, Jean-Pierre Mileur, Donald Nieman, Tomonari Nishikawa, Omowunmi Sadik, Anton Schick, Andrew Scholtz, Edward Shephard, Thomas Sinclair, Diane Sommerville, Roberta Strippoli, Andrew Walkling, Erin Washburn, Douglas Wehbe, Alexi Zentner, Yan Zhang, Harald Zils, Melissa Zinkin

Excused: Richard MacKenney, Anthony Meder, Sumantra Sarkar, Harvey Stenger

Absent: Anne Bailey, Lina Begdache, Kevin Boettcher, Peter Borgesen, Brian Callahan, Ana Maria Candela, Lubna Chaudhry, Anne Clark, Eric Cotts, William Culverhouse, Elizabeth DiGangi, Deborah Elliston, Sarah Gerk, Robert Holahan, Albrecht Inhoff, Sha Jin, John Suk Young Kang, Thomas Kulp, Brett Levinson, Stephen Levy, Steven Lynn, Daniel Magelby, Claudia Marques, Nkiru Nzegwu, SB Park, Timothy Singler, Gale Spencer, Cihan Uzmanoglu, David Wilson, Lei Yi, Hong Zhang