

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Penn State Worthington Scranton

December 6, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 P.M. by Faculty Senate Chair, Beatriz Rivera-Barnes. A motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting was made by Pat Hinchey and seconded by **Majid** Chatsaz. The motion was passed unanimously.

Administrative Reports

Chancellor

1. Chancellor Mary-Beth Krogh-Jespersen thanked everyone in advance for all of the work they will doing in the next few weeks that end the semester—administering tests, grading them, dealing with student issues.
2. The most recent follow up to the Sandusky scandal involved the NCAA's visiting Penn State to assess Penn State's compliance with its recommendations. When the Integrity Monitor of the NCAA met with all of the the Vice-Presidents of the University, the magnitude of there being nineteen campuses within the purview of the University came into focus. The question arose as to whether any of the campuses had athletic teams that may involve regulation by organizations other than the NCAA. There was concern about whether any of the regulations of any other governing organizations would take precedence over those of the NCAA. So questions of governance that were originally only directed to University Park were then extended to the campuses. (for instance, our campus is a member of the USCAC, and Jeff Mallas responded to questions in that regard). Dr. Madlyn Hanes, vice-president for Commonwealth Campuses, then asked each campus to report to her any organization that has a constitution and bylaws to determine if any of those organizations had outside governance that had potential to supersede the authority of the University. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said this involved on our campus the Faculty Senate, the SGA, the Campus Advisory Board and many of the clubs on campus. She thanked everyone who moderated any of these organizations for their prompt response to an e-mail send out last week for information regarding their organization and the location of its constitution and bylaws. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that to the best of the campus's knowledge none of our campus organizations are outside Penn State's purview.
3. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that in dealing with AD 39, the Behavioral Threat Management Team has learned a lot by dealing with complaints and through their meetings. She said

that our committee recently met with the Behavioral Threat Management Team of University Park. In advance of the meeting Michelle Schutt and Gene Grogan had prepared ten questions to ask the U Park Team and that team was very open in answering those questions. Some protocols that had already been established—e.g. grade appeal, Affirmative Action, and other grievance policies--will remain the same and should be utilized as needed. As to AD39, Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that while it is a policy that is very descriptive as to the procedure to be followed in reporting a case of abuse, the questionable area involves what should be reported. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen stressed that when in doubt ask. She said our campus has found Childline very helpful in determining what cases need to be reported. She also noted that the University Park BTMT has experienced an explosion of activity because of the uncertainty of what needs to be reported. Gene Grogan and Michelle Schutt are developing a session on reporting and a follow-up case study session that will help people to determine what needs to be reported, and Dr. Krogh-Jespersen encouraged faculty and staff to attend.

4. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that she hopes that the renovation of the athletic fields will be accomplished by this summer has funding has been provided for the work.

Chief Academic Officer

1. Dr. Patrick reinforced what Dr. Krogh-Jespersen had said about reporting potential cases of abuse. He said that the day before he and a faculty member had been in touch with Childline regarding a case of abuse of a student when a minor and that the case will go forward. He stressed that AD 39 makes it clear that any faculty member who becomes aware of abuse of a student when that student was a minor needs to report it immediately to him. (AD 39 requires the person who becomes aware of abuse to report to his/her supervisor.) Then he, the faculty member and perhaps other people will decide what action needs to take place. [Later in the meeting Eileen Giavognoli asked who adjunct faculty should report to—Dr. Patrick or Durrell Johnson. Dr. Patrick said the person could report to either person.]
2. Dr. Patrick thanked Russell Casey and Caressa Gearhart for the very successful Advising Week, which they will be reporting on later in the meeting. He also thanked everyone who had participated in the weekly events since activities such as this are important to retention and recruitment.
3. Our campus is being asked to develop articulation agreements with the community colleges in our area of NEPA. Representatives of five area campuses met recently with **Penny** Carlson from U Park to discuss this issue. Since transfer of credits require course-to-course matches, some faculty may need to be involved in this process this spring and fall.

4. The summer compensation model was sent out yesterday. Basically, the pay for a summer course will be the same but determining the amount will be by % and dollar amount per credit hour rather than by course.
5. Dr. Patrick said he is looking for ways to better evaluate teaching and is soliciting suggestions. One thing he would like to initiate at this year's March conferences is for each faculty member to bring to the meeting one learning outcome from one of their syllabi and then show evidence of how this is accomplished in the course. He hopes to make this a mandatory part of the 2013 FAR.
6. Dr. Patrick reiterated what he had said at the last faculty senate meeting—that his department has funds available for equipment for classrooms, lab, office or research—and he asked that interested people put in a request.
7. Dr. Patrick asked that everyone adhere to the submission date for final grades.

University Faculty Senate

1. Fred Aebli announced the advent of scholarsphere.psu.edu, an online archive location for scholarly work produced within the University. It is a secure repository where faculty, students and staff can record all their work in one place and share their research, lectures, Power Points, videos and the like. Its goal is to increase collaboration within the University and make resources produced within the University available to members of the community, in some cases before they are made available to outside sources. The site is available now and developing; more details will be forthcoming.
2. Pat Hinchey said that, when President Erickson was asked whether the University was putting into effect all of the recommendations of the Freeh Report, he said that the University was in the process of thoughtful implementation. Many of the recommendations have already been put into effect but not all will be, and the University will develop rationale for why they will not be implementing any that they don't implement.
3. The Senate recently passed changes to its organization that will allow representatives of campus athletic programs that have NCAA Division 3 connections to meet outside the regular standing committee of the Senate. As the campuses grow their NCAA Division 3 efforts, athletic representatives felt they needed another venue to get together and talk.
4. Pat said that our representation on the University Faculty Senate may be reduced from three to two. The number of senators for each campus is based on the number of full time faculty members. Ours is currently 53, one less than last year which puts our percentage a miniscule percentage below the 2.5 required for three representatives .

This is a complicated issue since if our number of senators were reduced and we hired even one more faculty we would then be entitled again to three. Pat said that the people who have to made the decision have said they “will work it out” and Pat suspects that we will continue to have three senators. [Later in the meeting Dr. Patrick asked Pat what census date was used for determining the number of senators. Durrell Johnson said it was the beginning of the academic year. Durrell’s take on the issue is that if the number were to be reduced, it would be reduced this coming year. If we were then entitled to the third senator next year, we would get that senator back in two years.]

5. A motion was made for the Senate to sponsor a statement of support for President Erickson and the Board of Trustees. After numerous faculty spoke strongly against such a statement and not one person spoke in support of it, the sponsor of the motion withdrew it.
6. Pat then moved into what she called two “substantive” issues. She prefaced her comments by saying that anything she said did not refer to our campus or anyone on it and that she was not talking about the quality of faculty or administration; she was just reporting the content of the discussions. The first issue concerned a trend in standing faculty in relation to fixed term faculty. **An informational report to the Senate pointed out that** a number of years ago the ratio was 6 to 1; it is now 2 to 1. This trend is a national one. At Penn State continuing contracts were phased out many years ago, and currently there is a move away from the multi-year contracts that replaced them, with mostly one year (and less often two-year) fixed term contracts being awarded. This trend has created great consternation among Faculty Senate members. Some members in attendance spoke of the difficulty of having stability within a department or program when there is no assurance that certain faculty members will return the following year. Some faculty spoke of the humanity issue, the chaotic effect of this lack of commitment on the lives of those who have those fixed-term contracts, and the hypocrisy of lauding the value of such faculty while not treating them as valued and respected members of the University community. The issue of academic freedom was also addressed. When one’s job is on the line, it’s difficult to speak “truth to power.” The committee member who presented this issue said that since we know this is a trend, we need to start a conversation about it. We need to look at the implications beyond budgetary ones and ask questions like Is there a plan regarding this issue within the university? If so, what is it? And what are we willing to let happen? What’s next? One thing is certain: this is a national trend that is continuing to evolve, and the issue is of immense concern to the Faculty Senate. Pat noted that Larry Backer, Faculty Senate Chair, on his blog recently posed research on the increase in administrative costs while standing faculty positions are declining. In the literature this is called “administrative bloat.” Pat reiterated again that she was simply a reporter and not making any inference about our campus.

7. The second significant issue related to a report on workload guidelines. A recent informational report was put out by the Senate. It gives the results of an examination of a previous report that the Senate had issued a few years ago, which set forth a set of recommendations for workload guidelines that had been passed by the Senate, endorsed by the leadership of the University, and posted on one of the Senate's leadership pages. What the committee reviewing the previous document did was ask the question: Where are we now? The committee looked at the guidelines of all of the units of the University, most of whom had posted guidelines, and made a chart. Then they took each unit's guidelines and checked to see whether they had met each of the Senate's recommendations. One of the interesting observations was that most units had flexibility in assigning workloads to faculty. There was less consistency in things like having an appeals process for faculty who have a grievance. What the document does is give campuses a touchstone with which to examine their own guidelines.

Dr. Patrick then picked up the presentation by saying that University College, whose guidelines we adhere to, fared well in the Senate report. He said there is flexibility, which would come from his office, and we do have an appeals process. However, he said there is still room for discussion on some areas and he is open to ideas regarding workload assignments on campus as long as they are reasonable and do not violate University College guidelines. He said that certain issues have already arisen such as a faculty assigned 4-4 semester load who wished to have a 3-3 based on research expectations. He said that he has already had to set criteria because that specific issue has already been addressed to him by a faculty member, but that he would prefer to have guidelines set with input from faculty. This is the exact task that has been relegated to the Faculty Affairs Committee, and Dr. Patrick said anyone with opinions on the subject should voice them to the committee.

Pat noticed that one issue that would seem to need clarification is the difference in research expectation of a Fixed Term faculty member and a tenure or tenure track one. Dr. Patrick said that the University College guidelines do say that research is expected from both but not to the same degree. Suzanne Harper noted that as a fixed term faculty she has always been told that she was expected to make scholarly presentations and attend conferences but there was no expectation to publish. She said she was under the assumption that the expectation was "scholarly activity," not research. Dr. Patrick confirmed that scholarly activity would be considered research but perhaps there is a need for more clarification as expectations can and do change.

Committee Reports

1. Russell Casey and Caressa Gearhart reported on Advising Week, which was deemed a definite success. Both thanked everyone who had participated. Russell said that in January a survey will be sent out to faculty and staff to get opinions on Advising Week and suggestions for changes. He said that one change the Council already anticipates is having the major and minor fair follow immediately after the First Year Workshop so students can be directed right to it. A summary of student participation was distributed, which showed a total of 332 participants for the four events during the week: majors and minors fair, first-year meeting and workshop, college information sessions and lunch, and the daily advising information table.
2. One observation of some who participated at the Information Table was that some students, even juniors and seniors, didn't know how to get or read an audit. Russ said he thinks it might be that others have always done it for them. He said he will show a student how to do an audit and then have the student do it for him or herself.
3. The Council is currently working on an advising plan to solidify advising policies, procedures, and structure.
4. Russ suggested that we might initiate a mentoring program with a new faculty member assigned to "shadow" a seasoned faculty advisor for a period of time. He said that Janet Melnick said that she does that successfully in HDFS.
5. Caressa reminded everyone of the faculty advising development sessions scheduled for the spring. She said she will send out a reminder memo. Some of the sessions may have faculty collaborating and there are opportunities for faculty to do a presentation of their own.
6. Dr. Patrick reminded faculty (there are eight) who have not submitted the report on students who have not filled out a spring schedule to make sure to do so ASAP since the deadline was yesterday.

Other Reports

1. Jeff Mallas reported that the men's and women's basketball team would be leaving tomorrow for games at PSU Du Bois and Greater Allegheny . He will send a list so faculty will know who is excused from classes. He also mentioned that the gym would be open during exam week at its regular hours: 8:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.
2. Fred Aebli reminded everyone that the IST Club is collecting toys for Toys for Tots until the end of next week. Boxes are in all buildings except the Gallagher Building. [NOTE: After the meeting Fred sent an e-mail to everyone saying that he received word from the U.S. Marine Reserve will be collected our toys on Monday, December 10.]

3. Dale Holen asked what an advisor should do if he/she finds out that a student who thinks he/she is doing well in a course actually isn't, especially if this is the case of a course which is a pre-requisite to another one. This raises questions like what if the student signs up for the follow up course and then fails the pre-requisite. There isn't anything in the system that would automatically knock the student out of the course he/she had already signed up for. So should faculty in courses that have a pre-requisite be checking to see that students in the class have fulfilled the pre-requisite and, if so, is there a way to do that? Pat Hinchey said she believes there is a way in eLion to determine if a student has met the prerequisite requirement and that a faculty member can refuse to allow a student into a class who hasn't passed a prerequisite just as the faculty member can override the prerequisite. **Majid Chatsaz** said the engineering department has a program that faculty can run that will tell them if an enrolled student has not met a prerequisite. Dr. Patrick said this is a complex issue with no easy answer and suggests a topic for an advising session.

Fred Aebli said this discussion of student skills sets leads him to wonder about the status of First Year Seminar. Dr. Patrick said he is hoping to have a conversation about FYS next spring. He said that he saw tremendous success at his previous institution with their FYS but he feels such a program must be academically rigorous if faculty are going to buy into it. Fred also mentioned that some students don't know how to determine their grade based on the weighting of assignments as they are set forth in a syllabus. He said this is something that faculty need to help students understand so they know where they stand as the semester progresses.

A move to adjourn the meeting was made at 1:00 P.M. by **Majid Chatsaz** and seconded by David Byman.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Harper

Faculty Senate Secretary