

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Penn State Worthington Scranton

November 7, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 P.M. by Faculty Senate Chair, Beatriz Rivera-Barnes. A motion to approve the minutes for the October meeting, made by Pat Hinchey and seconded by Magid Chatsaz, passed unanimously.

Administrative Reports

Chancellor

1. Chancellor Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that preparations continue for the selection of a new University president, which will also involve the designing of a new strategic plan for the University. She said that she was recently at the meeting of the Academic Leadership Council at University Park and the Council of Campus Chancellors and noted that the Board of Trustees and several select faculty and staff have formed the Blue and White Council, which has delineated four critical areas to be considered in the selection process of the new president and in the drafting of a new strategic plan: 1) the academic vision for the University; 2) the economic and fiscal environment of the state of PA and of the University; 3) the implications of the digital revolution, and keeping the University current with trends such as MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses); 4) the special character and structure of the University.
2. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that while the strategic plan efforts have been postponed that some elements are still in place and are moving forward. She said the faculty need not become experts on the issues that will affect the drafting of a new strategic plan but she hoped we would develop an awareness by reading any information that is forwarded to us. She said the outcome of the three Core Councils will certainly be an important part of the new strategic plan. A University-wide IT strategic plan is currently being developed, and in this regard, an IT Strategic Plan Open Forum was held last week on campus and results will be forwarded to U Park. [NOTE: See e-mail of results sent November 8.] She noted that one issue that seemed significant both University-wide and on the campus was what kind of IT we need for research data management. Another factor that will affect the strategic plan is the Budget Task Force that is working to find different budget models for Penn State funding in the future.
3. Regarding Ad-39 (the Mandatory Reporter Act), Dr. Krogh-Jespersen said that two cases have recently occurred on campus. Both cases involved provision 16 of the Act, which

says that if anyone becomes aware of any sort of neglect or abuse involving an adult student when that student was a minor, the person who becomes aware of the abuse, through whatever means, is required to report it. While it was anticipated that cases would result from faculty receiving papers in which an adult student reveals some kind of abuse, the two cases on campus actually resulted from 1) a staff person reading a student's paper; and 2) a student putting incriminating information on a report when applying for Hardship Funds. Both cases were reported to the Childline and in both cases the follow-up given to the campus is that there was no real concern with either case. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen reminded everyone to go through the Mandatory Reporter training aid that if anyone is in doubt about whether a situation should be reported, that person should get help from his/her supervisor.

4. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen asked anyone who had a suggestion for a Commencement speaker to let her know.
5. Dr. Krogh-Jespersen invited all to attend her annual Open House from 2:00-5:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 2.

Chief Academic Officer

1. Dr. Charles Patrick noted that Advising Week will start next Monday, November 12. He asked that all advisors do their best to meet individually with all advisees. A recommendation from the Retention Task Force will require all advisers, at the end of the pre-registration period, to contact current students who have not filled out a schedule. He said each advisor will receive a spreadsheet with the list of students they are to contact. After contacting each person on the list and encouraging them to fill out a schedule, advisors are then to send the spreadsheet back to Dr. Patrick's office with the results. Dr. Patrick said that in his experience this method definitely works. He said schools that use this method have found up to a 40% difference in the rate of students returning the following semester.
2. Dr. Patrick said that earlier this week he met with approximately twenty people for a conversation on effective teaching and evaluation. He noted that currently on campus the primary method for evaluating faculty teaching is the SRTEs with the only other methods being perhaps attendance at teaching workshops and the receipt of teaching awards. Those in attendance felt that the SRTEs should not be so exclusively used in assessing effective teaching. [NOTE: Earlier this week Dr. Patrick sent everyone a copy of the Power Point he had used at the discussion.] He said he is looking for feedback on how to evaluate and enhance teaching, and he asked anyone with ideas to send them to him.

3. Dr. Patrick said he has already informed Program Coordinators that Academic Affairs has some extra cash available for such things as lab or classroom equipment or replacing chalkboards with whiteboards. People should forward requests to him.
4. In the near future, Program Coordinators will be contacting faculty for suggestions for successful summer class offerings. Dr. Patrick said he will send out a compensation schedule for those summer classes.
5. Following up on Dr. Krogh-Jespersen's comments on the two AD-39 cases reported on campus, Dr. Patrick said to remember the Behavioral Threat Management Team, which was discussed at a previous faculty senate meeting. He said people can contact any member of the Team about anything that has happened on campus that they are concerned about. The two main people to contact are Gene Grogan and Michelle Schutt.

Beatriz Rivera Barnes said that she was told by her Program Coordinator that all faculty are expected to be on campus at least four days a week and she asked Dr. Patrick how this would be monitored. Dr. Patrick responded by saying that the intent is make sure faculty are available to students and advisees. He said that he would be discussing the issue during March conferences with those faculty who don't conform, the number of whom he expects to be minimal.

Faculty Senate Report

1. Pat Hinchey reported on the recent University Faculty Senate meeting. She said that the Commonwealth Caucus was addressed at its Monday evening meeting by the University Park librarian, who told the group that Penn State is the tenth largest research library in the nation. The librarian said that the Knowledge Commons, which Joe Fennewald, our former librarian is now heading, is doing well. She said that the University would like every campus to have as much of a Knowledge Commons as their resources would allow. Some campuses have already been able to upgrade their facilities to incorporate the concepts of the Knowledge Commons.
2. Pat said that in a meeting she heard several faculty discuss the role of the ombudsperson, a discussion which revealed extensive confusion about such issues as how well the position worked, whether the person should be elected or appointed, and the nature of the relationship between Human Resources and the ombudsperson representatives(s). This may be a topic of future interest.
3. Strengthening shared governance throughout the University remains a topic of interest.

4. Soon faculty and staff will need to provide documentation for dependents and/or spouses who are covered by their insurance. For a dependent child, a birth certificate will need to be submitted, and if a spouse is covered, both a marriage certificate and tax returns must be submitted, although financial information is to be redacted. A website will soon be established with details. Pat said that some people at the meeting expressed a concern for internet safety and were told that documentation could be **sent** through the mail. (Sandy Feather said that this kind of verification is apparently becoming the norm, not just at Penn State. She said she recently had to renew her daughter's passport and had to submit her marriage license.)
5. The search for a Provost is now underway. It was decided not to delay the search until a new president was hired as that would delay the process for 3.5 years. (The new president is expected to be selected for a start date of July, 2014.)
6. A decision has been made to hire three more inhouse general councils to add to the four currently on staff. The additional of the lawyers is not necessarily related to the Sandusky scandal. The University has been paying very high hourly rates to outside firms, and the move is seen as a cost-saving one.
7. In the absence of Senator Fred Abeli, Pat read a report that Fred had prepared. In it Fred noted that the motion to send the comments from the Past Faculty Senate Chairs to the NCAA was defeated by a narrow margin of eight votes. The letter was not written to move the NCAA to another position in favor of PSU but to simply state for the record that what they stated was incorrect. It had been written with the intent to give a voice to faculty who felt they were labeled by the NCAA as being part of a culture that lacks academic integrity. Prior to the vote a student representing the student body said that the letter was unnecessary and would only reopen the issue. At the completion of the vote a motion was made to indicate that the Senate vote should not be seen as indicating the faculty agreed to the NCAA's actions.

Other Business

1. Marlene Soulsby moved to amend her motion from the previous meeting calling for the creation of an ad hoc committee to examine and establish guidelines for faculty workloads and establish guidelines. Instead of an ad hoc committee, she proposed that the Faculty Affairs committee deal with the issue. Magid Chatsaz, chair of the Faculty Affairs committee, said that when he examined the Faculty Senate Constitution he saw that an issue such as faculty workloads would be the domain of the Faculty Affairs committee and therefore the formation of an ad hoc committee would not be necessary. Marlene's motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

2. Billie Walker, head librarian, explained the Knowledge Commons (also known as Information Commons). The idea is that the library becomes a one-stop shop, so to speak, a centralized location for a variety of services such as assistance with math, writing and IT issues. **As mentioned in Pat Hinchey's report, the University would like to see the concept developed on other campuses. Billie noted that currently University Libraries and the Hazleton administration are sharing the cost in the feasibility study of the Knowledge Commons on that campus.** Marlene Soulsby asked if providing the variety of services meant that these services would be eliminated from other parts of the campus and the answer was no.
[Addendum: Here is a clarification submitted by Billie in an e-mail after the meeting: "An Information Commons is a physical space, where any and all can participate in the processes of information research, gathering and production. Collaboration with information technology, tutoring centers, and other university departments allows the knowledge commons to combine digital and multimedia technologies with library programs and online collections in a warm, vibrant, and dynamic physical space."]
3. Jeff Mallas announced that ten of our young women runners, members of our campus's Cross Country team, will be competing Friday at the USCAA National Championship meet at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, New York. He noted that three of these athletes are National academic All Americans.

A motion to adjoin the meeting was made at 12:50 P.M. by Janet Melnick and seconded by Magid Chatsaz.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Harper

Faculty Senate Secretary