The minutes of the December 6, 2011 meeting were approved.

3. Vice President’s Report

Vice President Shapiro reported that two medical school faculty members, Nune Darbinian and Armine Darbinyan, have volunteered to serve on the Committee on the Status of Women. After FSSC members reviewed their statements of interest and curricula vitae, a motion to appoint them to the Committee was approved.

Vice President Shapiro also reported that she will be contacting committee chairs to develop an updated master list of committee vacancies. She also will be asking chairs to begin preparing final committee reports so that they can be published in the Faculty Herald. To be included, they will need to be submitted either in late March (for the April edition), or in early May (for the end-of-semester edition). There was some discussion regarding a suggestion that the committee chairs might be invited also to deliver oral reports at faculty senate meetings. There was general agreement that oral reports should be considered for committees that have done substantial and interesting work over the course of the year.

4. Meeting with President, Provost and Others Regarding the Budget

Vice President Shapiro asked Mark Rahdert to report on the meeting regarding University budgetary matters that occurred on January 12, 2012. The meeting was led by President Hart. Also in attendance were Provost Englert, Associate Vice President Kenneth Kaiser, other members of the administration, members of the budget committee of the Council of Deans, and members of the Faculty Senate Budget Review Committee, along with members of the FSSC. Although the President mentioned the fact that the Governor has announced $7 million in further cuts in its appropriations for this year, the meeting focused
primary attention on Commonwealth appropriations for 2012-13 and the expectation that the Governor will seek additional cuts for state-related universities in the Commonwealth budget he proposes in February. Some of the discussion at the meeting concerned the possible dimensions of those cuts and the University’s plans to lobby against them. Other issues that were discussed included possible ways to generate additional revenue for the University, as well as means for reducing time to graduation for some students, thus potentially reducing the overall cost of higher education for them. The President alluded (without any specifics) to forthcoming proposals regarding faculty workload, and she mentioned the need to reduce the number of classes that do not conform to the class scheduling matrix. There was no real discussion of how the University will absorb the immediately impending budget cuts for this year. Nor was there any discussion of the white paper or possible collegial or program reorganization.

This report was followed by general discussion of how budgetary matters are being handled at the University. Various FSSC members expressed frustration at the way that the University administration cultivates an appearance of consultation with faculty, as at the recent meeting, without engaging faculty on specific issues of budgetary allocations and their practical effect. Meetings that purport to involve such consultation regularly get deflected to other matters. In the recent meeting, for example, there was probably more discussion of how to increase enrollment in summer sessions than there was of actual budgetary issues. Concern was expressed that this approach allows the University administration subsequently to announce cuts and maintain that they have been vetted through consultation with faculty when in fact there has been no discussion of specifics.

Members also expressed concern that the approach to the budgetary situation does not seem to involve active efforts to enlist alumni support and does not appear to include input or involvement of university development staff.

Several members suggested that the FSSC needs to become more procedurally “proactive,” setting out its own agenda for finding ways to involve faculty in meaningful discussion of the budgetary and reorganization issues we are facing. One suggestion was to try to arrange a meeting between FSSC members and collegial assembly chairs. Another was to work on developing a statement of principles for securing faculty commitment to positive change. A third suggestion was to try to use Faculty Senate meetings as a platform for focused discussion of specific issues and concerns, without necessarily waiting for the University administration to put forward specific proposals.

### 5. White Paper on Reorganization

President LaFollette chaired the remainder of the meeting. He raised the question of how the Faculty Senate should respond to the Provost’s white paper on reorganization that was disseminated at the end of the fall semester. There was general agreement that it is difficult to respond to the white paper, because it is vague and does not include any specific proposals. However, various FSSC members reported that reorganization planning is apparently under way in some units, without any apparent involvement of faculty or even department chairs. Although there should be some opportunity to discuss the white paper at the January 23, 2012 Representative Faculty Senate meeting, there is insufficient time to prepare for a full discussion at that meeting. Accordingly, it was suggested that there should be a special Faculty Senate meeting devoted to discussion of the white paper.
It was moved and seconded that the President should call a special Faculty Senate meeting to debate whether the Faculty Senate should oppose the merger of all university arts programs into a single school or college.

There was some discussion of whether or not it was appropriate to focus on the potential reorganization of the arts given the lack of any specific proposals from the administration. There was also some discussion of how the agenda item for the meeting should be worded, whether or not it should include discussion of other reorganization issues that may or may not be on the table, and whether the timing of the meeting would facilitate appropriate discussion by collegial assemblies in affected units. One FSSC member pointed out that it is important to involve the student press, so that they are aware of faculty views on the reorganization issues. After further debate, the motion was approved.

President LaFollette indicated that he will refer to some of the process issues regarding the white paper during his report at the January 23 Representative Faculty Senate meeting, and that he will announce at that meeting our intention to call a special meeting devoted to discussion of the proposed reorganization. There should also be some opportunity at that meeting for faculty to engage with the Provost regarding the white paper and reorganization issues.

6. Nominations Committee

Karen Turner will once again chair the nominations committee. She has asked FSSC members who served on the committee last year whether they are willing to serve again. Turner pointed out that we need to begin the nomination process soon in order to meet the applicable deadlines for the spring Faculty Senate elections.

7. Old Business
None

8. New Business
None

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Rahdert
Secretary