Faculty Senate Steering Committee  
Tuesday, March 20, 2012  
Minutes

Present: Paul S. LaFollette (Pres.), Joan Shapiro (V. Pres.), Mark C. Rahdert (Secy), Karen Turner (Past President), Nora Alter (SCT), Mark Anderson (Law), Joan Delalic (Engr.)[teleconferenced], Deborah Howe (SED), Forrest Huffman (FSBM), Michael Jackson (STHM), Michael Jacobs (Phar), Tricia S. Jones (Educ.), Stephanie Knopp (Tyler), Jim Korsh (CST), Laurie MacPhail (Dent.), David Waldstreicher (Fac. Herald), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

Absent: Adam Davey (CHPSW), Jeffrey Draine (SSW), Charles Jungreis (Med.), Joseph Schwartz (CLA), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 28, 2012 and March 13, 2012 meetings were approved.

3. Provost

Provost Richard Englert and Vice Provost Vicki McGarvey came to discuss the 6 documents concerning reorganization, SFFs and workload issued by the Provost and President during the first week after Spring Break.

Englert began by referring to the comments in his Report on Restructuring that addressed changes in faculty governance. Englert stated that the comments were meant in the “best spirit.” He believes it is appropriate as we contemplate other changes in organizational structure to review faculty governance and see if there are ways it can be streamlined and improved. Englert affirmed the importance of shared governance as central to the University. He stressed his desire to work with the Faculty Senate, and stated that his comments were not intended to be critical. Englert invited questions and comments regarding the various documents.

It was pointed out that not all documents have been seen by all individuals. Three of the documents in question have been sent to faculty at individual schools and colleges, but not to the entire faculty.

FSSC members observed that the paragraph on governance in the Report on Restructuring stated that time spent on governance is time not spent on the University’s “core mission.” Several members challenged the accuracy of that statement. Much of the work of the Faculty Senate and its committees is very mission-centered. One example of mission-centered faculty governance is the hard work that many faculty members in the University invested in developing the Academic Strategic Compass. Englert agreed that this was mission-centered work.
Others noted that a statement of that sort reinforces notions, especially among junior faculty, that participation in faculty governance will be regarded negatively in terms of evaluation for retention, promotion, and tenure. This makes it progressively more difficult for the Faculty Senate to function, since only full professors with tenure feel at liberty to devote substantial energy to governance matters. Rather than viewing teaching and scholarship as primary and service as secondary, we should view teaching and scholarship as primary and service as “expected.” Englert responded that he liked that formulation.

Englert was asked whether the focus of his comments in the Report concerned service and governance generally, or whether they were directed particularly at the Faculty Senate. He responded that his concern was general. Some FSSC members observed that “service” covers a wide array of faculty activity, only some of which involves faculty governance. We may need to develop more precise terminology.

Several FSSC members commented on the President’s proposed policy regarding faculty workload. One concern was the statement that non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty should perform only “minimal service” amounting to no more than 4-5 hours per week. This statement seems to be inconsistent with the actual roles of many NTT faculty members around the University, who have specific service assignments with respect to particular programs or departmental functions that easily exceed that amount. It also creates risks for departments where the only tenure-track faculty are nearing retirement. It was suggested that greater consultation with NTT faculty regarding what would be an appropriate level of service expectation would be desirable. It was also suggested that a “one size fits all” approach to NTT service may not be advisable. One FSSC member noted that 4-5 hours per week is what a typical faculty member might spend just reading and responding to email.

Other FSSC members responded to the language in the workload document calling for a “five-day presence” at Temple. If that language is intended to require an actual physical presence at an assigned campus location, it is not consistent with professional practice in 21st century higher education, which often requires faculty to be elsewhere for reasons directly related to their teaching, scholarly, and service obligations. It also neglects the realities of distance learning, digital access, and the potential for effective on-line “presence” with students, colleagues and others.

Several FSSC members observed that the chief source of “inefficiency” in day-to-day faculty life often involves interactions with University administration, where it is extremely difficult and time consuming to get basic information or needed administrative responses on particular issues. One problem is the proliferating hierarchy of administrators, which makes it difficult to penetrate to the proper layer when a decision is needed, and often creates confusion about who has responsibility on a particular issue. Another problem this year is a vacuum of central leadership, leading to a sense that there is no real shared vision for the University’s future.

Many FSSC members defended the quality and value of regular FSSC meetings, which are for some among the only opportunities they have to share information across school and college divisions. One member noted that it might be possible to be equally effective with somewhat less frequent meetings. Others disagreed, saying that the FSSC is “not a place to cut corners.”
Several FSSC members observed that the Faculty Senate is not opposed to a review of governance structures. In fact, the Faculty Senate revised its constitution and bylaws last year, and it has developed a set of principles to govern bylaw revisions by Collegial Assemblies. So we have already been working on improving our governance process.

It was observed that some faculty members at Temple may not fully understand or appreciate the difference between the duties of the Faculty Senate and TAUP. They may feel (incorrectly) that governance matters are handled by the faculty union.

One factor that hampers faculty governance efficiency is the difficulty we encounter in obtaining adequate information from the administration. Often, due to lack of real and relevant information, the FSSC and the Faculty Senate end up “spinning wheels,” discussing or working on matters that turn out not to be significant or relevant, or that turn out to have already been decided. A better and more open and transparent flow of information would contribute to improved efficiency.

At the close of the discussion, Englert reiterated his support for faculty governance, as well as his conviction that “we can do better” and his desire to look for improvements.

4. President’s Report

President LaFollette reported that the Presidential Search is proceeding “apace.”

5. Vice President’s Report

Vice President Shapiro reported that several faculty volunteers have come forward for Faculty Senate committee service. The statements and bios of several volunteers have been circulated. The FSSC reviewed their credentials and approved the following appointments:

- Michael McIntosh (CHP) Status of Faculty of Color
- Douglas Wager (SCT) Research and Creative Awards
- Chris Harper (SCT) TU Press (submitted to editorial board)
- Janice Laurence (COE) Status of Faculty of Color
- Jacqueline Volkman-Wise (FSBM) Library
- John Masker (CLA) Athletics Advisory (submitted to President)
- Brianna Clark (STHM) Status of Women
- Laura Katz-Rizzo (Boyer) Status of Women
- Michael W. Jackson (STHM) Bargaining Units Liaison
- David Waldstreicher (CLA) Bargaining Units Liaison

6. Old Business

There was continuing discussion regarding the status of NTTs, both with respect to service obligations and the desire of some NTTs to conduct research, which is evidently disallowed in at least one college.
There was also further discussion about how best to respond to the various documents put forward by the President and Provost. Members noted that the FSSC should call for adequate protection for untenured tenure-track faculty members in the various reorganization plans going forward. Concerns were also expressed about the potential impact of reorganization on curriculum and budgets within affected units. Another issue was to ensure appropriate titles, faculty status and rank for individuals who lead the various subunits in the proposed Center for Fine and Performing Arts. There was general consensus that the Faculty Senate and FSSC should embrace the Provost’s invitation to re-evaluate governance mechanisms, particularly with respect to the governance processes for the units involved in reorganization. There may be an opportunity to reverse some of the limits on the operation of Collegial Assemblies that have been in place over the last two presidential administrations.

7. New Business

It was reported that the Collegial Assembly of the CLA may be bringing a motion to the Senate regarding graduate education. A recent presentation to CLA faculty appeared to treat graduate programs as potential profit centers rather than as part of the University’s educational mission. It was suggested that any motion should be brought first to the FSSC, since if the FSSC relays it to the Senate it can be debated and voted on in a single meeting.

It was suggested that the FSSC should consider developing “white paper” discussions of important University issues that could be submitted to the new President when s/he takes office.

President LaFollette asked FSSC members to consider what sort of formal response the FSSC and/or Senate should make to 1) the Provost’s Report on Restructuring, 2) the President’s proposed workload policy, and 3) the structure and function of Collegial Assemblies.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Rahdert
Secretary