Faculty Senate Steering Committee  
November 29, 2011  
Minutes

Present:

Paul S. LaFollette (Pres.), Joan Shapiro (V. Pres.), Mark C. Rahdert (Sec’y), Karen Turner (Past President), Mark Anderson (Law), Adam Davey (CHPSW), Joan Delalic (Engr.), Jeffrey Draine (SSW), Deborah Howe (SED), Tricia Jones (COE), Jim Korsh (CST), Laurie MacPhail (Dent.), Joseph Schwartz (CLA), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD), David Waldstreicher (Fac. Herald), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

Absent:

Nora Alter (SCT), Forrest Huffman (FSBM), Michael Jackson (STHM), Michael Jacobs (Pharm.), Charles Jungreis (Med.), Stephanie Knopp (Tyler).

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 PM. In President LaFollette’s absence (due to a Presidential Search Committee meeting), Vice President Shapiro chaired the first part of the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 8, 2011 meeting were approved with one correction.

3. Vice President’s Report

There is no change in the committee situation. At this late stage in the semester, there are not likely to be further committee developments until January. Vice President Shapiro reminded FSSC members that the next meeting will be a luncheon meeting in the Rhodes Room at the Diamond Club. Lunch will be available beginning at Noon.

4. Budget Discussion

Vice President Shapiro read a summary by Professor Yanella recapping the analysis of the University budget that he published in the Faculty Herald during the Spring 2011 Term. That analysis shows a budget surplus averaging approximately $45 million annually over the last several fiscal years, with the surpluses evidently being used to fund construction. There has been no response, either by way of challenge or explanation, from the University administration. Professor Yanella is requesting the FSSC and/or Faculty Senate to press the University administration for a more thorough and transparent explanation of the budget, especially with respect to the handling of operating surpluses,
possible use of surplus funds to support capital projects, use of tuition revenues, and the financial relationship between the University and the hospital.\textsuperscript{1}

There followed a lengthy discussion of budget issues, in which FSSC members identified the following principal queries regarding the budget:

\begin{itemize}
  \item To what extent did the surpluses result from federal stimulus funding, and how were those surpluses employed?
  \item Are there federal, state, or bond-rating requirements for surpluses that we must meet, and what are they?
  \item What is the relationship between budget surpluses and quasi-endowment? Has there been a deliberate effort to build up quasi-endowment, and if so why? What is quasi-endowment used for?
  \item Since budget cuts are being spread over two years, shouldn’t budget surpluses from one year be carried forward into the next?
  \item Is the University paying for the budget shortfalls at the Hospital? If so, by how much, and from what funding sources?
  \item Is there a priority system for allocating budget cuts among sub-units within the University, and if so what is it? Have all units in the University (including the medical center units) been treated equally?
  \item Is there a priority system for allocating budget cuts or restrictions between the operating and capital budgets of the university?
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{1} Vice President Shapiro read the following summary from Professor Yanella’s letter:

But, in actuality, Temple has had and continues to have plenty of money. Exactly how much is not a matter of dispute. For even after its huge Health System annual deficits are taken into account, and even after its average annual $13 million “Auxiliary Enterprise” deficits are taken into account, Temple still reports that there are large operating surpluses. Those surpluses – they are titled “Excess/(deficit) of revenues over expenses” – are reported on p. 3 of the audited financial statements. In 2010, the surplus was $61.2 million, in 2008 it was $49.2 million, in 2007 it was $98.4 million, and in 2006 it was $31.6 million. There was one year, 2009, in which there was a deficit of $14.1. The total surplus from 2006 through 2010 was $226.3 million, an average of $45.2 million per year. This is the money, paid as tuition, as the “charge or fee for instruction,” that Temple takes as a “pot of money” to pay for its construction projects (and perhaps a few other things, too). Readers can use their own imaginations to picture the enhanced undergraduate academic programs we could produce with an extra $45 million each year.

Let me summarize what Temple’s own reports show. It has a Health Care System that runs huge deficits. It is poorly endowed. It gets relatively meager annual donations. It annually loses a lot of money on its Auxiliary Enterprises. It takes $45 million out of the operating budget each year, money largely paid by undergraduates as tuition, uses it for construction projects, and, as a result, it constantly squeezes its colleges and departments. For a staterelated institution, for many years, it has had very high tuition rates.
• If there are budget cuts for operations, shouldn’t there also be budget cuts for capital projects? Have there been such cuts, and if so to what projects and in what amounts?

• How does Temple’s handling of cuts in state appropriations compare with the handling of cuts in appropriations by other state-related universities in the Commonwealth?

• Are any major budgetary decisions being held until the next President is selected and if so what are they?

• Is there parity in the treatment of research and instructional budgets, in terms of allocating budget cuts?

• Is student tuition being used, directly or indirectly, to support capital expenditures? Is tuition being used to support the hospital? If either is the case, what are the practical, academic, and ethical implications of doing so?

There was general agreement that President LaFollette should, on behalf of the FSSC and Faculty Senate, push both Provost Englert and Vice President/CFO Anthony Wagner for candid answers to these questions. Several FSSC members stressed the need for greater ongoing transparency regarding the financial health of the university, especially in a time when major structural changes in the university’s academic programs are being contemplated, at least partly as a means toward achieving greater fiscal austerity.

5. Teaching and Learning Center – Peer Review of Teaching

Associate Vice Provost Pamela Barnett, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), presented a report on the Center’s activities. She identified the Center as an important resource in efforts to develop instruments for assessing teaching effectiveness that are based on peer review rather than student feedback. In particular, the Center is presenting a program next term that invites departmental faculty teams to work together to develop peer review processes. Participants will need to commit to four meetings over the spring semester. They will receive advice and facilitation from Center staff to construct a peer review model for their department that faculty in the department can then both utilize and develop further through practice and experience. The Center conducted a program of this nature last year, with 17 departments (many of them from Health Sciences) participating. This year TLC hopes to broaden participation, and it would like assistance from the FSSC in publicizing their effort.

A general discussion of peer review and the work of the TLC followed. Deborah Howe (SED) had participated in last year’s program and described how it worked for her department. Others made a variety of points, including:

• Approaches to peer review can vary, with some being more hierarchical (usually centering on the role of the department chair) and others more collegial and voluntary. The instruments tend, however, to be fairly similar in focus.
Peer review should operate at the curricular and program levels as well as at the individual instructor level.

When instructors are already overloaded with responsibilities, it will be difficult for them to find time to participate in developing peer review instruments. Barnett responded that one of the advantages of a good peer process is that it should identify and document workload issues.

Use of the TLC varies considerably by college and school. Some schools (e.g., Law) rarely use the Center’s services. The Center should develop more programs that go out to individual schools and colleges.

TLC has done relatively little with studio teaching, but it is planning an arts teaching institute for fall 2012.

There is insufficient sharing of information about teaching among faculty. Programs like the ones TLC is sponsoring could help faculty members identify skills that can be shared and generalized.

There may be some way to coordinate what TLC is doing in peer review with program reaccreditation. Reaccreditation is broader, but it could be a foundation for generating interest in developing effective peer review instruments. Barnett indicated that up to now TLC has rarely been involved in reaccreditation matters.

The GenEd recertification process that is going on right now could be a model for program-level peer review, but it is highly labor intensive and needs both leadership and support from Deans and department chairs.

Peer review support is especially helpful for programs that are in transition from one method or mode of teaching to another.

Peer review needs to be discipline-specific. That is why individual departments need to develop their own instruments that are fine-tuned to the needs and objectives of a particular discipline.

Peer review needs to operate in several different frames. In addition to a professional development frame and an evaluation frame, there should be a curricular development frame and a program review frame. There may need to be different processes and instruments to address these different frames of review. Ideally they should flow together. Only collectively do they support reasoned decisions about staffing and resources.

It might be possible for TLC to develop on-line modules and other on-line resources to assist colleges and departments interested in developing better systems for peer review. Barnett responded that some instruments developed in the past are on line, and she will look into making more on-line material available. But the TLC budget
and on-line capabilities are fairly limited. TLC’s budget is about $380K, and the bulk of that covers labor costs for staff.

• TLC’s long-term plans include developing programs that can be offered to non-Temple participants, and that could bring in additional revenue. It might be possible to develop a certificate program. Barnett noted that the spring Teaching Institute will have a poster session that will include presentations from other area schools and colleges.

• Incentive structures in place at the University actively work against additional faculty investment in peer review. When merit is tied overwhelmingly to research, it deters faculty from putting time and energy into better teaching.

• Deans should be solicited to encourage participation in TLC peer review development programs by offering financial incentives for faculty/departments that commit to doing it.

6. President’s Report

At this point President LaFollette resumed the chair. He noted that he cannot report on search committee activities. However, Professor Howe (SED) reported on the open meeting with the search firm that occurred at Ambler. The meeting was well-attended, especially by staff. Several participants commented on the underrepresentation of faculty, students, and staff on the search committee, as well as the need for greater transparency in the selection process. There were also quite a few comments regarding the tendency of the University to make plans and decisions about satellite campuses (Ambler, TUCC, Harrisburg, etc.) without consulting the people who live and work at those campuses, or involving them in the decisionmaking process at meaningful levels. They stressed the desirability of having the search committee, not just the search firm, hear directly from faculty, students, and staff regarding their criteria and priorities for a new President.

LaFollette reported that he has begun to press the Provost for the development of some sort of “best practices” or guidelines for the hiring and use of NTT faculty. Although the Provost expressed some initial reluctance, he eventually signified that he is willing to facilitate further discussion of the issue between the FSSC and Deans. The Provost’s chief concerns are that any guidelines should stay clear of contractual matters and should preserve decanal flexibility and discretion.

The Provost’s white paper on reorganization has been submitted to Deans and he has received comments from them. He is making changes based on their suggestions, and then will get the white paper to the FSSC. LaFollette will ask him to do so in time for us to put together comments on it at our last FSSC meeting of the semester.

There was some discussion of the agenda for the December Faculty Senate meeting. LaFollette will renew his invitation to Vice Provost and Dean Stroker. However, the
agenda for the meeting will depend largely on whether the white paper from Provost Englert is available for faculty review and comment.

7. Old Business

There was no old business.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Rahdert, Secretary