Faculty Senate Steering Committee
December 6, 2011
Minutes

Present: Paul S. LaFollette (Pres.), Joan Shapiro (V. Pres.), Mark C. Rahdert (Secy), Karen Turner (Past President), Nora Alter (SCT), Mark Anderson (Law), Adam Davey (CHPSW), Joan Delalic (Engr.), Jeffrey Draine (SSW), Deborah Howe (SED), Forrest Huffman (FSBM), Michael Jacobs (Phar), Tricia S. Jones (Educ.), Charles Jungreis (Med.), Stephanie Knopp (Tyler), Jim Korsh (CST), Laurie MacPhail (Dent.), Joseph Schwartz (CLA), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

Absent: David Waldstreicher (Fac. Herald)

1. Call to Order

After a delicious luncheon, the meeting was called to order at 12:55PM.

2. Presentation of Holiday Cards

On behalf of the FSSC, Mark Rahdert presented holiday cards and gifts to Faculty Senate Coordinator Cheryl Mack and her student assistants.


Provost Richard Englert distributed a draft of his white paper on university reorganization and related issues for FSSC review. He indicated that he intends to distribute a final draft on Monday December 12 to the university. He invited FSSC members to give him feedback on the draft between now and then. Provost Englert went through various portions of the draft with the FSSC. He noted that the draft outlines a basic timeline for matters that will need approval from the Board of Trustees. The timeline calls for development of specific proposals by March and final university decision on them by the end of April, in order to enable Board action in May. Englert also indicated that he believes the university should commence a search for a Dean of Libraries in the immediate future.

After giving his report, Provost Englert responded to a variety of questions and comments by FSSC members.

• Englert was asked if he had any leanings regarding reorganization. He acknowledged that he thinks the integration of the arts into a single unit makes a lot of sense. He also stated that consolidation of administrative functions and services will be necessary even if there is not a formal reorganization.

• Englert was asked about student input and participation. Beyond involving student government leadership he has not given the question a great deal of consideration. Englert agreed that getting student input from affected schools and colleges on any plan of reorganization would be important.

• FSSC members pointed out that uncertainty and rumors regarding planned reorganization have negatively impacted faculty in the most likely affected units. Englert said faculty with concerns on that score should contact him directly.

• FSSC members commented that changes could have significant impact on the surrounding community, and that plans need to take community impact into account.
• Impact on alumni and alumni reaction are important factors that will need careful planning going forward. Englert agreed. One FSSC member described a procedure used at another university that included an on-line real-time forum to elicit greater alumni participation.

• FSSC members observed that the timeline is very general, and that any plan for reorganization needing Board approval must at least be presented before spring break, preferably no later than the end of February.

• Members pointed out that while some of the options have been under discussion already in some affected units, there has been no real discussion in others. All affected units need to be directly and equally involved in the discussions.

• Any proposal should clearly map all the directly affected groups that need to be consulted, and provide clear opportunities for adequate deliberation and response by those groups. This includes not only faculty in programs slated to be moved, but also faculty in the schools or colleges identified as the recipients for those programs.

• The white paper draft identifies neither criteria nor procedures for evaluating any proposal, nor does it specify means for choosing among the various alternatives sketched in the appendix. Englert responded that criteria for evaluation and comparison should be developed through a “bubble-up” process as we go forward rather than being specified in advance.

• In response to questions about references in the draft to graduate assistantships and fellowships, Englert stated that all university systems for utilization of graduate students are currently under scrutiny, and he thought those issues should be clearly signaled as part of the discussion. He acknowledged that changes will be controversial. One FSSC member pointed out that there are also graduate externs, and their role needs to be evaluated as well. They tend to be forgotten, much to the detriment of many individual students.

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• In response to the draft’s call for a joint faculty/administration committee to re-evaluate curricular programs, FSSC members stated that curriculum re-design should be primarily a faculty function, and that the process needs to remain attentive to the university’s mission commitment to diversity.

• FSSC members observed that faculty input into the handling of graduate students is almost nonexistent, and that there is a need for much greater transparency, especially on related budgetary matters.

• Some FSSC members commented that recent University experience with combining programs has not been very successful. The past effectiveness of particular schools and colleges in absorbing new programs should be a factor in judging whether they should receive new ones. Faculty in some schools or colleges involved in the recent linkage of arts programs through interim deanships feel that their programs have suffered as a result of “absentee leadership.”

• In response to questions, Englert said that once the white paper is released to the University, there will be a central designated location for faculty members to register comments and ideas.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 29, 2011 meeting were approved with one correction.

5. President’s Report
President LaFollette reported that the president of Temple Student Government (TSG) wants to speak to the Faculty Senate, to request faculty flexibility for students who will need to miss some classes in the spring in order to go to Harrisburg to appeal on behalf of university appropriations. FSSC members agreed that the TSG president should be given this opportunity.

There has also been a request from Senior Vice Provost Peter Jones to publish the white paper regarding on-line administration of Student Feedback Forms (SFF’s) on the faculty senate listserv. LaFollette noted that there has been some SFF discussion on the listserv, and that he has received private communications about on-line SFF’s from concerned faculty members as well. LaFollette will put the SFF issue on the Faculty Senate agenda for further discussion during the spring term.

6. Vice President’s Report

Vice President Shapiro stated that she will be working with David Waldstreicher, editor of the Faculty Herald, Faculty Senate Coordinator Cheryl Mack, and others, to develop a more effective format for reporting by Faculty Senate committees. She also noted that the Committee on the Status of Women is in need of new membership, and that the interim chair is being swamped with other responsibilities, including a substantially increased teaching load. Shapiro hopes she can find someone to co-chair the committee, and she encouraged all FSSC members to think of faculty (both women and men) who might be interested in joining the committee.

7. Faculty Senate Response to White Paper on Reorganization

There followed an extensive discussion regarding what steps the FSSC, Faculty Senate, and collegial assemblies in directly affected units should take in responding to the Provost’s white paper on reorganization. President LaFollette noted that the next FSSC meeting is scheduled for January 17, but he can call a special meeting before that if necessary.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

None

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Rahdert
Secretary