

**University Faculty Senate Meeting
December 9, 2011
Minutes**

Attendance:

Representative Senators and Officers: 59
Ex officio: 1
Faculty, Administrators and Guests: 24
Total Attendance: 84

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 1:52 PM.

2. Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes of the May 4, 2011 University Faculty Senate meeting were presented for approval. Prior to approval, President LaFollette explained one matter. The minutes presented for approval say that after the vote on the proposed amendment concerning adding librarians to the membership of the Senate, one faculty member said the voting lists for the electronic ballot on constitutional changes should be revised to include librarians. President LaFollette said in the meeting that would be done. That is an accurate report of what transpired at the meeting. However, LaFollette later realized that his statement at the meeting was incorrect, since the change to add librarians had yet to be approved. As a consequence, the voting list was not revised.

With that clarification, the minutes were approved.

3. Presentation by Student Government Officers:

Colin Saltry and Elliot Griffin, the President and Vice President for External Affairs of the Student Government Association, spoke to the Faculty Senate regarding two important student initiatives to occur during the spring term. The first will happen on January 31, 2012, when students from Temple will join students from other state-related universities in Harrisburg to speak with state legislators regarding the importance of Commonwealth support for state-related institutions of higher education. The second event will be a "Cherry and White" day in Harrisburg, set for March 27, 2012, when Temple students will meet with legislators to speak specifically about the importance of state support for Temple. Students participating in these events will be contacting their professors to request excused absence from classes on those days. The SGA expressed the hope that faculty members will be flexible and supportive of these student efforts on the University's behalf.

4. Provost's Report – White Paper on University Reorganization.

Provost Richard Englert began his report by thanking all for a good semester and wishing all a good semester break. There is no additional news out of Harrisburg regarding state appropriations, except that state revenues continue to fall short of projections, enhancing the likelihood of a mid-year cut in appropriations. As reported at the last Representative Senate meeting, the annual capital appropriation has already been reduced by 50%.

Englert expressed condolences to the family to the family of Trevor Sewell (COE emeritus), former Dean of the College of Education, whose son passed away recently.

Englert announced that he will be releasing a White Paper on the general subject of school or college reorganization within the coming week. The White Paper has been in formative stages for some time. Originally it was projected to be released in August, but at the request of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee (FSSC), the Provost delayed its release until after he was able to meet with the FSSC in a retreat. That occurred in October, and the Provost has also met during the fall with the University Deans. The paper he will release contains ideas he has gathered from many sources. The Provost met with the FSSC during the past week to discuss a semi-final draft of the White Paper, and he has invited them to submit written comments to him as well. The final version will be distributed to all faculty electronically, and there will be many avenues for faculty response both during the winter break and next semester.

Englert stressed that the Paper contains many ideas and has many parts. Some of the ideas are already being implemented; others can be accomplished relatively quickly. For those changes that would require approval by the Board of Trustees there is a timeline that calls for formulation of proposals by the end of February, in advance of spring break. Englert will attempt to establish a website address where faculty members may register comments, both signed and anonymous.

One recommendation that need not wait is to commence a search for a new Director of Libraries. That will begin in January. Another that is already under way is to strengthen interconnections between the Library IT staff and facilities and Computer and Information Services. The White Paper also mentions an ongoing project regarding faculty workload, which is being studied by a Presidential task force, and the distribution of teaching assistants, which is being addressed by Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education Ken Blank. These are sure to be controversial topics.

The White Paper is built on three main guiding principles: 1) improving the quality of the student experience; 2) streamlining administrative processes and services; and 3) positioning the curriculum for the future. The White Paper also discusses some options for possible realignment of schools and colleges, and it considers some revenue enhancement strategies.

The Provost indicated that he is open to meeting with faculty members as individuals or in groups as we go forward with the White Paper's recommendations.

In the Q&A session that followed, the following matters were among those raised:

- The Provost was asked about the timing of reorganization, given that there is an active search for a new President. Many faculty members expressed concern that we should not rush to judgment, especially on the more fundamental changes being considered. Englert replied that we need to keep moving forward and cannot wait until new senior leadership is in place.
- There were questions about the decision timeline. Englert replied that the timeline for decision necessarily varies depending on the type of decision and what levels of approval are required. Some can be implemented this semester, while others will take longer to develop. It is necessary to strike an appropriate balance between moving too fast and moving too slowly.
- Englert was asked whether he could distinguish between primary options that are most likely to go forward and secondary options that are less likely or less urgent. He responded that it may be premature to do so at this point.

- Some representatives noted that most faculty members have not been part of the discussions to date and hence have no context for evaluating the White Paper. It would be helpful to include specific motivations for specific options, along with specific information about their practical effect on faculty. It would also be helpful to know whether any of the options contemplate reductions in force, increases in workload, consolidation or elimination of academic programs, or other substantial changes affecting faculty. Englert responded that those sorts of implications cannot be fully identified in advance but will emerge as we move forward. He reiterated his intention to meet with the most directly affected faculty members to discuss practical implications as plans develop over the semester.

5. President's Report

President LaFollette reported on several matters (in addition to consultation regarding the Provost's White Paper) that have occupied the attention of the FSSC over the fall semester and/or are likely to come before the Senate during the spring. These include the following matters:

- The FSSC has been meeting with the Provost, Senior Vice Provost Peter Jones, and the Student Feedback Forms (SFF) Committee to discuss the proposal the Committee has developed to move to university-wide online administration of SFFs. The FSSC has raised a number of questions and concerns about this proposal. Further consultation is likely during the spring semester, and the matter is likely to require further discussion by the Senate.
- The FSSC has been discussing the issue of Collegial Assembly bylaws, which are supposed to be undergoing revision by each school and college. There has been little progress on this issue, and the FSSC would like to begin moving the process forward.
- There have also been meetings between the FSSC and the General Education Executive Committee (GEEC). This is the year that GenEd is due for a thorough evaluation. The FSSC has authorized the formation of a joint liaison committee with GEEC to ensure that the Senate is involved in and apprised of the process.

President LaFollette invited Senate members to contact him directly if they are aware of other important issues that will need Senate attention during the spring term.

6. Vice President's Report

Vice President Shapiro reported that her work focuses on the activities of the Senate's 30+ committees. Several committees, both elected and appointed, have vacancies, and Shapiro is constantly searching for potential new members. One committee that is of particular concern is the Committee on the Status of Women, which is an important committee but is in need of substantial repopulation. The Committee has a new acting chair but needs new members, both female and male.

With David Waldstreicher, Editor of the Faculty Herald, Shapiro is working on a letter that will soon go out to all committee chairs asking for reports on committee activities during the year. Rather than waiting until the end of the year, the Herald will be publishing committee reports as they come in. The aim is to develop a more streamlined and useful committee reporting process.

Shapiro also noted that the Herald plans to put out a special issue devoted to discussion of the Provost's White Paper. For that purpose, the Herald is soliciting written faculty responses to White Paper suitable for publication in that issue. The hope is that the issue will help to focus faculty discussion and response.

Shapiro concluded her remarks by thanking all faculty members who have volunteered to serve on Senate committees this year. She noted that thanks to the efforts of FSSC member Michael Jackson (STHM) we have begun what we hope will become a tradition of honoring individuals for university service. We need to continue building that tradition of service this spring.

7. Old Business

There was a question on the status of Senate efforts to engage with University administration over the University budget. LaFollette responded that efforts of the Budget Review Committee have been frustrated by difficulty in obtaining detailed information on the current budget. He noted that there are proposals before the Commonwealth General Assembly to make state related universities subject to the Pennsylvania Right to Know Act. In LaFollette's opinion faculty members should support those measures.

One member raised concerns about the increase in teaching by contingent faculty, coupled with a decrease in teaching by tenured and tenure-track faculty. This is a matter the Senate will need to address.

Other members raised further concerns about on-line administration of SFFs, observing that there do not seem to be adequate plans in place to ensure an acceptably high level of student response, or to develop other means for evaluating teaching. It seems as though we ought not to go forward with university-wide on-line administration until those plans are firmly in place. Senior Vice Provost Jones responded that he and the SFF committee will be scheduling an open meeting concerning the SFF proposal in January, at which committee members will be present to answer faculty questions and concerns. Jones also noted a recent item in the student newspaper stating that students presently feel "disenfranchised" if they happen to be absent during the class in which SFFs are administered. Many students do not take the present system seriously, so there is the possibility that we may actually get better responses with an on-line system. We may also get more insightful written comments if students can compose them on-line.

8. New Business

A member registered concern about difficulties that students are encountering in traveling between the Main Campus and the Health Sciences campus. LaFollette stated that he would follow up on this issue with appropriate administrative staff.

9. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mark C. Rahdert
Secretary