

**Faculty Senate Steering Committee**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 2013**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Mark Rahdert (Pres.), Tricia Jones (Vice Pres.), Paul LaFollette (Secy.), Joan Shapiro (Past-Pres.), Li Bai (Engr), Deborah Howe (SED), Forrest Huffman (FSBM), Michael Jackson (STHM), Michael Jacobs (Pharm), Chip Jungreis (TUSM), Stephanie Knopp (Tyl), Jim Korsh (CST), Steve Newman (Fac. Herald) Catherine Schifter (Educ), Joseph Schwartz (CLA), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD), Karen M. Turner (SMC), Matthew Miller (TFMA),

**Absent:** Kenneth Boberick (DENT), Cheri Carter (SSW), Robert Reinstein (Law), Michael Sachs (CHP), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:04 PM.

**Minutes:** The minutes were approved as distributed.

**President's Report:**

President Rahdert made the following requests:

- The invitation to the FSSC/Deans retreat has been sent out. Please RSVP.
- Please encourage your constituents to participate in the President Theobald's inaugural activities. Provisions have been made for academic regalia for those who need it.
- October 18 is the deadline for submission of names for the service brunch.
- President Theobald will meet with the FSSC on October 22 and with the University Senate on December 6.

Rahdert has had a request that the FSSC meet with campus security. He asked if we mind having two guests at some upcoming meeting. The members agreed.

The agenda for the October 8, 2013 Representative Senate meeting will include Dialog with Dai, a report from Jodi Laufgraben about the new academic program committee, and, if time permits, a discussion of the progress made by individual schools and colleges in forming budget committees for the new budgetary model.

We were informed that FSBM has formed committee to look at their collegial bylaws, and they are considering how to form a budget review committee.

One member suggested asking collegial assembly chairs to give information to the FSSC about the progress their schools and colleges are making in forming these committees. Another member suggested that we as the colleges' representatives to the FSSC should do this. Rahdert proposed that we adopt both approaches.

Rahdert announced that Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Peter Jones, has asked to meet with the FSSC.

The committee asked to draft a letter for possible delivery to the Provost has re-drafted it.

**Vice President's Report:**

Paul LaFollette CST was approved as a member of EPPC.

James Shellenberger LAW was approved as a member of the Handbook Committee.

**Guest – Provost Dai:**

Provost Dai began by soliciting questions.

A member asked him to comment upon two decisions made over the summer – the changes in the 2014-2015 Academic Calendar, and the decision to join the online consortium. Since neither of these seemed to be emergencies, the FSSC member wondered why it was necessary to proceed without faculty involvement.

The Provost explained that, with regard to the calendar, his staff informed him that calendar changes were routine matters that have never in the past involved faculty input.

He explained some of the matters that he and the President hoped to overcome with these changes, including providing for a fall semester break and simplifying the process of making sure all days of the week are equally represented. He apologized for not consulting the faculty, but said that it never occurred to him that the faculty would want to weigh in on what seemed to be a routine matter.

A faculty member pointed out that EPPC had discussed similar changes in past years and had found several reasons to recommend not proceeding with them. One issue brought forth was that the early start of the spring semester would make it very difficult to evaluate courses taken by transfer students in the fall semester in time to give them transfer credit for them.

The Provost responded that the earlier start of the fall semester would obviate this problem.

Another FSSC member expressed concern that the proposed changes in the summer schedule, particularly allowing four week courses, could cause concern about whether such classes are pedagogically sound. This member also questioned the process of making changes with academic impact without hearing from EPPC and the Graduate Board.

The dialog continued along similar lines for some time, and included the following points:

- Perhaps we could maintain the momentum of the semester and still balance the days of the week by keeping Temple open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Thanksgiving week and dealing with Thursday and Friday by eliminating the end of semester study days.
- Tyler needs access to its studios even when the University is closed.
- The issue of the best time for evening graduate courses was raised. Some felt that 5:30-8:00 is not as good a use of time as was the older system of 4:30-7:00 and 7:30-10:00.

Finally, President Rahdert pointed out that none of these decisions was immutable, and proposed that we watch carefully how things work during the first year of implementation and make changes as needed.

The conversation next turned to the decision over the summer, and in the midst of an already started tenure process, to change the number of letters of recommendation required for tenure.

The Provost expressed the following:

- This was a change that the President made to the President’s Guidelines on Tenure and Promotion after consulting with the Provost.
- The currently smaller number of letters makes it more difficult to deal with cases in which there is one weak letter. With a larger number of letters, it is easier to ignore one as an outlier.
- Penn’s Chemistry Department requires 16 letters.
- It is not necessary that all 8 letters be from the candidate’s sub-discipline. He hopes to develop a clearer policy.
- The Provost expects all departments to make a determined effort to find eight letters for each candidate, but *for this year only*, his office will accept applications with fewer if it is clear that a good faith effort was made to get eight.

Some responses to these comments were:

- We need to be more aware of discipline specific practices. This is particularly pertinent to the professional schools.
- In some professional disciplines, it would be useful if highly recognized practitioners of the discipline who are not themselves academics could nonetheless have their opinions valued.

The Provost replied to this point that he, as Provost, in making his decisions needs to consider the voices of peers, not colleagues.

Additional points made:

- It could be helpful if we went back to the previous practice of having the University Tenure and Promotion Committee evaluate all T&P cases, not just those in which departmental, collegial, and decanal recommendations have not been unanimous.
- Short of that, it might be possible for the Provost to identify certain cases as problematical and ask the UTPC for a recommendation on those cases.
- One member commented that it sounds like our T&P decisions are effectively being made by the outside reviewers. All steps along the process appear to have little or no meaning except the opinions of those not in the Temple community.
- Another proposed that external letters are helpful in evaluating research/scholarship, but not teaching and service. This creates an imbalance between the three bases of T&P. We need to find better ways of evaluating teaching and service, and apply them.

The Provost agreed that if a candidate has “mediocre letters,” it would be possible to look at teaching and service.

A member suggested that if the rules are changing, this needs to be done with transparency.

The Provost responded that no standards are changing, only the methods of assessment.

The same member observed that “if one tepid letter can derail a case that has been positive at all previous levels, whether that be one of five or one of eight, this gives the appearance that Temple is looking for ways to say ‘no.’ ”

The Provost answered that we are not trying to say “no.” We want to say “yes.”

The conversation continued in similar fashion for some time, including:

- The idea that we need to increase our mentoring of associate as well as assistant professors.
- That some dozen years ago or so, Temple’s administration decided to change the kind of professors that Temple would hire, and the kind of institution it would become. Faculty were never involved in those decisions. Perhaps it is time that the entire Temple community have the opportunity to discuss what Temple should be.

The Provost responded to this by essentially stating that we are what we are and need to behave in the way that state funded comprehensive universities are expected to behave.

There was a brief discussion about the role of service both in terms of promotion and merit.

Finally talk turned to the consortium for distance learning. The Provost apologized again for failing to realize that the faculty would want to comment on this matter which he viewed as a “very small administrative decision.” He explained that the opportunity arose for us to join this organization as “observers.” That initially our students can take courses at other institutions, but we cannot offer courses ourselves. Later, after a few years we can offer courses. He pointed out that we can withdraw from this consortium by giving a few months notice.

The provost described the new office being added to the Teaching and Learning center to help faculty develop online courses.

Various members suggested that:

- Faculty need to be involved in developing appropriate standards.
- The report of the committee jointly chaired by Vicki McGarvey and Catherine Schifter should not be ignored.

Three final observations by FSSC members:

- If GenEd is going to change, we need to have faculty discussion about it
- The same is true of the proposed new honor code (this comment came from the provost)
- Faculty members need a mechanism to respond to SFF’s and explain their side of the story.

This finished the dialog with Provost Dai.

**Vice President’s Report continued:**

We approved Henry Parkman and Dale Haines to be members of the handbook committee.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07

Paul S. LaFollette, Jr.  
Secretary