

Minutes
Faculty Senate Steering Committee
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
3B Conwell Hall

Attendance:

Present: Tricia Jones (Pres., SMC), Adam Davey (Vice Pres., CPH), Michael Sachs (Secy., CPH), Mark Rahdert (Past-Pres., Law), Teresa Gill Cirillo (FSBM), Donald Hantula (CLA), Michael W. Jackson (STHM), Stephanie Knopp (ART), James Korsh (CST), Heidi Ojha (CPH), Cornelius Pratt (SMC), Jeffrey Solow (BCMD), Ken Thurman (COE), Cheryl Mack (Coord.)

Absent: Marsha Crawford (SSW), Fred Duer (TFMA), Paul LaFollette (Fac. Herald, CST), Jie Yang (KSoD)

WebEx: Raghbir Athwal (LKSoM), Kurosh Darvish (Engr), Michael Jacobs (Pharm)

1. Call to Order

President Jones called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

2. Minutes for 2/16 approved – unanimous (with three abstention).

3. President's Report

CIO Interviews – we met with the four candidates. Three external and one internal. Unclear what the next step in the process is. Identified needs for upgrading computing systems for academic as well as professional sides. Resources need to be significantly increased.

Budget Requests – possibility is there is an overage in terms of scholarship money promised but not budgeted. Money promised in one of provost's initiatives. Overage is in the millions. And Provost has told schools/colleges they will have to make it up. Is this true?

CoDC/Diversity Summit – met and working on symposium, identifying date and venue, probably Spring 2017.

BULC - met on 2/22 – shared information, basic understandings

Gen Ed Summit – still talking about this, looking for dates for a Summit.

Update on Nominations committee and process – no update from Committee yet. Alas, as of now no nominees for Vice-President and Secretary positions. Call for FSSC

members to be considered or know of someone interested, please put forward recommendations. Ideally need to know very shortly. Question about where nominations come from and need for names of 6 individuals to be nominated. Practice has been don't need names if nomination comes from the committee.

Update on website upgrade and support – Jones talked with LaFollette – we had a website design team, group of students developed a projected site. LaFollette has been examining what it would take to get it done. He has a person who could do it. Need up to \$1000 to get it done. Jones will inform Sitler we are moving forward with it. Jones also will check with Sitler that ideally we would have a tech person or graduate student tech person to maintain/upgrade website presence. Hopefully this will be approved.

President Theobald will be attending March 23rd meeting – perhaps start with appropriations issue before going on to stadium issue. President Theobald was okay with this. Other issues to address? Possibility that some capital appropriations from Harrisburg have already been allocated, but only for the stadium. Theobald perception that faculty are in favor of stadium based on his four meetings with collegial assemblies. FSSC sense is this is not the case. Feeling that stadium is a done deal – even have city on board (Clarke, Kenney as well). Task Force established to identify ways to generate revenue for the university and the community. People may say they're against it but no one says why? Research Center for Head Trauma, Alumni Center – lots of possibilities to include that might generate support? Only meet with community groups of 12 or fewer in future for any discussion.

4. Vice-President's Report

Have filled in 50-60 positions this year. But still have 30-40 openings. Davey will be meeting with Mack on 3/9 at 11:00 a.m. to update lists/check openings for next year.

Two nominations from Istvan Varkonyi for GEEC: David Ingram (TFMA), and Bridget Mancano (CPH).

Unanimous approval for two appointments to GEEC.

5. Guest: Professor Xiaoxing Xi (Chair, Department of Physics, CST)

Professor Li Bai (Chair, Electrical and Computer Engineering, ENGR)

Bai came to discuss Xi's case. Xi did not come because legal case not resolved until March 18th and felt best not to attend until case resolved. Bai distributed some information concerning the case. Only raised 10% so far of funds to pay for his legal defense. Cost is \$220,000 for legal defense- has raised \$29,100 so far.

Justice Department had a similar case in 1998-1999 (Wen Ho Lee). Later found not guilty. Awarded \$1.3 million. But not able to find a University job. No one would hire him.

In 2015 Dr. Sherry Chen and Xi charged, but charges later dropped. Dr. Xi has gotten support after charges dropped on 9/11/2015. Lot of support from U.S. Congress, as well as from Attorney general Loretta Lynch.

At Temple, University counsel did not provide any support. He was put on administrative leave. He had to defend himself (legal fees). University counsel recommended he not interact with his students. Laptop also not in his possession.

Question – where’s the Dean on this? Xi still out even after charges dropped.

Lessons – no guarantee University will support you. Send communications in English (not Chinese).

Question is if this is something FS can address? Many faculty working with colleagues elsewhere. Some guidelines/policies?

Chinese born faculty are profiled. Have to be very careful.

Jones: Questions about Xi specifically as well as general question about guidelines for other scholars and what should be considered with them. Limbo status he is in is an issue as well – when will University make a determination – is he a risk or not?

Patriot Act indicates any communications with foreign nationals are subject to being monitored. Make sure faculty know this.

What type of support faculty will get, if any, and how resolve any situations that might arise? What is University’s obligation to a faculty member in this type of situation – if University chooses so University’s obligation is zero.

Jones found International Scholars Office at MIT may have some protocols/guidelines that would be helpful. Perhaps an ad-hoc Task Force would be helpful to investigate best practices. In ENGR 90% of faculty are foreign born. On campus at least 50 faculty may be Chinese born. Jones will talk with Kevin Delaney to decide on how to proceed.

Conversation ensued on how to respond? Nothing in Faculty Handbook on what happens if charged with criminal offense? Need some kind of policy. Deeper issue on what Provost’s office responsibility is in this area. Should it be presented/discussed with faculty?

Jones suggested continuing to think about this. She will schedule a meeting with Kevin Delaney to discuss this area.

Bai suggested assisting with Xi’s defense fund but we did not acknowledge this. Most FSSC felt uncomfortable with this.

Question is if he is on administrative leave with pay. University can dictate what he does (or not do) while getting paid.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

There was no new business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Sachs
Secretary