

**University Senate Meeting
December 9, 2010
Minutes**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 1:50 pm.

Guest – Provost and Interim Senior Vice-President, Dick Englert:

Interim Vice President and Provost Englert complimented the faculty on the conclusion of a “great semester.” He mentioned listening to a Temple Jazz Band performance at the Temple Performing Arts Center and attending a class that dealt with interdisciplinary projects, and how impressed he was with both.

Provost Englert mentioned the dean searches being conducted and reported that he feels that these are progressing in a timely manner.

The Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Committee will finish its work shortly and will submit their findings and recommendations to President Hart by December 1, 2010. Provost Englert complimented the committee and President LaFollette on his service co-chairing the committee. After the recommendations are submitted to President Hart, she intends to post them on a Temple website and invite comments from faculty.

Provost Englert mentioned that at the recent FSSC/Provost Retreat, the steering committee made thoughtful comments about the Temple websites. He has shared these concerns with President Hart who plans to set up a task force to deal with issues concerning the Temple websites.

Provost Englert mentioned that five specific academic policies for students have been discussed and will soon be ready to be released. These topics include:

- 1) withdrawal from classes (U and G)
- 2) academic forgiveness (U only)
- 3) academic standing (U only)
- 4) repeating classes (U only)
- 5) leave of absence (U and G)

When a question came up about who was on the committee that developed these new academic policies, Senior Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies, Peter Jones, said that the work on these policies began two years ago, though EPPC discussions. He mentioned that a number of sources have had input, and that ultimately, the policies came back to the EPPC for its recommendations.

Provost Englert invited everyone to President Hart’s Holiday Party and said that it’s an excellent way to meet others from across the university.

He mentioned that the university will be closed from 12/23/10 through 1/2/11. The Tech Center will also be closed during this time. He stated, however that the library will be open on December 28th, 29th, and 30th from 9:00 – 5:00 pm.

Professor Gregory Urwin (CLA), said that at the last Representative Faculty Senate Meeting, a colleague mentioned her objection to the fact that the Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Committee contained no members recommended by the Faculty Senate. He asked Provost Englert about this, and how this might impact other upcoming committee appointments. Provost Englert said that he appreciated the underlying criticism and that he personally takes responsibility for who was chosen. He mentioned that because President Hart intends to post the recommendations, there will be ample opportunity for faculty to have input before the new Tenure and Promotion Guidelines are decided upon and published.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the last University Senate Meeting of May 5, 2010 were approved, as written.

President's Report – Paul LaFollette:

President Paul LaFollette discussed the FSSC/Provost Retreat and shared that one of the emerging issues is the inadequacy and the difficulties involved with the university websites. According to President LaFollette, Provost Englert brought these issues to the president and she intends to have them addressed by creating a task force to review them.

The draft template bylaws were discussed at the retreat, and twice at FSSC meetings. A committee of the FSSC has been formed to further look at the draft bylaws and bring forth a report to the FSSC that will entail subsequent action.

President LaFollette requested that representatives to the Faculty Senate remind their schools, colleges, and departments not to schedule meetings at the same time as Faculty Senate meetings. He mentioned that the dates and times of Faculty Senate meetings have been published since the beginning of the year.

President LaFollette concluded his remarks by thanking Professor Scott Gratson (SCT), who is stepping down as the Parliamentarian of the Faculty Senate, after five years of excellent service. Professor Gratson received an enthusiastic round of applause. President LaFollette said that if anyone is interested in this position, he would appreciate it if he/she would contact him.

Vice-President's Report – Joan Shapiro:

Vice President Joan Shapiro thanked everyone who ran for Senate Committee Elections. She said she hopes that there will be a greater number of people voting in the spring elections.

She added that she also hopes that senators will place their name in nomination for the EPPC and the Personnel Committee during the spring elections.

VP Shapiro pointed out that the Faculty Senate vacancies were listed on the back of the minutes, and said that she hopes people will volunteer for the remaining openings on these committees.

She mentioned that if one goes to the Faculty Senate Website, there is information about the various committees including the work that the committee accomplishes and the time commitment involved. She requested that committee chairs let Faculty Senate Coordinator, Cheryl Mack, know if any pertinent information has changed, i.e. if the committee now conducts the majority or all of its work online, so that she can post this information.

She concluded her report by mentioning that if a senator is interested in serving on a committee, he/she should send a short bio and CV to Senate2@temple.edu.

Secretary's Report – Roberta Sloan:

Secretary Roberta Sloan, on behalf of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, thanked the two Faculty Senate Student workers, and especially, the Faculty Senate Coordinator, Cheryl Mack, for their wonderful work this past semester, and presented them with holiday gifts on behalf of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee.

New Business:

President LaFollette opened the floor for discussion.

Senator Marge Devinney (CLA) presented a motion that had been passed by unanimous vote by the College of Liberal Arts to the Faculty Senate. The motion is as follows:

The Collegial Assembly of the College of Liberal Arts is concerned about the process of policy making in the University as exemplified by three recent decisions:

- **The move to on-line student evaluations**
- **Scheduling restrictions for the course matrix**
- **Rules regarding graduate fellowships and “gradadjuncts.” (sic)**

Our concern is that the ramifications of any procedural changes should be fully discussed with units directly affected before any rules are put in place. We are sympathetic with the goals of central administration to ensure effective and equitable policies, but we call for careful deliberations about unintended and unfunded mandates.

This motion was brought to the floor by the CLA Executive Committee, (and) was endorsed by a unanimous vote of the CLA faculty at the collegial assembly on December 8, 2010.

Professor Dieter Forster (CST) asked that a committee be formed to study the use of the Ambler Campus.

President LaFollette invited Senators to participate in a discussion of the Student feedback forms and the Matrix. He began the discussion by asking how the SFFs should be deployed and how they should be used.

Professor Scott Gratson (SCT) asked about the effect of online SFFs and the low response rate he has encountered. He said that he had to make a decision about rehiring an adjunct and only had two SFF responses to use in making this decision. He feels this is a very serious issue and he has real questions about the validity of online SFFs.

Senior VP Peter Jones offered some feedback on SFFs. He said that two years ago, the CATEs became the SFFs and that this new instrument includes many changes meant to make the student evaluation forms more viable.

He further stated that last year and this year, the SFF Committee has looked at other aspects of the forms. One aspect that they are studying is whether or not students need or should know the results of the SFFs and the concept of using online SFFs rather than paper ones. As a result of some faculty members' requests, there was a pilot tryout of online forms. VP Jones stated that the university needs to be careful about response rates and the nature of the feedback. He said that it was decided that the first pilot program of online SFFs was too small to be significant. He has been working with various deans to see if the number of responses can be increased in the spring, 2011 semester sample. He mentioned that several hundred sections are now being piloted online by the faculty and when the data is known, the results will be shared. He noted that online SFFs are an experiment. He said that he is exploring ways to encourage students to participate. He doesn't wish the impetus to be negative. One idea being considered is that students who fill out the form online will have access to the results.

Professor Fran Viola (SCT) stated that she feels that NTT's should not be evaluated by SFFs in the same way that tenured and tenure-track professors are evaluated because NTT's often teach a 4-4 load as compared to some professors who teach a 2-2 load. She also mentioned data that asserts that female professors fare differently in SFF evaluations. She feels that these concerns need to be addressed if the SFFs are to be meaningful.

Professor Art Hochner, President of TAUP (FSBM), asked VP Jones what the SFF committee had actually done. He said that upon inquiry, three members of the SFF Committee told him that they had no part in deciding to pilot the SFFs online. He asked VP Jones about the process.

VP Jones responded that that SFF Committee had accomplished quite a lot by changing from the previous use of the CATE instrument to the new SFF evaluations. He pointed out that previously percentiles had been used, and that the SFFs does not use percentiles which often can be very misleading. VP Jones said that the SFFs are created in such a way that one or two very low evaluations cannot now distort the final overall evaluation. He made it clear that SFFs should not be used for making decisions about hiring or rehiring adjunct professors. He said that in terms of the process itself, the SFF Committee had accomplished quite a lot.

VP Jones also mentioned that the SFF Committee had worked in tandem with the Office of Research, and that the entire process of creating the SFFs had been very time consuming and that the committee had worked very hard to create a new instrument, and in fact, had created several versions to be used in a variety of classes with varying formats. He concluded by saying that the SFF Committee had not met for three years.

Faculty Senate Past President, Karen Turner (SCT), said that she has previously stated, based upon significant research, that faculty of color and women, tend to rank lower on these kinds of student evaluation instruments, and she feels that although she has mentioned this many times, it has not been acted upon or taken into consideration.

VP Jones replied that he heard about it last month and is looking into it.

Professor Turner said that currently, there is no way that a faculty member can respond to SFFs and to what might be erroneous information that has been written by students. She mentioned that once it is written, it follows a professor's career at Temple, without the professor having any way to refute what might, in fact, be untrue. She asked that a mechanism for faculty responses to SFFs be created and utilized.

Professor Michael Hagen, (CLA) said that he felt that the decision about whether or not to participate in the pilot online SFF program has been left solely in the hands of those who wish to participate, thereby providing a basis for bias in the results of the pilot program. He stated that the discretion as to whether or not to participate in the pilot program can impact its outcome. He offered a solution: solicit volunteers and then divide them in half with one group being evaluated online and the other group being evaluated through the paper instrument. He asserted that the comparison of the outcomes of the two groups would provide more valid information.

VP Jones responded that, in the future, they do plan on using various ways to make the online SFF pilots more statistically reliable.

Secretary Sloan referred back to Professor Turner's inquiry and asked VP Jones whether or not he is looking into the impact of gender and race on the SFF evaluations. He responded that he does have some results of looking into this question and offered to share them.

Professor Dieter Forster (CST), stated that the poor number of responses to the online SFFs means that the results are not valid. He mentioned that he feels the same way about written SFFs. He said that he feels if the percentage of students filling out the forms falls below a certain level, that the results are not valid. He concluded by saying that this is important and should not be ignored.

Professor Gregory Urwin (CLA) stated that he feels, in principle, that online SFFs are a great thing, but that the number of responses is very important. He added that he does not like the idea of any punitive methodology for persuading students to fill out online SFFs and that it would be better for the students not to fill them out at all rather than to approach the issue with a negative incentive.

Professor Giorgio Ingargiola (CST) stated that he would like the CATE (sic) results to be available to the students.

Professor Scott Shall (Tyler) mentioned that too many students breeze through the SFFs and do not spend much time on them, and that therefore numerically, they are unreliable. He stated that he feels as if the written comments from the students are more revealing.

Professor John Nosek (CST), stated that, at the Air Force Academy, a study was conducted that showed there was an inverse relationship between how much the students liked a class and how well they did in the next sequential class. He stated that feels as if the SFFs are used for the wrong reasons. He said that he feels that there should be a review of the whole purpose of student evaluations, and it should be ascertained as to whether or not they really are helping teaching and learning at Temple University. He said that he feels that the SFFs are not very effective.

Faculty Senate Vice President, Joan Shapiro (COE), shared that she administers SFFs in her classes, but of more importance and help to her as a teacher, is a second questionnaire that she passes out. On this second form are three questions. She asks for the students to state the strengths of the class, the weaknesses of the class and to add any additional comments. She stated that this second informal evaluation helps her tremendously, particularly in further developing new classes.

Parliamentarian Scott Gratson (SCT), stated that "we like to be liked," and that at Temple University, 70-73% of the grades are A's or B's. He said that he feels that the results of the SFF evaluations are highly connected to the expectation of grades. He added that literature suggests that this fact encourages grade inflation. He added that he feels that, if the results of SFF data are published, and available to students, it will negatively impact teaching.

Senator Mark Rahdert (Law) stated that he believes when people talk about conducting experiments regarding teaching, he wonders whether or not the experiment has failed. He feels that it is important to identify the criteria beforehand, so that the results of the experiments can be compared to already established criteria, rather than deciding afterwards if the experiment was successful in revealing what it was meant to explore. He said that he fears that when the results of the online SFF pilots are in, the university will move forward with online SFFs without really having a valid way of evaluating the results of the pilot programs.

Professor David Waldstreicher (CLA) stated that administrators and tenured faculty are the least affected by the SFFs, and yet they are making the decisions about the SFFs. He stated that the people with the least at stake are making the decisions for those with the most at stake

Professor Dieter Forster (CST) stated that he doesn't want this discussion of the SFFs to be an exercise in paranoia. He felt that we should "not throw out a good thing," because it is believed that it will result in grade inflation.

There being only five minutes left for the meeting, President LaFollette thanked everyone present for their input, and stated that the topic of the matrix, which had been announced as one of the topics to be discussed at this meeting, would be discussed at a future meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Sloan, Ph.D.
Faculty Senate Secretary