

MINUTES

Faculty Senate
September 6, 2005

The meeting began at 7:15: Seth Brown chaired.

The members introduced themselves.

Joni Warner gave an opening prayer.

1. The minutes from May 4, 2005 were approved without amendments.

2. Chair's report.

As a reminder of the Senate's purpose, the chair read the charge to the FS as given in the Academic Articles—a broad mandate:

The senate's range of concern extends to matters affecting the faculty as a whole and to matters on which a faculty perspective is appropriate. The senate seeks to formulate faculty opinion and for this purpose may, at its discretion, conduct faculty meetings and referenda. The senate also receives from other groups in the University items requiring consideration by the faculty. With respect to matters of academic concern, the recommendations of the senate are referred to the Executive Committee of the Academic Council, which shall place the recommendations on the agenda of the council.

Questions to take up in committee meetings in setting the agenda for the coming year: What issues affect the faculty, and how can we help improve the University? What structural changes might help better integrate the FS effectively in the workings of the University?

3. Election of delegates to the Campus Life Council.

One of last year's delegates, Ramzi Bualuan, described the committee and its functions, and agreed to run, as did Gail Bederman. Both were elected by acclamation.

4. Election of a delegate to the Traffic Appeals Committee.

John Stamper was elected in May but has asked to resign because he has joined the Executive Committee. Kevin Misiewicz agreed to run and was elected by acclamation.

The senate broke into committee meetings at 7:15 and reassembled for committee reports at 8:15.

5. Student Affairs.

Gail Bederman chaired and reported in Philippe Collon's absence. Agenda issues for the year:

Formalized student-generated public comments on teaching, which are still in process.

Student academic freedom inside and outside the classroom: what are the current explicit or practical restrictions? Do students, and should students, have academic freedom, and in what degree?

Problems of student conduct at athletic events (e.g., scurrilous chants at basketball games)

The committee would like to learn more about what is being done on the issue of adequate and regularized student communication with the administration, which was identified in both of the latest external reviews as an ongoing problem. After discussion, it was agreed that the FS would invite a representative from the provost's office to discuss the matter with the committee.

6. Benefits

Nasir Ghiaseddin reported on the committee's discussions with Human Resources and distributed a memo about pending changes. Ongoing issues:

HR is seeking in the medium run to shift a greater proportion of healthcare costs to the faculty, and the committee is trying to minimize the financial consequences to the faculty.

The committee will continue to take up the retiree health plan in relation to Medicare prescription benefits.

A new issue: living quarters for visiting scholars.

The chair invited the FS to contact committee with concerns and questions.

Members raised questions about the potential implications of pending changes in payment calendar, particularly for professional specialists and lower-paid staff, and the possible effects if Congress indeed votes to make tuition benefits fully taxable.

7. Administrative Affairs.

Collin Meissner reported. Agenda items for year:

A planned invitation to the new provost to address the FS as body

A planned invitation to associate provost Chris Maziar, who hopes to revise the Academic Articles for consistency, correspondence to actual practice, and elimination of redundancy, for discussion with the committee

Issues about the current constitution of search committees for the selection of University officers and other important administrative committees, and what can be done to secure adequate FS representation on them

The effort to establish a regular FS presence at the regular retreats at the beginning of the academic year.

Discussion of faculty involvement in general and FS involvement in particular in several bodies ensued.

8. Academic affairs

John Robinson reported. Three longstanding issues:

The status of and issues confronting special professional faculty, especially in the liberal arts, and the degree to which the FS can and should work on their behalf.

The effect of electronic fora on varieties of faculty publications and rates of publication, and the reception of such publication in the course of faculty evaluations such as renewal, tenure, and promotion.

The currently limited role of faculty in making major academic appointments, and what can be done to improve involvement and develop a legitimate sense that the faculty meaningfully participates in these processes. The overlap of this issue with those raised by the administrative affairs committee was acknowledged.

Other issues worth considering in future but which committee doesn't plan to take up this year:

The status of adjunct faculty

Issues about the small group of faculty designated as research faculty

Causes and effects of reported staff reductions, e.g., at the Snite

9. Old business

Seth Brown reported that FS minutes will be appearing in ND Report from here on in: the backlog is about to be cleared up, and the goal is to publish them one month in arrears.

10. New business

A question was raised about the apparent proliferation of possibly overlapping internal publications., e.g., NDWorks. It would be good to have a clearer sense of what they are designed to accomplish, with input from faculty about what kinds of communication they in particular might find most helpful. It was suggested that it might be helpful to invite someone like Matt Storin for discussion either with the whole FS or an appropriate committee. The matter will be referred to the Executive Committee for followup.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Marvin
Co-Secretary