

Faculty Senate Minutes #425

October 29, 2014

1:30 PM

Moot Court NB

Present (32): Chevy Alford, Andrea Balis, Ned Benton, Adam Berlin, James Cauthen, Kashka Celinska, Silvia Dapia, Artem Domashevskiy, Janice Dunham, Jennifer Dysart, Peggy Escher, DeeDee Falkenbach, Joel Freiser, Terry Furst, Katie Gentile, John Gutierrez, Maki Haberfeld, Karen Kaplowitz, Maria Kiriakova, Carmen Kynard, Kyoo Lee, Jay Pastrana, Edward Paulino, Frank Pezzella, Melinda Powers, Dainius Remeza, Marcel Roberts, Raul Rubio, Francis Sheehan, Charles Stone, Staci Strobl, Robert Till

Absent (12): Claudia Calirman, Marsha Clowers, Lior Gideon, Hunter Johnson, Lou Kontos, Tom Kucharski, Vincent Maiorino, Xerxes Malki, Raul Romero, Ian Seda, Fritz Umbach, Daniel Yaverbaum

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Adoption of Minutes #424 of the October 29, 2014, meeting**
- 3. Announcements & Reports**
- 4. Update on the workload mitigation initiative and its implementation**
- 5. Review of the Provost's College Council proposal for online (instead of paper) administration of the Student Evaluation of the Faculty**

1. Adoption of the agenda. Approved.

2. Adoption of Minutes #424 of the October 29, 2014, meeting. Approved.

3. Announcements & Reports

President Travis had asked the Faculty Senate to name two faculty members from whom he would choose one to serve on a vacant seat on the Auxiliary Corporation Board. The Senate had elected Senators Ned Benton and Fritz Umbach. President Travis selected Senator Umbach who attended the Aux Corps' October 24th meeting.

4. Update on the workload mitigation initiative and its implementation

A meeting will take place the following day, on October 30, between Provost Jane Bowers and representatives of the Senate and Chairs to develop a method to propose to President Travis, to the Senate, and to the Chairs for the allocation of the workload mitigation dollars. Ned Benton, Adam Berlin, and Karen Kaplowitz were chosen by the Senate Executive Committee to represent the Faculty Senate; Jama Adams and Angela Crossman will represent the Chairs. President Kaplowitz reported that she had urged the Provost to include representatives of the PSC Executive Board but Provost Bowers had chosen to not do so.

5. Review of the Provost's College Council proposal for online administration of the Student Evaluation of the Faculty [Attachment B & C]

President Kaplowitz reported that she had just passed President Travis as she was walking to our Senate meeting and that he had told her that she would be receiving an email momentarily from him saying that a revised proposal for a pilot for online Student Evaluation of the Faculty (SEOF) would be on the agenda of the December meeting of the College Council rather than the November meeting, as had been planned, in order to give everyone more time to work on a revised proposal. He said he is requesting that the Faculty Senate send its concerns to the Provost's Task Force on SEOF Online.

Senator Staci Strobl said that her understanding is that *Robert's Rules of Order* prohibits an agenda item from being brought back during the same session, unless someone who voted with the majority makes a motion which must be approved by a two-thirds vote; absent such a vote, she said, the item may not be brought back until the end of the current session, which at John Jay ends in May, end of the academic year. President Kaplowitz said her understanding of *Robert's Rules* is very different, that the session ends with the adjournment of each meeting of the College Council and that, therefore, this item can be brought back any time. Senator Strobl strongly disagreed and called upon President Kaplowitz to accompany her to meet with the college's legal counsel, Marjorie Singer, to discuss this matter. President Kaplowitz agreed and said she would email AVP Singer following the Senate meeting to ask for a meeting.

Senators reported that they had been subject to inappropriate lobbying by the administration prior to the College Council vote. Senators reported telephone calls and texts from the Provost's Office urging them, implicitly or explicitly, to vote for the online SEOF proposal. One Senator read the text sent to her which expressed the sender's hope that she would vote yes for the online SEOF proposal. Senators said such pressure is upsetting and wrong; they said they had never before experienced or heard of such behavior at John Jay or, indeed, elsewhere. President Kaplowitz said she would convey this to the administration and call on them to cease from such behavior henceforth.

Additional criticism of the administration was expressed because the administration has actively lobbied the student members of the College Council, without giving the students the opportunity to hear all sides of the issue; several characterized this behavior as setting a bad

example and teaching a bad lesson to students about how to make informed decisions. It was noted that the student members of the College Council had voted as a block at the College Council meeting and that even prior to the discussion at the College Council meeting they had adopted a resolution endorsing the proposal.

Other Senators criticized the fact that the College Council members had not been told that the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC), which is chaired by President Travis, had voted to move an amendment to the online proposal; in fact, the College Council members did not learn about the amendment until the meeting was almost over, right before the final vote, at 2:40 pm, a few minutes before the end of the meeting, when a member of the FPC, Professor Valerie Allen, read and asked that the FPC amendment be moved, which it was.

Many criticized the fact that the actual proposal for the SEOF online pilot is a “blank check” with no specifics contained in it and that none of the solutions that had been developed by the Provost’s Task Force on Online SEOF had been incorporated into the proposal. Many said that this was the main reason they could not vote for the proposal at the College Council meeting last week.

President Kaplowitz said she would like all outstanding issues of the online SEOF pilot to be identified now so that solutions can be developed by the Senate Executive Committee in consultation with the Senate’s Ad Hoc Group on SEOF Online, and the College Council Committee on SEOF, and other faculty experts. The following problems were identified:

- ◆ Response rates are the biggest concern and the concern most frequently articulated: how do we ensure that faculty members are evaluated by data and comments that do not represent outliers or that are not from a statistically unreliably low percentage of student respondents?
- ◆ Science courses comprise labs, recitations, and lecture sessions but only one link is sent to each enrolled student in each Science course; this is why the Science Department voted to not support the pilot and why the Science Department opted out of all past online pilots. The question was asked: what will be done to ensure that Science faculty members are evaluated for each of these activities, which are very, very different?
- ◆ If third parties issue a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in order to get the data now that digitization will be easy, what protections would faculty have, if any?
- ◆ If students use profanities in the comment section, will the profanities remain?
- ◆ If students write libelous comments or otherwise untrue comments, will faculty be able to post their responses online?
- ◆ What will be the guidelines for use?

- ◆ What is being piloted? What is to be studied and analyzed and how? What will the benchmarks be?
- ◆ What is the data analysis plan, in general? Will departments be compared to each other in terms of scores, etc?

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.