

1. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes. Seconded. Minutes approved.

2. Faculty Assembly (FA) President's Report

Jim Morley

- a. Faculty Assembly Executive Council (FAEC) Email – not being utilized. Please feel free to send messages via faec@ramapo.edu
- b. FAEC members will not sit in front of everyone at FA meetings anymore. This decision was reached as the result of negative feedback from faculty members and was also the preference of the representatives.
- c. Achievements, Fall 2010: Progress was made on utilizing Robert's Rules of Order at FA meetings, the Academic Commons Proposal, Transparency in Reassigned Time, and in Academic Decision Making by Administrators.
- d. Faculty In-Service will not take place until the end of Spring 2011 semester and will be re-titled "Faculty Conference Days" (or something along those lines).
- e. Alex Olbrecht will serve as parliamentarian for the meeting.
- f. Jim Morley read a statement from President Mercer regarding the budget situation at the college, which was not dissimilar from the statement that had been sent out by the President in December. Lay-offs are a last resort but still possible. If Governor Christie approves lifting tuition caps, then the budget concerns may be alleviated.
- g. Please vote on the Governance Structure of the Faculty Assembly (ballots will be sent via campus mail in the next two weeks).
- h. Briefly reviewed the motions to be voted upon 1/19 (see below for the text of those motions and the substance of those discussions).
- i. If Discussion Period motion passes, FA will talk about the reduction of once per week classes.

3. Governance Review Discussion

- a. A presentation was made by Aaron Lorenz, member of the Governance Review Committee. The charge of the committee was to provide information regarding whether the Faculty Assembly should keep its current structure or revert to the old system of governance (a FA President with an optional council).
- b. Should the current structure be retained, the committee drafted proposed clarifications in the language and structure of the by-laws.
- c. Survey results regarding faculty opinion on this issue were reviewed. 61% would like to retain the current structure with some changes. 6% like the old model. 34% would like a new model.

- d. Mail ballots will be distributed within a week and will be due within two weeks after that (will utilize campus mail for all but those on sabbatical to keep the cost down). Mail balloting is required in the by-laws.
- e. Two-thirds of those voting need to approve the new structure, pursuant to Article 8 in the current by-laws. The minimum quorum for the vote is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the faculty and teaching staff.
- f. It was asked how is the FA is strengthened by the new bylaws? Major decisions will be reserved for the Faculty Assembly. Minor decisions could be decided by the FAEC. Proceeding in an orderly way should provide more power, as would fostering a climate of transparency and trust.

4. Motion: To include Periodic 'Discussion Sessions' into the Rules of Order.

Move to amend the Rules of Order to allow for periodic discussion sessions that do not necessarily involve immediate decision items. Like any agenda item these would be announced in advance and only take place after all other decision items on the agenda are completed and before the close of the formal FA meeting. They should be time limited and follow all the other rules of order - except that no immediate vote will take place. These sessions could be initiated by the FAEC or any faculty member who makes a request to the FAEC no less than one week in advance of any FA meeting.

Rationale:

In its deliberations with the administration there are instances when the FAEC may wish to consult with the faculty as a whole to ensure that we are accurately representing their voice. In other instances we may simply need to solicit ideas, information, and perspectives. Also, individual faculty may wish to draw their colleagues' attention to an important matter without the pressure of an immediate decision. Such discussions should enhance good communication and faculty engagement with governance.

Discussion:

A vote of two-thirds of those faculty present at a FA meeting can suspend the rules in the event of an "emergent" situation that needs immediate action. A time limit is needed so that the Faculty Assembly meetings proceed efficiently. Proposals are needed one week in advance because the FA agenda has to be posted one week in advance. Points of information can come through unit representatives, the FA President, the FAEC email, and in "New Business" (if approved). Points of information are not announcements of campus activities.

Moved and seconded.

Total Faculty Voting N = 91

91 % yes

5 % no

1 % abstain

5. Motion: to Include a 'New Business' Session into the Rules of Order.

This was authored by Kay Fowler and placed on the agenda by petition.

1. Moved that the working rules be amended to read: After all agendaed decision items are completed, and prior to a motion for formal adjournment, the chair will make an open request to the Assembly for any 'new business' (defined as actionable new agenda items to be considered for future FA decisions).

2. Discussion on the "new business" will be limited to ten minutes unless a secondary motion passes to extend the time for discussion.

3. Formal motions which may accompany or follow the new business item (besides the usual secondary motions listed elsewhere in the rules) may be one of the following:

a) Move to place the item on the agenda of the subsequent FA meeting (requires a majority vote of those present)

b) Move to forward this matter to one of the FA standing committees (FAEC or ARC) for analysis, discussion, and a subsequent recommendation to the FA by a specified date (requires a majority vote of those present)

c) Move to consider this matter immediately as an emergency matter (Note: 3c requires a 2/3 vote of those present in order to suspend the rules)

Rationale:

(added by Jim Morley)

Our collegial governance system requires good communication between the FA and the FAEC. Solicitation of agenda items via unit reps and e-mail is not working sufficiently. Therefore 'new business' sessions could facilitate more faculty input and engagement in the governance process.

Comments by Kay Fowler: The Faculty Assembly needs to be efficient, but we also need to be able to discuss issues all together. She then reviewed the content of the motion (above).

Moved and seconded.

Total Faculty Voting N = 91

80% Yes

18% No

2% Abstain

6. Discussion Item: Once per Week Courses

(Assumed the above motion passed, which it did.)

The administration has asked faculty to put limits on offerings of once per week classes – especially for 1st and 2nd year students. Exceptions would be made for labs, fieldwork courses, advanced seminars, and graduate courses. The pedagogical rationale behind this new policy is the empirical evidence that students learn best when material is distributed in shorter segments over time. This may especially be the case with lecture courses. While the FAEC finds the administration's rationale to be persuasive, we want assurance that faculty support our consent with the administration and, most importantly, that this policy will be implemented in an equitable manner. Therefore, we wish to solicit direct input from the faculty on this matter and especially seek ideas for ensuring fairness and equity.

Questions and comments related to the substance of the above included the following points:

Evening classes, which are often crucial for non-traditional students are not addressed in the above statement. How will these be dealt with under this policy?

Why do once per week graduate level courses work well but undergraduate courses work poorly? Are graduate students assumed to be independent learners?

Scheduling for the unit is the purview of the deans. Scheduling at the college is the purview of the provost but is delegated.

The Strategic Plan states that no more than 25% of courses will be offered only once per week by next year. The above exceptions (labs, fieldwork, etc...) were already taken out of the denominator when it was calculated that 50% of the college's courses were offered only once per week.

Several conveners commented that it would be next to impossible to staff their course offerings through adjuncts if the adjuncts had to come to campus more than once per week. The Provost responded that she could not suspend the need for good pedagogy for adjuncts.

It was asked that core General Education courses (many of which are taught by adjuncts) be taken into consideration.

It was stated that the literature on this topic is conflicted – many studies show that once per week courses work just fine.

A literature review on this topic from approximately 2006, consisting of 317 experiments, was summarized. In general, the benefit of spacing into more sessions is greater when the material is meaningful, semantically complex, and learning is intentional.

It was suggested that grades be compared across courses that have been offered both once per week and twice per week.

It was suggested that the issue of intensive courses in Summer and Winter sessions be addressed if pedagogy was indeed the motivation behind this policy.

Motion to extend the discussion another 10 minutes; seconded.

84% yes out of N=90.

Motion passes.

It was suggested that, if this is a pedagogical issue, then the convening groups should be in charge of this decision and that it should go through ARC. If it is just a scheduling issue, then we need to have a discussion regarding the practicality of this.

It was noted that many courses are offered in both formats. Students are adults and can decide which way they want to take the course.

It was suggested that students actually be included in the discussion.

It was suggested that we move to a Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday format for classes.

The Provost noted that there are definitely scheduling issues because of a lack of prime time slots. Left to their own devices, classes tend to cluster around lunch and there aren't enough classrooms to accommodate that type of scheduling.

Typical students are working 20-30 hours per week. On-campus housing is very expensive and many commute. Once per week courses make it easier for such students to attend college.

It was suggested that we have blocks of time that are only for long classes or only for short classes.

It was noted that this policy has already been put into motion.

Motion to extend the discussion another 10 minutes; seconded.

48% yes.

48% no.

3% abstain.

Motion fails.

7. New Business

(Assumed the above motion passed, which it did.)

It was reiterated that there be no announcements of events be made during new business.

It was asked how the once per week policy came to put into effect without being noticed by either the FAEC or the FA. The response was that this policy went through the Deans' Council and therefore should have been brought before the Unit Councils for discussion.

Utilizing clause B of the New Business rules, a motion related to limiting once per week course was put forth:

Motion to put the once per week class issue before ARC and FAEC in light of the fact the this appears to be an academic decision, and that this policy would appear to be in the process of implementation without input from the Faculty Assembly. ARC and the FAEC should each bring back a recommendation by the next FA meeting.

Moved and seconded.

Total Faculty Voting N=91

81% yes

13% no

6% abstain

8. Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Unanimously Approved.