**Faculty Assembly Executive Council Minutes**

September 12, 2012, 9:30-10:30am, ASB 230

Present: Jill Weiss, Irene Kuchta, Donna Crawley, Murray Sabrin, Bob Becklen, Ken McMurdy, Jonathan Lipkin, Jennefer Mazza

Absent: Tae Kwak

Secretary: Rebecca Root

1. **Approval of Previous (May 14 and Sept. 5) Minutes**

Motion to approve seconded; approved unanimously.

1. **FA President’s Report**

Pres. Weiss reported on her recent meetings with Pres. Mercer, Provost Barnett and other administrators, staff, and faculty.

a. Pres. Weiss and Pres. Mercer reviewed the Executive Council priorities covered at last week’s meeting. On the issue of enrollment concerns, Pres. Mercer noted that last year Assoc. VP for Enrollment Management Chris Romano oversaw a review of enrollment issues, so Pres. Weiss will ask for information about this review.

Pres. Weiss reminded Pres. Mercer that, though the Board of Trustees removed the tenure caps last year, caps are still in place for promotion. He promised to address this concern with the Board.

Pres. Weiss raised a concern that BoT committees are not meeting regularly, but Pres. Mercer assured her that they are holding phone conferences. Faculty representatives are now in place for each BoT Committee. The Executive Council will follow up with faculty reps to BoT committees.

Regarding Pres. Mercer’s June 7 email on organizational restructuring and hiring of new administrators, Pres. Mercer said he will be happy to address that with the Executive Council and/or FA.

b. Provost Barnett reminded Pres. Weiss that the Executive Council declined her request last year that we develop new/additional criteria for tenure/promotion, so Provost Barnett has asked Assoc. VP for Academic Affairs/Employee Relations Judith Jeney to propose these changes. These will then be forwarded to the administration, Executive Council and FA, etc. for input and discussion. While procedures for tenure and promotion are negotiated with the union, criteria are determined by the administration with faculty input. Concern was expressed by Reps. that this will lead to an effort to restrict faculty ability to gain tenure and/or promotion, and that it would be unfair to apply any new criteria to previously hired faculty. We will await Assoc. VP Jeney’s proposal before taking any action.

c. Pres. Weiss has also met with AFT Local Pres. Prof. Martha Ecker, Prof. and Chair of the Faculty Budget Committee Jason Hecht, Prof. and Chair of ARC Emma Rainforth, and has met or will soon meet with each dean.

d. Pres. Weiss met with Dan Connelly (who is in charge of construction on campus), who told her that asbestos in G wing is being properly abated. They are removing this encapsulated, non-friable asbestos-containing tile at night and using appropriate barriers and other safety measures to minimize any potential exposure. Pres. Weiss will follow up on this. Rep. Crawley recommended Pres. Weiss check with Ramapo’s Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Gina Mayer-Costa. Pres. Weiss also met with Assoc VP for Administration/Finance Dick Roberts, who gave her a list of all major physical plant projects currently in progress on campus.

e. Pres. Weiss has also been looking into the issue of correcting problems with online student evaluations after contact initiated by the Administration. Rep. Mazza noted that she has recently taken over as Director of the Instructional Design Center, and that she and Rep. Crawley plan to work on this issue. They are looking into outside vendors, and mentioned that there is now an app available for students to complete their class evaluations outside of class time.

1. **Discussion of issues to be addressed by Executive Council this semester**

a. Pres. Weiss discussed a number of items additional to the list she presented last week. Her list is appended to these minutes. She noted concern raised by some faculty about a new form for Independent Studies created by Vice-Provost Eric Daffron, with approval from ARC Chair Prof. Emma Rainforth, which requires a specific statement of 150 hours of student work for 4 credits. The Middle States Commission passed a new policy on August 23, 2012 requiring this, available at <http://www.msche.org/documents/CreditHourPolicy.PDF> Chair Rainforth assured Pres. Weiss that academic-curricular policy changes are normally reported to Exec Council for a vote of the Assembly before going into effect, but that this was an exception because of the short notice from Middle States.

b. Rep. Sabrin would like to propose a change to the length of the lunch period. We will discuss this issue at next week’s meeting. Rep. Sabrin will forward his proposal to the group by email to start the discussion.

c. Rep. Becklen raised the issue that faculty are not able to use a gmail account for their Ramapo email (as students can). Pres. Weiss will ask Chief Information Officer George Tabback about this.

d. Rep. Kuchta suggested we try to change the requirement in the current FA bylaws that require a 2/3 vote to amend the bylaws. There was not consensus about whether to move forward on this issue at this time.

1. **October 3 Faculty Assembly agenda**

a.Pres. Weiss thinks both Pres. Mercer and Provost Barnett should be invited to say a few words at the beginning of the Oct. 3 FA. Rep. Lipkin suggested we provide them a few specific questions or issues to address in their comments. Pres. Weiss suggested they might explain changes to the organizational structure, and consideration of changes to tenure and promotion criteria.

b. Rep. Mazza requested to be put on the agenda so that she can introduce herself as the new Director of the Instructional Design Center and address her plans in that role.

c.There are a number of vacancies on GECCo. Pres. Weiss will email faculty about the openings and ask people to come forward for election at this FA.

d. Pres. Weisswill send around a proposed agenda for the FA, as it needs to be finalized next week. (She and Rep. Sabrin will not be able to attend the Sept. 26 Executive Council meeting due to religious observance. VP Crawley will chair that meeting.)

1. **October 10 Faculty Conference agenda**

a.Rep. Crawley suggested a report from the Faculty Budget Committee.

b. Rep. Mazza suggested a discussion about the crisis in higher education. This might also involve a discussion of general education.

c. Pres. Weisssuggested tenure/promotion as a topic.

d. Tabled until next week.

1. **Other Business**

a. Rep. Crawley raised the policy that exists in SSHS and AIS that syllabi should not be photocopied. Pres. Weiss will follow up to see if this is a college policy or decided unit by unit.

b. The new Faculty Development Funds (FDF) process that replaced SBR seems to have a few problems (perhaps simply a matter of wrongly posted material on the website). Pres. Weiss will follow up to see if this can be straightened out.

c. The Provost’s Council approved a cap of 35 students in 200-level classes (raised from previous level of 30), but many faculty don’t appear to know this. The cap for First Year Seminar has also been raised. As an academic/curricular policy matter, this should have gone through ARC and FA. According to ARC Chair Prof. Rainforth, the ARC guidelines continue to recommend a cap of 30 for 200-level courses. Pres. Weiss will follow up on this. There appeared to be consensus that this might be an issue we should address at the next FA.