

## **Faculty Assembly Executive Council (FAEC) Meeting Minutes**

March 7, 2012, 9:15 to 11:15am

Present: Jim Morley, Elaine Risch, Donna Crawley, Peggy Greene, Beba Shamash, Max Goldberg, Jillian Weiss

Absent: Sam Mustafa, Alex Olbrecht

Secretary: Rebecca Root

---

**1. Minutes** for Feb. 22 and Feb. 29 meetings approved.

**2. Decision:** After discussion, the FAEC agreed to cancel next week's FA (March 14). The next FA is scheduled for March 28.

### **3. Increasing Faculty Voice in Deans' Evaluation/Reappointment**

Deans used to be chosen from the faculty of the unit, so there were discussions and votes taken by the faculty in the unit to determine their dean. Now deans are generally hired from outside Ramapo and the only institutionalized way in which faculty input influences the evaluation/reappointment of deans is through an online survey sent out by the Provost's Office. The results of that survey are confidential, so while the Provost considers the results as she is making her decision, faculty are not privy to the results. The current survey instrument is based on the job description under which the dean was hired, and the FAEC believes it may need to be revised. Also, it used to be the case that deans stepped down after one or two terms of three years each, but it is not clear that this expectation still exists. In meeting with Provost Barnett today, we seek clarification of when the deans are due for reappointment, whether their terms are of equal length, and her response to our ideas for increasing faculty voice in this process. Those ideas are:

- a. Suggesting changes to the current survey instrument used in the deans' evaluations so as to better measure faculty opinion.
- b. Developing a second survey instrument for deans' evaluations, where the results would be available to the faculty.
- c. Institutionalizing a meeting of faculty in the unit to discuss their dean's reappointment, resulting in a recommendation or non-recommendation for reappointment.

Agreed that if we have a discussion or decision item on this topic at the next FA, it should be a closed session.

### **4. New Administrative Roles and Curricular Responsibility**

Rep. Weiss raised an issue that an anonymous faculty member drew her attention to recently. Several Assistant Dean and/or program director positions are being created to oversee academic programs. It is unclear whether these individuals will be tenure-eligible members of the faculty or if in fact they are administrators. If the latter, these new roles place administrators in charge of overseeing academic programs, including some authority over curriculum. It is our understanding that faculty, not administrators,

determine the curriculum of academic programs. We will ask Provost Barnett whether non-faculty are being hired to convene academic programs.

We briefly examined the job description posted for the Assistant Dean for Teacher Education. It explains that this person will “oversee undergraduate programs” and “develop programs”; it does not mention any teaching responsibilities or experience.

## **5. Other Issues**

Pres. Morley will ask Provost Barnett to urge Deans to consult faculty about the allocation of office space in the wake of renovations across campus.

Rep. Weiss raised a number of issues that she believes ought to be discussed at FA:

- a. New Academic Advising policy
- b. Issue of membership in convening groups
- c. Change in venue for graduation

On that last issue, the FAEC discussed the fact that, though there are faculty reps on the committee that plans graduation, the full faculty and FAEC were unaware of plans to move graduation until the decision was announced. This is part of a structural problem we have at the college, where a few faculty members participate in most committees led by administration, but we have not institutionalized an expectation that they will report to the FAEC or FA. Changing that reality would require both gathering information about what committees exist and what faculty reps serve on them, and then inviting them to report to FAEC and/or FA on a regular basis.

**Decision:** Pres. Morley will get that ball rolling by asking the five faculty reps to the Board of Trustees to come to an FAEC in the next few weeks. He and Secretary Root will check as to when elections for these roles need to be held. At least two are up for election this semester.

## **6. Meeting with Provost Barnett**

### **a. New Administrative Roles and Curricular Responsibility**

Q: Is it possible for non-faculty to be hired to convene an academic program?

A: Assistant Deans are hired with the credentials of faculty, are eligible for tenure and promotion, have teaching responsibilities, and are assigned to convening groups. Labeling them “Assistant Dean” impacts their salary. We don’t have Associate Deans, who would be administrators. Assistant Deans are only being hired in cases of programs with accreditation or programs like the Honors Program. She noted that a program like Social Work may be reaching the point where an Assistant Dean might be needed because of extra burden the accreditation process places on a program. Assistant Deans are obligated to be on campus 12 months of the year. They don’t sit on Deans’ Council or

have managerial responsibility (like deans do). Rep. Weiss stated that only faculty should convene an academic program; Provost Barnett agreed. On the other hand, Assistant Deans do have curricular oversight responsibilities, because they have to ensure the program meets the requirements for accreditation. Rep. Weiss stated that it is her understanding that the convening group runs a major or minor, but Provost Barnett doubts that is a written policy. After discussion, it is clear that there is some conceptual fuzziness here as to the respective roles of Assistant Deans and conveners in determining curriculum or “running” an academic program.

### **b. Increasing Faculty Voice in Deans’ Evaluation/Reappointment**

Around the time of Provost Barnett’s arrival at Ramapo, there was consensus that deans needed to be “professionalized.” She decided then that deans would become managers, be paid at a different rate, and largely be chosen through nation-wide searches. A committee, which included faculty members, wrote the job description for deans; that job description is the basis for the survey instrument that is currently used in deans’ evaluations and reappointment. In addition to the faculty feedback from that survey, the Provost bases her decision on how much progress the dean has made toward fulfilling the Unit Plan which was submitted by that dean and integrated into the college’s Academic Plan. The Provost’s Office has also now put in place collection of data (like faculty output in terms of scholarship, how many students participate in faculty-student research, etc.) that also informs the decision. Provost Barnett noted that she receives feedback informally from faculty about how things are going in their unit, and is well aware of which units have recurring problems such as grades submitted late.

Pres. Morley went over the three ideas for increasing faculty voice in this process (see Section 3 above). Provost Barnett supports the first two ideas, noting that very few faculty participated in the last deans’ evaluation surveys. However, she objected to the third one. She stated that if faculty held a meeting to discuss the reappointment of the dean and recommend/not recommend, this would be an intrusion into the personnel process. Because deans are managers, faculty do not have the right to that kind of institutionalized role in their reappointment. There is nothing to stop faculty from meeting to discuss their dean’s evaluation and then individually taking the survey(s), but they do not get a “vote” in the process, and reporting the results of such a meeting would present problems (for ex., who would write the report? Would it be anonymous as to which faculty supported the contents of that report? etc.).

Rep. Weiss stated her opinion that faculty did not agree to this change (making deans managers and faculty losing their vote in reappointment). She also disagreed that labor law or fair personnel procedures prohibit faculty from weighing in on deans’ reappointment.

When a dean is first appointed, his or her initial contract is for a 3 year term. After that, each renewal brings a new 2 year contract. Dean Chakrin (ASB) is up for renewal now; the Board of Trustees will review his reappointment in April. All other deans are up for renewal next academic year.