

**Faculty Assembly (FA) Minutes of the Meeting**  
**March 1, 2017**  
**12:30pm – 2:00pm**  
**Pavilion Rooms 2 & 3**  
**Number of Faculty Attendees: (approximately) 102**

**1. Approval of February 1, 2017 Minutes of the Meeting.**

- a. The minutes were approved without objections.

**2. President Peter Mercer's Report.**

- a. Based on the governor's budget speech yesterday, it appears that funding for higher education will remain stable. There may be some issues with funding for fringe benefits (over 50% of salary costs are set aside for fringe benefits). The budget also appears to include some small reductions to EOF funding (although such reductions often get reinstated later). On the other hand, it appears that NJ TAG grants will increase. At the federal level, it is unclear how the proposed increases to military spending will affect higher education (e.g., reduced research grants?).
- b. Enrollment Issues.
  - i. Currently, approximately 28,000 students leave NJ (for colleges and universities in other states) each year. Most of these individuals do not return to the state. One factor is tuition. NJ's domestic tuition rates are almost as high as out-of-state tuition rates in other states.
  - ii. Bergen County Community College's enrollment is down significantly this year. This suggests a trend that may ultimately affect Ramapo.
    1. Nevertheless, President Mercer remains optimistic about Ramapo's enrollment numbers in the near term.
  - iii. President Mercer is exploring the possibility of forming an "exclusive recruiting relationship" with a local community college (similar to the type of relationship that Rowan University has with its local CCs).
- c. Audience Question: Is there any likelihood that NJ will follow the NY governor's plan for free tuition at state institutions?
  - i. Answer: President Mercer does not see any signs of that being proposed in NJ.

**2. Provost Beth Barnett's Report.**

- a. Soon, we will need to start putting together an assessment plan for the new Gen Ed. In addition, GECCo will be conducting a review of the Gen Ed revision process with a focus on "lessons learned" (i.e., what worked, and what didn't). This information will be reported back to the Faculty Assembly. As is widely known, the implementation of Gen Ed has been delayed from its original date.

- b. Audience Comment: There is a need for clear data on how many Gen Ed courses will need to be implemented.
  - i. Answer: We have some of these data.

**3. Ms. Nicole Morgan Agard, Chief Equity and Diversity Officer and Director of Employee Relations.**

- a. Ms. Morgan Agard briefed the FA on her educational and professional background and described her roles as the College's Chief Equity and Diversity Officer and Director of Employee Relations.
- b. In her officer role, Ms. Morgan Agard oversees affirmative action and Title IX compliance.
  - i. A task force is working on defining the mission of the new Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Compliance. Faculty feedback is welcomed.
  - ii. She is also taking steps to increase the diversity of qualified applicant pools.
- c. Ms. Morgan Agard understands that her dual roles may be perceived to create a conflict of interest. However, she does not believe that any such conflict will occur. Ms. Morgan Agard will recuse herself from any AA/EEO investigation involving an AFT member (these investigations will be managed by her direct reports).
- d. Question: Any thoughts on the Sanctuary Campus issue?
  - i. Answer: Ms. Morgan Agard does not take a position on the Sanctuary Campus issue. However, she feels it's always important to look at what other colleges (under the AFT agreement) are doing.
- e. Question: Is there an advertising budget for recruiting faculty candidates at academic conferences?
  - i. Answer: Ms. Morgan is not aware of such funding, but she will explore it.

**4. Voting Item: FA Endorsement of a FA Sanctuary Campus Advisory Council.**

- a. Original voting item: "The Faculty Assembly endorses an FA Sanctuary Campus Advisory Council of faculty members to serve as a resource for the campus community, particularly for students, in dealing with challenges to travel, employment, and immigration issues."
- b. There was a motion to change the wording of the endorsement to the following: "The Faculty Assembly endorses an FA Advisory Council of faculty and staff members to serve as a resource for the campus community, particularly for students, in dealing with challenges to travel, employment, and immigration issues."
  - i. The amendment to the proposed language was approved by a voice vote.
- c. The council is free to change its name. It is not the council's job to take the lead in pushing an agenda (FA will do that if there is a desire to push for "sanctuary campus" or "safe haven" status). The advisory council will

serve as a resource for students. However, its role is not to provide legal advice.

- d. The vote on the endorsement, as amended, was conducted by electronic device.
  - i. Total votes—102.
  - ii. Yes – 94%
  - iii. No – 2%
  - iv. Abstain – 4%
- e. The motion passed.

**5. Presentation by Prof. Maya Poran (SSHS—Psychology).**

- a. Introduction to Psychology was submitted to GECCo for inclusion in the Scientific Reasoning Gen Ed category. The course was rejected, and the convening group was told that only TAS courses may populate the Scientific Reasoning category.
- b. The Psychology convening group is concerned that “recommendations” included in the original Gen Ed-2 proposal are being treated as “requirements”. Using TAS courses to populate the Scientific Category was a “recommendation”.
- c. The Psychology convening group recommends that the faculty take a vote to reclaim recommendations as recommendations, and to reaffirm course inclusion in a category based on pedagogical criteria and not school affiliation.
- d. Audience Comments:
  - i. Prof. Ed Shannon pointed out that when proposals are accepted and implemented, proposal “recommendations” become “policies.”
  - ii. Several members of GECCo expressed their need to adhere to the language of the Gen Ed-2 proposal. Adherence to these “recommendations” is a way to avoid personal biases.
  - iii. The Chair of GECCo emphasized the committee’s extensive deliberations on this matter. The committee wants to follow the spirit of the Gen Ed-2 proposal.
- e. Prof. Kwak would like to credit the members of GECCo for their difficult work. He would also like to bring faculty from Psychology, GECCo, TAS, and FAEC to resolve this issue.

**6. Other Announcements.**

- a. The Mahwah Town Council will be meeting on Thursday, March 9. One of the issues discussed will be the Sanctuary Campus issue.
- b. Nominees for a FA/FAEC secretary.