

## **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**

February 1, 2012

1:00-2:30 pm, SC 137/138

Minutes prepared by FA Secretary Rebecca Root

### **1. Motion to accept the minutes for the December 7, 2011 Faculty Assembly.**

Seconded, approved.

### **2. FA President Morley's Report**

Pres. Morley announced the basic agenda for today's FA and for the faculty conference of Feb. 8 (Trustees Pavilion, 1-3pm). The latter will entail a discussion about liberal arts, led by Prof. Anthony Padovano, and then break-out sessions addressing the mission of the college and the vision that should lead the Strategic Planning Task Force.

He reported on recent FAEC activities, including a Jan 18 meeting with the President's Cabinet, at which the issue of a need for better communication between faculty and administration was addressed. Though Pres. Mercer declined the FAEC's request to allow a representative of the FAEC to attend the President's Cabinet, he agreed to meet with Pres. Morley to develop a document describing future measures to improve communication, such as periodic meeting between the FAEC and President's Cabinet. (Minutes available on the FAEC minutes webpage.) The FAEC also met last week with the faculty members of the Strategic Planning Task Force and will continue to work with them to ensure a strong faculty voice in that process.

The membership of the FAEC for Fall 2012-Spring 2014 has been determined through elections. The President of the FA and FAEC will be Jillian Weiss (SSHS). The Unit Councilors will be Murray Sabrin (ASB), Jennefer Mazza (SSAIS), Ken McMurdy (TAS), Bob Becklen (SSHS), Jonathan Lipkin (CA), and Irene Kuchta (Library). Only one candidate is standing for the Councilor at Large seat restricted to faculty who have been at Ramapo longer than 11 years: Donna Crawley (SSHS). Rep Crawley has held that seat this year, and we thank her for her continued service. The other At Large seat will be determined by a mail-in ballot election after today's meeting.

Pres. Morley continues to work with the administration on the establishment of an Academic Commons, to be located in Carriage House. Rep. Crawley has been working on the issue of online student evaluations (currently in place for online courses) and will report to FA by the end of the semester.

Questions were raised from the floor about faculty involvement in the planning process for the Academic Commons and the wisdom of making a financial commitment of that nature at this time. Pres. Morley responded that the financing would most likely come from an external source, and that the FAEC will consider the establishment of a committee to oversee the planning for the Commons and will continue to report back to the FA on this issue.

Questions were raised from the floor about communications with the administration, including President Mercer's rationale for not having a faculty member attend the meetings of the President's Cabinet. Pres. Morley responded that the FAEC did emphasize to the cabinet the need for improved communication, including periodic reports by President Mercer and Provost Barnett to the FA, followed by Q & A. A question was also raised as to whether in future only part of each FA meetings ought to be open so as to have freer discussion.

### **3. Provost Barnett's Report**

Though the college appears to have met its enrollments goals, we did not fill campus housing again, which will mean considerable lost revenue.

She congratulated Profs. Lorenz and Unger for receiving a grant to organize a Deans' Lecture Series this semester, with a topic of Election 2012. Congratulations also to Prof. Peter Campbell who has accepted the position of Director of the College Honors Program, effective July 1.

Provost Barnett referred us to the Provost's Council website for information on the Adult Learners Program. She recently attended the American Association of Colleges & Universities conference, along with AIS Dean Hassan Nejad and Vice Provost Daffron. The main topic was student civic engagement. Student engagement is also the topic of an academic retreat this week.

In January, an Academic Planning retreat was held. A report will be posted on the Provost's Office website. The Deans' Council is looking at graduate programs and will bring this to a Graduate Council to address the role of graduate program directors. A meeting of conveners to discuss the new annual review process for convening groups has been rescheduled due to a conflict with Diversity Convocation.

A question is raised from the floor regarding the billboards appearing in NJ about Ramapo's new MBA program and asking for details. Provost Barnett responded that this program was approved by ARC and by ASB in Unit Council. Prof. Constance Crawford (ASB), who serves on the relevant committee, rose to address the nature of the program. It is their hope to enroll a cohort of approx. 20 students this Fall. It will involve some online courses as well as traditional coursework and is modeled on exceptional MBA programs elsewhere. Provost Barnett directed us to see the program's webpage for details about curriculum. Projections in the business plan give the college reason to be hopeful about revenues to be generated by the program.

A concern was raised from the floor about the disruption to classes by construction noise. Provost Barnett promised to express this concern to those overseeing construction.

A question was raised from the floor about whether unused housing could be used for faculty displaced from their offices by construction. Provost Barnett will consider the possibility, but notes the empty housing units are not located together and that we do not

yet know how many of those units will be needed to house students in the Fall. Another question raised was whether the empty housing reflects student response to restrictions on cars on campus. Provost Barnett noted that a recent survey indicated that students are more concerned about financial considerations and the restrictive alcohol policy. In response to a question about whether the cost of housing might be lowered, Provost Barnett said that will be determined as part of the upcoming budget.

#### **4. ARC Report (Prof. Ed Shannon)**

He reminded us to use the ARC syllabus template with an outcomes matrix, CEC, etc. The deadline for course proposals and revisions is October 15, but please submit them as soon as they are prepared.

#### **5. Report from Jason Hecht on the new Faculty Budget Committee**

At last FA, we voted overwhelmingly to create this new committee. Jason is chair. Reads the charge based on the motion approved but refined since. Include language here. Question from the floor about whether they will have access to all the necessary data. Pres Mercer has said Maria Krupin the accounting office will make available any needed data.

#### **6. Report from the Faculty Representatives of the Strategic Planning Task Force (Prof. Steve Rice)**

The faculty representatives to the Strategic Planning Task Force are Steve Rice (SSAIS), Caroline Brisson (TAS), Ann LePore (CA), Lysandra Perez-Strumolo (SSHS), Emma Rainforth (At Large), Ruma Sen (Diversity Action Committee), Rita Shea Van Fossen (ASB), and Madel Tisi (Library). That is 8 out of 25 members, so a significant increase in the size of the faculty voice in this process over last time. The SPTF has had two meetings and will continue to meet weekly throughout the semester.

The last Strategic Plan (SP) was developed in 2007 and is available at <http://www.ramapo.edu/president/stratplan.html>

Prof. Rice noted that the previous SP lacked measurable goals. The SP guides much of the college's decision-making, program creation, and resource allocation, so it is important to make this one a meaningful reflection of how we see our institution and of our vision for the future of the college.

The Task Force seeks input from the full faculty. Part of the Feb 8 Faculty Conference will be dedicated to discussion of the college mission and the vision that should guide the new SP. To prepare for that meeting, he asked that faculty read the current mission statement of the college, as well as the previous SP and its vision statement, and come ready to discuss them. The faculty members of the SPTF will also report to and solicit feedback from the faculty again later in the semester.

Several questions were raised from the floor about whether the SPTF will examine whether the goals and priorities set in the last SP were met. Prof. Rice responded that yes, they will, though definitive answers are difficult because many of these were not stated in measurable ways. Discussion of whether the necessary data exists and is available to the SPTF. Prof. Rice suggested that anyone with knowledge of relevant data bring that to the attention of the faculty on the SPTF.

The SPTF aims to have a draft SP by early summer.

## **7. Election Statements from Candidates for Faculty Assembly Councilor At Large**

The bylaws require that the person elected to this seat have tenure upon taking up office and have been at Ramapo for fewer than 11 years.

Peggy Greene (TAS) is the current holder of this seat. She noted her experience as a former Assistant Provost and Faculty Senator at another institution. She hopes continuity on the FAEC can contribute to strong leadership.

Tae Kwak (SSAIS) promised to use common sense and critical thinking. He has been at Ramapo since 2007 and will receive tenure this year. He notes that difficult times have invigorated the faculty, for whom he promises to be an outspoken advocate.

Stephen Jablonsky (CA) has been convener of Communication Arts for several years. He has been at Ramapo since 2004 and has witnessed a lot of busy work. He would emphasize real outcomes and less fruitless discussion.

## **8. New Business**

AFT Local 2274 Pres. Irene Kuchta updated us on union issues. Local 195, which represents some employees on campus, has settled with the state and ratified a contract, but there is no real progress to report on the faculty contract. A negotiation session last Friday represented some minor steps forward, which means the state cannot declare a total impasse and impose a contract on us. Her guess would be that our contract would be similar to the one Local 195 accepted, which included COLAs of 0, 0, 1%, and 1.75% for the next four years respectively, with step increments in place.

Pres. Morley reminded us that is a vacancy for President of our AFT Local for next year, and urged us to consider standing.

In response to a question for Prof. Jason Hecht from the floor, he clarified that he will seek a member from each unit for the new Faculty Budget Committee. Those interested in serving can contact him, and he will also be reaching out to faculty with the relevant skill sets.

## **9. Close of Meeting**

## **10. Announcements**

Prof. Paula Straile-Costa of the Diversity Action Committee reminded us that the Diversity Convocation is next Wed, Feb 8 3-5:30 in Sharp Theater. The speaker is Pernessa Seele, a community activist and founder of Balm in Gilead, an NGO that addresses health in the African diaspora. At 11am that day there will be a luncheon for students who participated in the paper competition, who will present. Student competition will have a luncheon at 11am that day at which students will present. One Feb 29 there will also be an event on dealing with sensitive subjects in the classroom.

Prof. Leah Warner (SSHS) reminded us that DAC's campus climate survey begins Monday with an emailed 20 minute survey. DAC hired an outside organization to collect and analyze the data and will hold townhall style meetings on the findings. See DAC website for FAQs. She noted that these surveys can have real results; the 2005 survey led to increases in the DAC budget, the creation of the Ombudsman position, establishment of the Diversity Convocation, etc.

Prof. Shea Van Fossen (ASB) announced that March 7, Mark Bauer will speak about insider trading at 1pm in the Trustees Pavilion.