

Meeting between the Faculty Assembly Executive Council and the President's Cabinet

January 18, 2012

York Room

Minutes prepared by FA Secretary Rebecca Root

Present: Peter Mercer, Beth Barnett, Cathy Davey, Dorothy Echols Tobe, Miki Cammarata, Maria Krupin, George Tabback, Chris Romano, Patricia Kozakiewicz, Brittany Williams-Goldstein, Jim Morley, Elaine Risch, Donna Crawley, Max Goldberg, Peggy Greene, Jillian Weiss, Sam Mustafa, Alex Olbrecht, Beba Shamash, Rebecca Root

I. President Mercer's Report

President Mercer discussed the Public/Private Partnership legislation in NJ. He is hopeful that the legislation may be reintroduced, but for now it extends through the next 18 months. An example of the fruits of such a partnership would be the new roof with photovoltaic panels that will soon be introduced on campus, which bring tax benefits as well. Pres. Mercer is considering other possible Public/Private Partnerships to benefit the campus, such as a co-generation plant to offer a cheaper source of energy on campus, or housing units for new faculty. This latter would provide a possible solution for new faculty who face the new NJ residency requirement and the high cost of living in this area. These projects are in the conceptual phase.

II. FA President Morley's Report

The FAEC wishes to improve communication between the administration and faculty. Last semester, faculty sometimes felt blindsided by policies or decisions announced in ways that appeared to be *fait accomplis*, without faculty input in advance. The Middle States Report also pointed to a need for better communication. The FAEC suggests that two ways to improve that communication might be allowing the FAEC to send a representative to participate in meeting of the President's Cabinet, and requesting that the President's Cabinet notify the FAEC of decisions that impact faculty.

III. Discussion

After some discussion, Pres. Mercer suggested that, rather than having an FAEC representative at all President's Cabinet meetings in their entirety, it would be more appropriate to either have periodic meetings between the FAEC and President's Cabinet, have a representative from the FAEC attend some part of the meetings of the President's Cabinet, or both. (Sensitive topics are discussed at the President's Cabinet meetings, so inclusion of a faculty member in all those discussions would not be appropriate.)

There was also consensus that frequent meetings between President Mercer, Provost Barnett and the FAEC are helpful. The structure – sometimes problematic – of faculty governance was discussed, as was the possibility of a Constituent Assembly. However, it

was agreed that we must all work to make the current structures function better. The FAEC is taking several steps to that end, including meeting with the faculty representatives to the Strategic Planning Committee, planning one or more sessions to discuss the budget, and empowering a new Budget Committee.

Members of the President's Cabinet provided examples of their extensive efforts to include faculty in relevant committees and campaigns. Sometimes faculty have not been eager to attend such meetings or events. Also, the standard procedure when they need faculty input is to contact the deans; the deans then suggest a faculty member, who participates, but often does not convey to colleagues what they are doing in conjunction with administrative offices. The result is sometimes that faculty do not feel consulted, even though the administration has included faculty participants.

Provost Barnett notes the extensive communication that occurs between herself and the Provost's Council and Deans' Council, for which minutes are posted on the Ramapo website. She has sometimes found that after communicating an issue to the Deans' Council it is not conveyed to faculty due to a lack of time during Unit Council meetings. Several members of the FAEC agreed that lack of meeting time was a problem for good communication.

Pres. Morley suggested that more direct communication between the administration and the FAEC would allow it to in turn alert the broader faculty of developments. Pres. Mercer and Provost Barnett both expressed their wish to address the FA periodically as a further measure to improve communication.

Pres. Mercer closed the meeting by proposing that he and President Morley meet to draft an action document detailing next steps.