

Faculty Assembly Executive Council Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2015

ASB: 007-008

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Emma Rainforth, Rebecca Root, Renata Gangemi, Bonnie Blake, Ken McMurdy, Susan Kurzmann, Eva Ogens, Roark Atkinson, Susan Eisner

Excused Absences: None

Secretary: Mark Skowronski

Guests: Beth Barnett

1. Approval of FAEC & FA minutes from September 30, 2015
 - a. Approved.
 - b. The Council decided that the minutes of last week's Faculty Assembly and the notes regarding the topics of the Faculty Forum would be maintained as separate documents.

2. FA President Emma Rainforth's Report
 - a. The Board of Trustees has announced that the Greenhouse will be renamed after a former Ramapo professor, Dr. Joseph Dallon. There was a discussion about the process of dedicating/naming campus buildings.
 - i. Several members inquired what the criteria for such naming is. For example, is naming reserved for occasions when financial contribution has occurred? Also, the meaning of "significant contributions" warrants clarification.
 - ii. A second query that several members raised was about the process of dedicating/naming buildings, and specifically when the naming is of a former faculty member. A suggestion was made that faculty input be received by the Board as part of that process to help inform its decision.
 - b. Prof. Rainforth discussed the new application, installed on classroom computers, to alert faculty and students to campus emergencies. There was a question about the appropriate procedure for notifying students when an alert message is broadcast. Several members of the FAEC recommend that the college conduct a "shoot drill" as part of its emergency preparedness plan.
 - c. Prof. Rainforth led a discussion about release time for conveners—an issue that was raised by faculty in last week's Faculty Assembly. There are concerns that changes in the general education requirements may require coordinators, which might warrant release time as well. Several members expressed concerns about inequities in the availability of release time among the units as well as conveners'

access to summer stipends. One member suggested a task force be created to formulate a policy to address such issues. It was also suggested that FAEC share with each other how this is done in each school, as there appears to be several different models in place now.

3. Provost Beth Barnett's Report (10:20 AM – 11:18 AM)

- a. The Provost had no specific announcements for FAEC. However, she did note that, as discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting on October 5, Middle States is discussing changes to its accreditation procedures. Although the details are unknown at this time, more frequent reports and reaccreditation visits are likely in the future. The Provost may have more information about this matter in December after the annual MSCHE meeting.
- b. The Provost was asked about the Greenhouse naming/dedication concerns (described above). She indicated that she did not know of it prior to the decision being announced on Monday. Several members expressed their concern about a lack of communication surrounding the decision and the effects of such acts on shared governance. The Provost agreed that the decision could have been communicated more effectively.
- c. The Provost discussed concerns regarding Conveners' release time (described above). She reminded the Council that such issues are largely determined through negotiation with AFT, albeit after discussion through the FA. The collapsing of Convening groups might free up resources for release time. However, "compensated" conveners may have additional responsibilities. In response to a member's question, the Provost indicated that each Dean has approximately two reassigned times that he/she may use at his/her discretion. The Provost also raised the question of how department chairs (as exist in other institutions) are distinguished from compensated conveners.
- d. Based on comments made at last week's Faculty Assembly, and also by a faculty member at this week's Board of Trustees meeting, the FAEC expressed concerns about the condition of the George T. Potter library and asked the Provost about plans for renovations. The Provost does not know of any current plans beyond the long-term Campus Master Plan. However, she agrees that the library is not a "healthy building". She also acknowledges that students consider the quality of campus libraries when selecting colleges, and that our library is not aligned with those students may be finding elsewhere (which have become more contemporary "teaching and learning centers" for the campus). She recommends that if the faculty feel this is one of its priorities, it gather data to make the case to administration that library renovation funding be a priority.

- i. The Provost believes that the “business side” of the college needs to understand the impact that libraries have on the lives of students and what contemporary libraries truly provide for this to become a priority.
 - ii. Educating donors about the value of a renovated library might rely on the following points (as suggested by the Provost and several FAEC members): Libraries are increasingly becoming “Teaching and Learning Centers”, offering students a variety of educational services. A renovated library may provide students with a social outlet that helps to address other college problems. Even the facade of the library’s physical structure and entrance can affect student use.
 - iii. Several members of the FAEC suggested that a working group be formed to conduct a needs assessment (re: library renovations).
 - iv. A member expressed concern that the current condition of the library prevents the library from expanding archives. Such limitations may affect scholarship.
 - v. Several members noticed that campus tours (e.g., on admitted student days) often skip the library.
- e. The Provost and the FAEC discussed hypothetical changes to graduate and undergraduate programs over the next five years. Specifically, a member addressed changes that are occurring in some states to provide a free community college degree. The Provost responded that should such changes be implemented in NJ, they would be problematic for liberal arts institutions like Ramapo. For accreditation purposes, it is important for liberal arts colleges to offer the first two years of an undergraduate program.
- f. The Provost was asked about a possible expansion of graduate programs at Ramapo. She believes that the college is most likely to be successful with career-oriented graduate programs (e.g., social work’s MSW and business’ MBA). Graduate programs at Ramapo though must be consistent with the institution’s liberal arts mission.
 - i. A member asked the Provost about the possibility of a five year BA-MAT Teacher Education program. The Provost responded that previous inquiries (a few years ago) suggested a lack of interest by the education faculty, but if the TE program wishes to explore this, they should do so. She indicated that a MAT would be a more appropriate degree than a MED for an institution like Ramapo.
- g. A member of the FAEC’s Shared Governance subcommittee informed the Provost that the group is constructing a “constitutional” document to outline the meaning and scope of shared governance at Ramapo. The Provost responded that the document should respect managerial purview as negotiated by the AFT.

Members of the FAEC reiterated the importance of faculty consultation by the administration. The Provost agreed but suggested that trust needs to be reestablished on both sides. She stated her belief that the administration has been “burned” in the past.

4. Reflections on the Provost’s Comments
 - a. The FAEC discussed the “breach of trust” mentioned by the Provost. Members of the committee were unclear about the specific incidents to which this comment refers. Clarification is required, as restoration of trust is foundational to shared governance, and understanding perspectives is the starting point for restoration.
 - b. Several members asked who the current members of the President’s Cabinet are. A list will be requested.
5. Follow-up on Prof. Rainforth’s Meeting with President Mercer
 - a. Prof. Rainforth asked Present Mercer to provide TAS-program data from the President’s Financial Sustainability Task Force report from Fall 2013.
 - b. Concerns about the Krame Center’s usage of 4th floor ASB classroom space were conveyed to the President.
 - c. President Mercer was asked about alert beacons etc. (a high priority for FAEC). He indicated these upgrades were a high priority.
 - d. Prof. Rainforth communicated the need for faculty-at-large to provide external consultants with input (re: structural deficit investigations). Pres. Mercer indicated he would communicate this to Cabinet.
6. Faculty Assembly and Adjunct Faculty
 - a. The FAEC discussed the role of adjuncts in the FA and, as the bylaws state that full-time faculty are voting members of FA, concluded that the status quo should be maintained. Prof. Rainforth reminded the committee that limitations of Luminis currently mean that email announcements from her go either to only f/t faculty, or a larger pool including all f/t, p/t & adjunct faculty, a fair number of administrators and their assistants (over 1000 email addresses). She is working with ITS to define a group for just the FA.
7. Updates from Unit Councils
 - a. In order to free up meeting time, the FAEC is exploring a reduction in the number of convening group meeting time slots on the master schedule (from 3 to 2). To facilitate this investigation, Prof. Rainforth asked FAEC representatives to ask faculty members to identify the disciplinary and interdisciplinary convening group meetings that they attend. A survey was created for this purpose and shared with members of the committee.
8. Provost’s Council

- a. Currently, ASB and TAS have faculty on the Provost's Council (ARC chair and FA President). Two additional at-large faculty members are needed. The FAEC would like these two members to be from SSHGS, CA, and/or SSHS.
9. FA Parliamentarian
- a. The FAEC continues to seek nominations for the FA Parliamentarian role. There were no nominations or volunteers at today's meeting.
10. Talking Points for Today's Unit Council
- a. International Committee reps will be attending some Unit Council meetings (some occurred last week).
 - b. CA needs a GECCO rep.
 - c. FAEC is working on:
 - i. Issues of release time for conveners.
 - ii. Concerns about the current state of the library.
 - iii. Clarifying shared governance.
11. Closing
- a. A member reminded the committee about the Dean's Survey.