

Faculty Assembly Executive Council Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2015

ASB-230

915-1100 AM

Present: Emma Rainforth, Rebecca Root, Susan Kurzmann, Bonnie Blake, Susan Eisner, Ken McMurdy, and Kim Lorber

Absent: Jonathan Lipkin, Tae Kwak

Secretary: Dean Chen

Guests: President Peter Mercer, Provost Beth Barnett

1. Approval of FAEC minutes from 2/25
 - a. Approved
2. Approval of FA minutes from 2/18
 - a. Approved
3. Discussed an incident told to FA President in which a Dean is reportedly appointing conveners. FAEC queried whether this constitutes a violation of the conveners' appointment/reappointment procedures (on the Provost's website) as described:
 - a. The convener serves for annual renewable terms. Additional terms are possible upon consultation with the convening group and approval by the Dean. S/he is chosen by the members of the convening group from among the full-time faculty and is approved by the Dean of the School. In the event that the Dean does not accept the recommendation for Convener, s/he will provide the convening group and the Provost with an explanation of the decision.
 - b. FAEC and AFT need to follow up on this issue.
 - c. FAEC queried whether selection process by Convening Groups, and clarification regarding term limits, should be clearer in the written procedures.
4. Email from Melissa Van Der Wall to President Rainforth
 - a. Discussed an email sent from Melissa regarding her recent meeting with a student about campus climate, diversity, and micro-aggressions in the classroom environment.
 - b. The student suggested a training module for faculty. She has suggested the First Year Seminar and Social Issues faculty as those to initially target for this training.
 - c. Melissa was advised by President Rainforth that the Diversity Action Committee (DAC) and Faculty Resource Center (FRC) should look into this issue.
 - d. The FAEC also refers Ms Van Der Wall to the Academic Affairs Procedure (approved by Provost's Council) on "appeals of an academic nature".

Additionally, FAEC discussed the importance of Administrators gathering full circle of information from other involved parties to assure they are fully informed about circumstances for which recommendations and decisions are being made (e.g. in this case, who/what is the reported (i.e. students, faculty, staff, social media, outside incidents) source of the situation reported, has that person or others in that environment been talked with) as whatever remedy is recommended should be tailored accurately to the source. Finally, the nature of the “training” recommended isn’t clear.

5. FAEC discussed comments received from faculty and the Provost with respect to the TFAEE draft report
 - a. TFAEE strives to have the finalized report ready by this coming weekend if not sooner so that faculty would have time to read through it before voting at the FA meeting on 3/11.
 - b. FAEC reaffirmed that the report will be put to vote at FA on 3/11.

6. Meeting with President Mercer and Provost Barnett
 - a. Provost Barnett and FAEC discussed about snow day campus closings and that faculty and students should still meet through some type of online or hybrid forums (i.e., moodle). Essentially, missed sessions should be made up. The Provost commented that this is a conversation that should involve the administration, the Deans, faculty, and students (SGA).
 - b. The President emphasized the administration’s commitment to the safety for all in the College, but there are many considerations to think about when making decisions regarding campus closing on snow days. He speaks with Public Safety after weather reports and closing plans of other relevant schools have been consulted, and then decides. There is no number of snow days that he regards as a “cap” for closure; safety is the priority in the decision.
 - c. The President and Provost expressed concerns about public safety issues and corrosion of campus climate (in light of recent sexual assault, alcohol incidents, and negative media reporting).
 - d. The President suggested that the type of discourse and mode of communications among faculty, administration, and students are sometimes very hostile and unfriendly, contributing to misunderstanding and alienation. He also queried the optimal venues through which to communicate, having used several including The Ramapo News and State of the College Address and finding relatively low student usage. The President and Provost noted that it is essential for us to improve the campus climate and strengthen our community.

- e. The President stated that, over the summer, the Atrium Dining area in the Student Center will be under renovation. The Birch Tree Inn will be renovated at a later date. This was approved by the Board last week.
 - f. FAEC and the Provost revisited the class scheduling issue for the Fall 2015 Interim schedule, discussing, in particular, the rationale and merits behind having the two 10-min breaks on Tuesdays and Fridays and how that would satisfy the Carnegie credit hours requirement.
 - g. Discussed classroom utilization.
 - h. One set of trailer classrooms will remain for the Fall semester.
7. FA agenda
- a. TFAEE vote (up-or-down vote)
 - i. President Rainforth noted that some faculty would not be present at FA but expressed their wish to vote for the report. FAEC discussed and explored whether it is possible to accommodate their absences through some types of mailed-in or online ballots. The Parliamentarian will see if there are constraints in Roberts Rules.
 - b. Gen Ed Task Force report