

## **Faculty Assembly Executive Council (FAEC) Meeting Minutes**

**December 2, 2015**

**ASB: 007-008**

**9:45 AM to 12:00 PM**

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

**No Absences**

**Secretary:** Mark Skowronski

**Guests:** Prof. Thierry Rakotobe-Joel, President Peter Mercer, Provost Beth Barnett

- 1) Approval of FAEC minutes from November 18, 2015.
  - a. Approved.
  
- 2) ARC Report: Prof. Thierry Rakotobe-Joel
  - a. This semester, the ARC committee has received 87 requests (6 new programs, 32 new courses, 39 course revisions). FA voting on program proposals will occur in the spring. One of the new program proposals would require, for accreditation purposes, "graduate faculty" (i.e., faculty who teach at least half of their courses at the graduate level). The ARC committee has concerns about this proposal as current college policy requires two thirds of a faculty's course load be at the undergraduate level. ARC is also discussing possible revisions to the college's RF policy, and ARC intends to send a proposal to the Provost by Dec. 18. This may result in the creation of two policies, one dealing with repeating course and the other with the removal of F grades.
  - b. There is currently a backlog for approving writing intensive (WI) courses. ARC is hoping to review WI course proposal before the holidays. Next year, WAC may have to change its deadlines or meeting schedule in order to be in alignment with ARC's deadline.
  
- 3) Shared Governance Subcommittee Report
  - a. The subcommittee met with the Provost earlier in the week. The Provost would like a discussion about closing programs. Several FAEC members feel that ARC should have a say in the closing of programs that is similar to its role in approving programs. Faculty is primarily responsible for determining the academic value of a particular program. Perhaps the administration (working with faculty leadership) can develop clear criteria that are given to ARC for these purposes.
  
- 4) FA President Emma Rainforth's Report

- a. The FA will vote on the Gen Ed Task Force's proposal today. Can students members of the Gen Ed TF attend today's FA? The consensus of the FAEC is that students can attend the vote. However, they cannot stay for the remainder of the FA meeting. Prof. Rainforth will announce this to FA at the beginning of the meeting and, if there are any objections, call for a vote on making this allowance for students.
- b. Discussion of what to do if there is a motion to table the vote on the Gen Ed proposal.
- c. Discussion on next steps if the Gen Ed proposal is rejected; how/when to get their goals/outcomes approved.
- d. The FAEC will announce to the FA its recommendation to accept the proposed Gen Ed revisions. As individual members of the FAEC (although not necessarily as representatives of units), there is unanimous support for the proposal and the work of the Gen Ed Task Force. The Parliamentarian will remind the FA about the rules of order for discussion.
- e. Prof. Rainforth met with the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. He indicated that he is pleased with the increased levels of student engagement that he is observing. He also communicated the following:
  - i. The college's Code of Conduct has not changed; however, enforcement of the code has increased.
  - ii. Student drinking on Tuesday nights appears to be decreasing.
  - iii. Further implementation of Title 9 changes will be forthcoming and some portions of the plan may not meet the deadline set for January.
  - iv. A faculty survey on academic advising is being prepared.
  - v. The college is on track for meeting its targets re: the retention and recruitment of specific underserved populations.
  - vi. The redesign of the Ramapo website will continue with a new phase of implementation.
- f. Provost Barnett requests some clarification of the FAEC's minutes - Oct. 21.
- g. The search for a new EOF Director is concluding.

5) Guests: President Mercer and Provost Barnett

- a. President Mercer began by reporting that Middle States has positively responded to our re-accreditation, with no sanctions to be applied. Provost Barnett said this was the first time in 20 years to have earned that response.
- b. Provost Barnett clarified that the new Gen Ed Implementation TF will need to go forward in the Spring semester, to meet the overall implementation timeframe. If the revisions to the Gen Ed program are voted down at today's FA, implementation will likely consist of applying the new Gen Ed goals and objectives to the existing Gen Ed structure. Failure to begin implementation

- this spring will make it difficult to have sufficient data for assessment in 2017 (increasing the risk of a Middle States monitoring report). Both President Mercer and Provost Barnett will try to remain at FA for the Gen Ed discussions and vote.
- c. President Mercer was asked about his thoughts on issues of race and diversity (as the FAEC has discussed in prior meetings) as well as the impetus for today's town hall. He indicated that the decision to hold a college-wide meeting on the topic was based on his personal feeling that we need a public discussion and debate, and that this issue is receiving attention at colleges nationwide. President Mercer intends to make such discussions regular events at Ramapo, perhaps holding two or three each semester.
  - d. President Mercer and Provost Barnett shared their thoughts about "safe spaces" and "trigger warnings", which the FAEC has been discussing. President Mercer emphasized the need to respect the sensitivities of individuals while still being able to discuss controversial issues. He acknowledges that these are issues that are on the minds of faculty. Provost Barnett expressed her concern with the concept of trigger warnings, as the mission of higher education is (in part) to take students out of their comfort zones by discussing controversial issues. Students also need help understanding that being offended, like most psychological states, occurs on a continuum. There are different levels of offense that require different reactions. Having one's feelings hurt during the discussion of a sensitive topic is not the same as bullying.
  - e. A FAEC member expressed concerns that faculty have about discussions of controversial topics, particularly those concerning issues of diversity. As discussed in prior FAEC meetings, some faculty members are concerned about whether the college will "have their backs" in such instances. The President and Provost were also informed that the FAEC is exploring possible training opportunities for faculty and students, such as the micro-aggression presentations made last year by the DAC committee.
  - f. The President and Provost were informed about concerns by some members of the campus that last week's march by the BSU caught many off guard (due to a lack of advance notice). President Mercer stated that he did not receive advance notice of that event.
  - g. Provost Barnett expressed her pleasure with the conversation that she had earlier in the week with the Shared Governance Subcommittee.