

University Faculty Senate
Wednesday, November 8, 2017
Rachel's Amphitheater, Dental School, Boston

The University Faculty Senate met from 8:00-9:30 am on Wednesday, November 8, 2017. Present at Rachel's Amphitheater on the Boston campus were Senate President Jeswald Salacuse, Senators Boris Bacanurschi, John Castellot, Brent Cochran, Roger Galburt, Andrew Hoffman, Will Masters, Nirupa Mathan, Roman Schumann, Lee Sillin, Chris Swan, Henry Wortis, and Provost Office Coordinator Lisa Bloom. Present via WebEx from Medford and Grafton were Senators Fulton Gonzalez, Eulogio Guzman, Jeffrey Hopwood, Robert Jacob, Anne Mahoney, Ali Muftu, Lynne Pepall, Pearl Robinson, Roger Tobin, Larry Weiss, Norbert Wilson, Melissa Mazan, Provost David Harris, and Vice Provost Kevin Dunn.

President Jeswald Salacuse called the meeting to order. First on the agenda was the approval of the meeting minutes from October 11. Following a motion and a second, the Senate unanimously

VOTED: To accept the minutes from the October 11, 2017 meeting of the University Faculty Senate.

The second item for consideration was the resolution distributed to the Senate before the meeting regarding the effect of Senate committee determinations. Following a motion and a second, the Senate unanimously

VOTED: To accept the following motion as follows:
Unless specifically otherwise authorized by vote of the Senate, all reports and determinations made by standing or ad hoc committees of the Tufts University Faculty Senate are in the nature of recommendations to the Senate and are not in themselves decisions of the Senate. For any such committee recommendation or determination to become a decision of the Senate it must be ratified or approved by appropriate vote of the Senate.

Next, Andrew Hoffman presented a report from the ad hoc committee assembled to examine the new retirement health benefits package adopted by the university (see report appended). He first thanked the members of the committee for their service. During the course of their work, the committee opened a dialog with VP of Human Resources Julien Carter, and he was open and responsive to the group's questions and concerns. There is an informational power point presentation available through HR, which Jes Salacuse agreed to distribute to Senate members. Andy Hoffman gave an overview of the plan, explaining that the goal of the new plan is to create savings in premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for most retirees. He noted that the next time a decision of this magnitude is made, the Senate will be involved. Discussion about the report raised a concern that the new plan needs to be carefully explained to constituents so that they can be aware of any supplemental coverage needs created by the change. While upper administration should be primarily responsible for information distribution, the Senate can assist in bridging the gap to faculty. The consensus was that the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee should meet with HR and administration on a permanent and regular basis to have a voice in future decisions, and that administration should be responsible for reaching out to the Senate for input on such matters. Additional discussion focused on dissemination of the report to the university community, noting that there should be some edits to the document to make it clear that it comes from the Senate and not HR. It was suggested that the Faculty Affairs Committee should make a study of the benefits being offered and how they are being used. Jes Salacuse then thanked Andy Hoffman and the other members of the ad hoc benefits committee. With a motion and a second, the Senate unanimously

VOTED: To accept the report of the ad hoc Retirement Benefits Committee pending revisions.

Melissa Mazan followed with a presentation of a report from the standing committee on Educational Affairs regarding the creation of new programs. The committee has examined a proposal for a new masters program in sustainable water

management at the Tufts Institute of the Environment (TIE), but doesn't feel that the EAP does not have sufficient expertise to make a recommendation beyond the group's overall enthusiasm for the proposal. They feel that it would be an appropriate undertaking for a re-invented College of Special Studies, but Senate members expressed concern about creating a partnership between TIE and CSS when there is not yet a clearly defined mission for the College. It was also noted that A&S faculty feel they have not been adequately consulted about the new program, and they passed a resolution that it not be brought to the Trustees for a vote until they have had the opportunity to approve it. Jes Salacuse expressed the Senate's thanks to Melissa and the Educational Affairs and Policy committee.

Moving forward with the issue of new program approval, discussion focused on the need for active faculty oversight of any new program. It was suggested that in this case, perhaps two or three schools could take on sponsorship of the new masters program in SWM through their own approval processes, then transition it to a future College of Special Studies. For future programs, a more official process needs to be developed. After motions and seconds, the Senate

VOTED: To allow two or three schools to develop the Masters Degree in Sustainable Water Management (SWM) via their own internal approvals process, then others may come on board in future years; meanwhile, an official interdisciplinary program approval process will be developed and implemented.

VOTED: To charge the Educational Affairs and Policy standing committee to create and propose a process for development and management of inter-school/interdisciplinary programs.

Before the close of the meeting, David Harris took a moment to express his appreciation for the Senate's work and process to date. Other agenda items to be deferred to the next meeting include reports from other standing committees, consideration of the process for determining Senate priorities, and creation of a University ombudsperson.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Mazan
Secretary of the Faculty Senate