**University Faculty Senate**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**January 10, 2018**

The University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, January 10, 2018 in Cabot 702, Medford campus, with remote access locations in Boston and Grafton. Present were Senators Boris Bacanurschi, John Castellot, Ginny Chomitz, Brent Cochran, Janet Forrester, Roger Galburt, Eulogio Guzman, Andrew Hoffman, Jeff Hopwood, Rob Jacob, Anne Mahoney, Will Masters, Nirupa Matthan, Melissa Mazan, Mitch McVey, Ali Muftu, Pearl Robinson, Jes Salacuse, Roman Schumann, Lee Sillin, Chris Swan, Roger Tobin, Larry Weiss, Norbert Wilson, and Henry Wortis. Present from Administration was Provost David Harris, Vice Provost Kevin Dunn and Program Administrator Melissa Stevenson.

Senators Gillian Beamer, Fulton Gonzalez, Vida Johnson, and Lynne Pepall were unable to attend the meeting.

President Jes Salacuse welcomed the senators to the meeting.

A suggested correction to the previous meeting minutes of December 13, 2017 was made. Chris Swan should be replaced as the person who gives reports on faculty senate activity to the School of Engineering, not Jeff Hopwood.

The senators engaged in a discussion about the level of formality with which the minutes should be recorded since they will be entered into the record of the university. It was agreed that slang or informal language should not be recorded into the minutes, and senators discussed whether or not formal names and titles should be used throughout the minutes. The minutes will serve as one of the primary ways that the university community will gain an understanding of the senate’s activities since they will be posted to the faculty senate website. The minutes are not only a part of the university’s historical record but a way to communicate with the university community. There was discussion about transparency and the need for accountability by attributing comments to the senators who made them versus a concern that people feel free to speak candidly and confidentially in meetings, noting that the senate could always move into executive session for such discussions. Robert’s Rules of Order are used as a guide for meetings and state that names should not be listed, only when a committee report is given, however, the faculty senate is not necessarily governed by Robert’s rules. After discussion, it was suggested that comments on how the minutes should be recorded can be sent to the secretary of the university senate, Melissa Mazan.

The standing committees then gave reports on the work they are currently undertaking.

John Castellot reported for the Committee on Nominations. He noted the need for the senate website language to be changed as it relates to the power of the committee on nominations to make appointments. Rather, the committee on nominations makes recommendations to the senate and is not “empowered” to nominate as the language on the website suggests. John Castellot also gave a recap of the conversation the executive committee had regarding nominations for faculty on the provost’s Bridging Differences committee. Melissa Mazan has asked to be replaced due to scheduling issues and the committee on nominations is requesting to nominate three faculty replacements to David Harris, since faculty representation on the committee is low, particularly in the health sciences. David Harris said that he is willing to consider two to three additional faculty recommendations to join the committee. The committee will approach the faculty they would like to nominate to see if they are interested before referring the names to David Harris. The committee has also discussed how to populate the Board of Trustees committees with the faculty seats that are available. Currently, the Arts, Sciences & Engineering (AS&E) Executive committee makes their own nominations and sends them directly to the trustees office. There is an imbalance of Arts, Sciences & Engineering faculty on these committees compared to representation from other schools.

The senate then moved to ask the Board of Trustees to increase the number of faculty seats on each trustee committee to three. One seat would be held by a faculty member from either the School of Arts & Sciences or the School of Engineering, and two seats would be filled by faculty from other schools. Of the non-ASE faculty members, each would be from a different school. These positions will be nominated, with the proviso that the nominations would be made in consultation with the appropriate bodies of each school.

VOTED: To request that the number of faculty representatives sitting on each trustee committee increase to three, comprising one faculty member from the School of Arts & Sciences or the School of Engineering and two faculty from other schools within the university. All nominations to trustees committees will be put forth by the senate after consultation with the appropriate bodies of each of the schools.

Additionally, the recommendation is that the AS&E executive committee continues to make their own nominations to trustee committees but that they are forwarded to the senate instead of directly to the Trustees Office. The senate will nominate the additional six faculty members from the six other schools. David Harris agreed to have this conversation with President Monaco and Peter Dolan, the Chairman of the Board, and will report back at the next meeting.

Chris Swan reported on behalf of the Committee on Faculty Affairs, which meets twice a month. He thanked the committee for their work. The committee is currently working on a proposal to regarding an ombudsperson and ombuds office at the university. They recognize that the role of the ombudsperson is to act as a facilitator in resolving conflicts with faculty and students. The ombudsperson would not be a representative of the institution nor would they be seen as an advocate for faculty. The stakeholders the committee is considering are faculty and graduate students. The ombudsperson would ideally work proactively to resolve issues and would prioritize the agenda, reporting back to the senate, not the administration. The report that the committee is preparing will describe the characteristics of the person they are looking to hire, the level of university support they are requesting, and a structure for how they will work with other offices on campuses such as Human Resources and the Office of Equal Opportunity. In an effort to assist them in formulating a university-wide policy to bring back to the full senate, the committee will be inviting guests who interact with a formal grievance process at the university to their next two meetings.

Larry Weiss reported on behalf of the Committee on Budget Planning and Development. The committee will meet later today to set up their future meeting schedule. Their goal is to set a meeting with the chief financial officer of the university and the budget directors in order to get started on their work.

Nirupa Matthan reported on behalf of the Committee on Research and Scholarship. The committee continues to focus on the same agenda items that were reported out at the last senate meeting. They are reviewing the data from the survey they sent out regarding the quality of quality of sponsored programs support. There were three to four schools that reported a great dissatisfaction with sponsored programs support and the committee will be discussing this with Vice Provost of Research Simin Meydani in order to mine the additional data her office has regarding the research infrastructure and the research priorities at the university. The committee will report back after their meeting with Simin Meydani.

Melissa Mazan reported on the work of the Educational Affairs and Policy committee, who met yesterday. The committee comprises senators Janet Forrester, Eulogio Guzman, Pearl Robinson, Melissa Mazan and Henry Wortis. Additionally, Mary Davis from the School of Arts & Sciences and Sergio Fantini from the School of Engineering have been invited to join the committee and they are looking into inviting several other faculty members for broader representation. The main topic the committee is currently considering is the College of Special Studies. Kevin Dunn joined the committee’s first meeting to give some background on what the university discussions have been thus far. The committee engaged in a discussion on what the structure of a university college might look like. While past discussions have focused on ways that this structure could house interdisciplinary programs, the committee also discussed the possibility of it being able to house university-wide initiatives and programs like summer school and certificates that don’t necessarily fit into one school. Discussion also focused on ways that the College could be a place to help facilitate income-generating ideas for the university. The committee plans to come forward with a recommendation in time for the May trustee meeting, after bringing it first to the senate for discussion. They will meet two weeks each month to discuss a proposal that would include a structure, what type of programs would be housed here, where should revenue go, and who would administer it.

The senate then moved into a discussion regarding an attendance policy for the senate. A motion was put forward and based on the comments that senators made regarding the language, there is now a new resolution on the agenda. The proposed resolution would not take effect until the next academic year so that newly elected senators know what their commitments are prior to running for office. The resolution reads as follows:

**Resolution on Senate Attendance**

Resolved: All Senate members elected by schools have an obligation to attend all Senate meetings. Senate members unable to attend a meeting shall inform the Secretary of the Senate of that fact as soon as it is known with an explanation of their failure to attend. In cases in which a Senate member is unable to attend a regularly scheduled Senate meeting, a proxy, delegate or agent of that member shall not be permitted to attend in that member’s stead. If a Senate member fails to attend two regularly scheduled meeting in any academic year, the Executive Committee will consider the matter, taking into account the member’s stated reasons for failing to attend, and will decide upon appropriate action pursuant to Article 6, paragraph 2, of the Faculty Senate Bylaws. This resolution on Senate attendance obligations will take effect as of the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Some senators felt that this policy would discourage senior faculty with international reputations from wanting to serve if there are strict attendance limitations. Discussion focused on having the technological infrastructure at the university to handle having senators call in from other countries and time zones. Several senators suggested that the executive committee again revise the resolution to sound less punitive and that the language might focus more on the quality of a member’s participation on the senate as opposed to the number of meetings the member attends. Edits to the language were suggested at the meeting and senators were also encouraged to send additional feedback to President Salacuse. Ultimately, each school is responsible for making decisions as to who represents them, and can decide how to handle attendance issues in their own way, so long as the senate has a mechanism for communicating lack of participation or repeated absences to the appropriate bodies at each of the schools. It was agreed again that proxies would not be allowed to attend in place of elected senators. The senate bylaws dictate that the executive committee has the obligation to notify schools of unexcused absences. This resolution attempts to give some guidance on how to carry out the bylaws and to make more public the provision of the bylaw. It was agreed again that proxies would not be allowed to attend in place of elected senators.

The senate moved to table the motion so that the executive committee can revise it and bring it back to the senate for further discussion and vote.

In advance of revising the resolution, the senate deliberated on two policy issues, the decision to allow proxies for absent senators and the policy that a certain number of absences triggers a formal process. No motion was put forward to change the decision to allow proxies at meetings. There was a general consensus that senators who know in advance that they will be absent from a meeting should report that absence to the secretary of the senate. There was also a suggestion that two consecutive absences should trigger a notification to the senator’s school and that the school can decide how to handle the absences. According to the bylaws, the senate has a responsibility to notify the school, but not every school has a faculty body that would address such matters.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

 Respectfully submitted,

 Melissa Mazan

 Secretary of the Faculty