**University Faculty Senate**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**February 14, 2018**

The University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 in Sackler 802, Boston campus, with remote access locations in Medford and Grafton. Present were Senators Boris Bacanurschi, Gillian Beamer, John Castellot, Ginny Chomitz, Antonia Chayes, Brent Cochran, Janet Forrester, Roger Galburt, Fulton Gonzalez, Eulogio Guzman, Andrew Hoffman, Jeff Hopwood, Rob Jacob, Vida Johnson, Anne Mahoney, Will Masters, Nirupa Matthan, Melissa Mazan, Mitch McVey, Ali Muftu, Lynne Pepall, 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.

President Jes Salacuse welcomed the senators to the meeting. The committee voted to accept the meeting minutes of the January 10, 2018 Faculty Senate meeting.

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

John Castellot reported for the committee on nominations. The committee is wrapping up the issue of whether three people will be nominated for each of the trustee committees, which would be an increase of one faculty per committee. Provost Harris will let the committee know what decision is made by the Chairman of the board of trustees. Additionally, the Senate was asked to elect a senator to serve on a university committee to review the RFP process for health plan administrators, pharmacy, and mental health providers. They will provide a recommendation to Julien Carter as to which senator will serve on this committee.

Chris Swan reported for the Faculty Affairs committee. The committee met a number of times and the major issue they have been focusing on is a proposal for a university ombudsperson. The proposal will include representation for faculty and will have options to include graduate students and postdoctoral positions in the future. In addition to the ombudsperson proposal the committee has been looking at the more formal grievance process. The committee met with various people from various schools who work with their respective grievance process, as well as with representatives from Human Resources and the Office of Equal Opportunity. Future discussions focus on creating a framework for creating a more common grievance policy across the university as well as the possible review of the tuition benefit offered to faculty and staff, and financial mechanisms to support faculty housing issues.

Larry Weiss reported for the committee on Budget Planning and Development. The committee has now met five times and have reviewed the financial statements of the University and started to review those of individual schools to obtain an understanding of the financial issues facing the university. They had an initial meeting with Thomas McGurty, Vice President of Finance and Treasurer, and James Hurely, Budget Director, and hope to meet with them again soon. Their current key questions going forward are to understand what has changed in the university budget from prior years, who the decision makers are, when decisions are made, and how the faculty senate can help improve the process and decisions. They are still in the early stages of learning about the Tufts budgeting process and setting out the specific mission of the committee. They welcome any comments or suggestions from the rest of the senate. Melissa Mazan noted that she is currently the senate representative for the trustees finance committee but believes that is makes more sense for the chair of the senate finance committee to be that representative instead of her. Vida Johnson commented that changes to trustee representatives can only happen next year because appointments are set. She suggested that the finance committee have a conversation with the School of Arts & Science’s chair of the committee on budget and priorities, Pedro Palou. Their committee is informed about university budget issues but has no significant input; in the past that committee was consulted and presented with university budget challenges and had more significant input in the decision-making process.

Nirupa Matthan reported on behalf of the committee on Research and Scholarship. The committee is planning to meet with the chair of the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering Research committee to see what he thinks are important issues for their faculty. They are also meeting with Vice Provost of Research Simin Meydani tomorrow. The committee plans to partner with her office, particularly since she is undertaking a research strategic plan right now. The hope is that the Office of the Vice Provost of Research can reach out to this committee as a resource for various initiatives.

Melissa Mazan reported on the work of the Educational Affairs and Policy committee that has met several times. They are focused on working with the administration not only to recognize the financial exigencies but to retain the integrity of the university by ensuring that any plan for the College of Special Studies has academic merit and does not simply serve a money making purpose. President Salacuse offered that Provost Harris acknowledged the good work the committee has been doing at the recent trustees academic affairs committee meeting, where he gave an update. Some senators commented that this highlights the need for better coordination of the senate representatives to the trustee committees, so that someone from the Educational Affairs and Policy committee could be present for conversations such as these.

The senators engaged in a discussion on ways to ensure that the process for selecting senators to trustees committees is better coordinated in the future, which is something for both the committee on nominations and the trustees office to be aware of. Currently, the faculty that sit on trustee committees do not have much of a participatory role, however, when senators are invited to be a part of these committees their role is to speak on behalf of the senate. The administration does not speak on behalf of the senate and the senate needs to do some work to ensure that the trustees see it that way as well. There is currently a cultural problem that exists if faculty are not invited to speak at trustees meetings. By partnering with the senior leadership of the university that has thus far been supportive of the creation of and the work of the senate, we should begin to see a positive change in the right direction.

The senate then revisited the resolution on senate attendance that was presented by the executive committee in previous meetings. The revised resolution is as follows:

**Revised Resolution on Attendance at Faculty Senate Meetings**

Whereas the effective functioning of the Tufts University Faculty Senate and the meaningful participation and representation of the faculty in university governance requires the active attendance of all Senate members in every meeting of the Senate, and

While recognizing the many other important academic and professional demands on the time and efforts of all Senate members, The Tufts University Faculty Senate adopts the following resolution:

Resolved: All Senate members elected by Schools have an obligation to attend all regularly scheduled Senate meetings. Senate members who are unable to attend a meeting shall inform the Secretary of the Senate of that fact as soon as it is known with an explanation for their inability 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 is unable to attend two regularly scheduled meetings in any academic year, the Executive Committee shall consider the matter, taking into account the member’s overall contributions to the Faculty Senate and stated reasons for being absent.  The Executive Committee, after consulting with the Senate member, may decide to pursue appropriate action according to Article 6, paragraph 2, of the Faculty Senate Bylaws by communicating its views to the designated liaison to the Senate of the School represented by Senate member in question.

After discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: to adopt the revised resolution on attendance at faculty senate meetings,

which shall take effect at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Vice Provost of Research Simin Meydani then made a presentation to the senate on the latest updates to the university’s research strategic plan. She gave an overview of the information gathering process, the composition of the steering committee, project team and executive committee, and the process by which they arrived at the list of five preliminary research priorities: One Health; reclaiming the human; climate, food, and water; secure and equitable society, and living technology. Working groups have been created, which include faculty representation, to delve deeper into each of the research priorities and to come up with a proposal as a part of the larger university strategy. The steering committee will review the work of the committees and make recommendations that will be presented to the executive committee, senior leadership, and the board of trustees. Many senators were surprised to learn from Vice Provost Meydani’s presentation that Tufts is in danger of losing their status as a Research 1 university. And Vice Provost Meydani explained the various ways in which universities are evaluated, such as the number of Ph.D. programs offered. Some senators suggested that the steering committee review the work done in the past twenty years to advance research strategy in order to learn from what has and hasn’t worked in the past. Several senators had questions about the list of grand challenges, in particular the lack of inclusion of science as a realm of intellectual inquiry. Another senator questioned the lack of a focus on the arts in light of the substantial investment Tufts has made in the procurement of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Vice Provost Meydani welcomed suggestions from the senate as to which additional faculty should be engaged in the process and who should be added to the working groups that may not already be represented. Additionally, some senators felt that if the research priorities will focus on those areas that can help Tufts to gain federal funding, it should be made explicit to the faculty that that is the goal because many faculty will feel that their research is missing from the strategic plan. Vice Provost Meydani acknowledged that funding is very important but that it is not the only focus of the strategic plan.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Mazan

Secretary of the Faculty Senate