

University Faculty Senate
Minutes of Meeting
April 11, 2018

The University Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 in Cabot 702, Medford campus, with remote locations in Boston and Grafton. Present were Boris Bacanurschi, Gillian Beamer, John Castellot, Toni Chayes, Ginny Chomitz, Brent Cochran, Janet Forrester, Roger Galburt, Fulton Gonzalez, Eulogio Guzman, Rob Jacob, Vida Johnson, Andrew Hoffman, Nirupa Matthan, Mitch McVey, Ali Muftu, Lynne Pepall, Pearl Robinson, Anne Mahoney, Melissa Mazan, Jeff Hopwood, Chris Swan, Roger Tobin, Larry Weiss, Will Masters, Jes Salacuse, Larry Weiss, Norbert Wilson, Roman Schumann, Lee Sillin and Henry Wortis. Provost and Senior Vice President David Harris, Vice Provost Kevin Dunn and Program Administrator Melissa Stevenson were present from the provost's office.

Senate President Jes Salacuse opened the meeting with a welcome to the senators.

The minutes of the March 14, 2018 Senate meeting were approved with a correction to the attendance in order to add Fulton Gonzalez, Anne Mahoney, Vida Johnson as present.

The committees then gave their standing reports.

John Castellot gave a report on behalf of the committee on nominations report. The committee passed along thirty-four nominees to President Tony Monaco for the provost search committee. President Monaco will select ten faculty members to join the search committee. The nominations committee learned several things while participating in this process, one of which is just how different the cultures are at each of the schools as it relates to making faculty selections to committees. Also, had there been more time, the committee would have like to bring their list of final selections back to the full Senate for review. Instead, the list was vetted through the executive committee, who made additional suggestions to diversify the list that was being submitted to the president. Ideally, there would be more uniformity among the schools as to the process they use in order to send names up to the Senate. Some senators expressed concern that the executive committee had an opportunity to edit the list without full Senate input and asked whether the additions were made by the executive committee or the administrators present. Several senators asked that in the future the senate better defines this process and that the nominations committee either be present at the executive committee meeting to vet the final list, or that the nominations committee is responsible for the final list of recommendations instead. Others suggested that the executive committee should be full authorized by the full Senate to make such decisions on their behalf. This was the first time the Senate participated in selecting faculty representatives to a university-wide search committee and so there were lessons learned.

Chris Swan reported on behalf of the committee on Faculty Affairs. They have currently been working on both revisions to the ombudsperson proposal and a discussion regarding tenure and its meaning at the university. Senator John Castellot joined the committee for their most recent meeting in order to provide a deeper understanding of the motion that the medical school put forward at the last full Senate meeting. The conclusion was that there is a need to define what tenure means. The discussion has just really begun but the committee looks forward to coming

up with something to bring forth to the Senate at a future meeting. That conversation does not result in a removal of the resolution that John Castellot put forward on behalf of the medical school. Senator Brent Cochran asked where this leaves the status of the resolution and is there any further progress on the grievance policy because the Sackler school is still working on theirs and is looking for input. The faculty affairs committee felt that the resolution is a Senate issue, and so they did not decide to address the resolution directly during their meeting. The grievance policy also was not on the recent faculty affairs committee agenda because of the ombudsperson revision and the attention to the medical school resolution. Each school should have a grievance process and make it official, and then the faculty affairs committee will establish a minimum bar and outline principles for their university grievance policy but cannot set the specifics for each school's policy. Faculty affair committee member Andrew Hoffman suggested that the Senate might require in the university grievance policy that every school have a grievance policy and an outlined process for handling grievances. Regarding the resolution, Provost David Harris commented that it is incredibly important for the faculty to make a statement on these issues now before decisions are made at the university level, reminding the Senate of its status as an advisory body. The Senate has an opportunity to weigh in and make a statement regarding the medical school's resolution in advance of decisions being made by the administration.

The senators then engaged in a discussion as to how to address the medical school's resolution, and many agreed that having a better understanding of the history and timeline of the events at the medical school would help them to proceed.

Larry Weiss provided the senate with a report from the Budget committee that details the medical school issue from a budgetary perspective, as a result from their recent meeting with Vice President of Finance & Treasurer Tom McGurty and Executive Director of University Budgets Jim Hurley.

After discussion, the medical school faculty agreed to send a written summary around to the senate so that everyone has a clearer picture of what the issue is and then the senate can determine how to move forward. The summary will be as objective as possible. Both Vice Provost Kevin Dunn and the Faculty Affairs committee agreed to review a draft of the summary and the sole focus of the May Senate meeting will be to discuss the medical school resolution. Some senators asked that the Senate be very careful about conflating the budgetary issues at the medical school with the general discussion on the meaning of tenure from a university-wide perspective. Some suggested that it would be to the detriment of the Senate's reputation to weigh in on the medical school's particular issues because the purpose of the Senate is to address issues having an impact on the university, not one specific school.

It was agreed that along with the written summary of the medical school issue that the university's Academic Freedom, Tenure and Promotion policy would be distributed. The report from the Budget committee's discussion with Vice President of Finance & Treasurer Tom McGurty and Executive Director of University Budgets Jim Hurley should also be distributed. Senators from the medical school cautioned that the budget report is misleading and does not give a full picture of the reasons for the budgetary issues at the medical school

David Harris commented that the Senate should provide advice where it would be most helpful to the university, and that is on tenure, its meaning and on what grounds tenure revocation should be considered. He again cautioned against delving too deeply into any one School's particular issues.

After additional discussion by the senate as to the urgency of deliberating on this issue, a motion was put forward to address the medical school resolution and approve of the moratorium. During discussion of the motion, some senators reiterated a desire to have a better understanding of the entire issue before voting to address the medical school resolution. Some senators felt that no harm would be done if the Senate accepted the medical resolution to put a moratorium on any changes until the Senate has more time to deliberate on the issue. Others felt that the resolution is predicated on a full understanding of the meaning of tenure at the medical school and at the university. Some senators felt that approving the moratorium at this time does not respect the autonomy of the schools to make their own decisions, especially with the senate's limited understanding of the entire issue. There is some degree of urgency, but there is time to have this be the focus of the May Senate agenda.

The original motion to vote on the moratorium is removed.

A motion is then made to make the medical school moratorium be the sole item on the May meeting agenda. The information that will be distributed to all senators are: the budget committee's report, the written summary and timeline of the medical school issue, and the university's academic freedom, tenure and retirement policy. The motion is seconded. After discussion, the motion is approved.

Nirupa Matthan gave a report on behalf of the Research committee. They have been interfacing with the university-wide committee working on scholarship and research matters. They also met with Paul Bergen, Director of Educational Technology and Learning Spaces, who gave an overview of the Faculty Information System that is currently being rolled out in the School of Engineering, with plans for rollout at the other schools shortly thereafter. Paul offered to give an overview of the Faculty Information System to the full Senate if there is interest. Some components of the faculty information system project are collecting core faculty data tied to Peoplesoft, including the hiring and promotion information for all paid and unpaid faculty; capturing scholarly activity, research, teaching, and service, and creating a database using software from Symplectic Elements; and creating capabilities for annual activity reporting used to aid in faculty's yearly reviews and annual faculty reporting. The committee suggested that Humanities faculty might want to provide feedback on the scholarly activity component so that their needs are met. In addition to search tools, there should be a way for the product to allow a search for common interests among faculty so as to encourage collaboration. Senator Matthan was also happy to report that the office of the Vice Provost for Research is continuing to reach out to the committee as they are going through the strategic planning process and convening various groups to address the surveys they have conducted. They are still seeking a chair for the research barriers working group and Nirupa has forward the request for nominations to the nominations committee.

Melissa Mazan provided a report for the Educational Affairs committee, who continues to discuss the University College/College of Special Studies. There is no update on that issue this month because the trustees are willing to provide the committee with more time to deliberate on this important issue. The committee hopes to have an update at the June Senate meeting.

President Jes Salacuse gave an update on the status of the Senate elections, which must happen by June at the latest. The medical school elected two faculty for their seats: Henry Wortis, Misha Eliasziw and Maher Tabba. The School of Arts & Sciences elected Mitch McVey, Mary Jane Schultz, and Vida Johnson. The Fletcher School is having elections today. The elections at the Cummings School, Engineering School, and the Friedman School will be happening soon. Most individuals will start their term as of the next academic year. Officer election should happen at the beginning of each academic year when all of the new members are present.

It was suggested that a packet of materials are pulled together by the Secretary of the Senate to be distributed to new senators as a welcome packet, which includes: the Senate bylaws, the Senate attendance policy, any resolutions that have passed, and the full membership list.

Chris Swan then gave a brief report on the revisions that the Faculty Affairs committee gave regarding the ombudsperson policy. Those revisions included:

1. Removal of graduate students as stakeholders
2. A recommendation that the ombudsperson reports directly to the Senate as a means to maintain impartiality, confidentiality and an informal nature as much as possible.
3. A minor revision stating that the person selected as ombudsperson should have worked with two or more schools as a qualification.

Senators were invited to make comments on the proposal. One comment made was that it should be noted at some point that the unionized faculty have their own grievance process. Another senator commented that it should be explicit that engaging with the ombudsperson's office prior to a formal grievance process should be optional and not mandatory.

A motion was put forward that the ombudsperson policy be put forward as a recommendation to the provost's office, as written. The motion was seconded. After discussion, the motion was approved.

Provost David Harris noted that this is his last Senate meeting before he leaves the university to assume the presidency of Union College. He thanks the Senate for all of their work. The Senate also acknowledged Provost Harris for making the Senate a reality and wish him the best.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Mazan
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

