

**Meeting of the University Faculty Senate**  
**Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 8:00 – 9:30 am**  
**Location – Zoom**

The University Faculty Senate met at 8:00 am on Wednesday, January 13, 2021. Present at the meeting were Brent Remco Chang (Engineering), Cochran (TUSM), Tom Dannenbaum (Fletcher), Leila Fawaz (Fletcher), Janet Forrester (TUSM), Greg Gottlieb (Friedman), Sonia Hofkosh (A&S), Nicole Holland (Dental), Olympia Karacosta (TUSDM), Carl Kirker-Head (Cummings), Jette Knudsen (Fletcher), Anne Mahoney (A&S), Michael Malamy (TUSM), Nirupa Matthan (HNRCA), Douglas Matson (Engineering), Mitch McVey (A&S), Dominique Penninck (Cummings), Ellen Pinderhughes (A&S), Mary Shultz (A&S), Lee Sillin (TUSM), Roger Tobin (A&S), Mai Vu (Engineering), Parke Wilde (Friedman), Henry Wortis (TUSM), and Chantal Zakari (SMFA). *Ex officio* members Provost Nadine Aubry and Vice Provost Kevin Dunn were also in attendance, and President Lynne Pepall presided over the meeting.

Regrets: Misha Eliasziw (PHCM), Melissa Mazan (Cummings), Maher Tabba (TUSM)

The Senate dedicated its January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting to a discussion with Provost Nadine Aubry regarding the challenges that it faces as body of faculty governance at the University level. The following questions are quoted directly from the letter dated December 18, 2020 sent to Provost Aubry (see appended).

1. *Decisions that affect faculty, including the scope of their research and teaching activities and the conditions of their employment, are made at the School level. Are there overarching principles set by the University Administration that guide each School's Administration in how these decisions that affect faculty are made?*

*If so, could you please elaborate on these principles and how they are communicated and implemented at the Schools. If not, we would like to discuss the possibility of establishing such principles.*

- a. Provost Aubry's response
  - i. There is a long-standing policy of respecting the autonomy of schools
  - ii. Values are maintained through tenure and promotion policies, but standards are dependent on various schools and disciplines
  - iii. Would welcome suggestions and discussions
- b. Discussion
  - i. Tenure is good example of an over-arching principle that is not consistent across schools
  - ii. Desire to have more integration of systems between schools; concerns about the gray area between school autonomy and u-wide issues; this is where senate would like to have an impact
    1. How do we best address interdisciplinary challenges?
    2. Review of tenure and promotion processes could be effective, while still maintaining primary focuses of faculty
  - iii. Importance of finding ways to engage deans in Senate mission, so that there is buy-in and support
    1. Suggestion to have meeting with Senate and deans re: joint mission

2. *What, in the view of the Administration, are the circumstances in which decisions that affect faculty and that are being made at a School level are of enough concern to the faculty of the University that consultation with the UFS is appropriate?*

*Your October 13<sup>th</sup> letter and response to our TUSDM resolution implies that the Administration does not think that the personnel decisions taken at TUSDM required prior consultation or input from the UFS. However, that is not the view of the UFS. Because one of the purposes of the UFS is to develop a shared sense of community among Tufts faculty, it is important that we reach an understanding about what is meant by respecting the autonomy of the Schools in achieving our purpose.*

- a. Provost Aubry's response

- i. Schools are responsible for delivery of services, and their own budget; they receive the revenues generated by their programs, but pay Central Administration an assessment for Central expenses
    1. Deans have the right to make their own budgetary determinations
    2. Dean reporting structure ensures oversight of deliverables
    3. University has oversight over tenure, promotion to full professor, and awarding endowed chair professorships; TUSDM matter referenced above does not fall into one of these categories
    4. Provost has to allow autonomy to deans
    5. Does not believe that senate is owed consultation re: school-based, confidential decisions
  - b. Discussion
    - i. University response to COVID created context where TUSDM events seemed incongruous
    - ii. The trustees are the final word on tenure and promotion, so doesn't that mean these processes are university-wide?
      1. Trustees have broad oversight, but tenure is in different among the schools
    - iii. Budget committee has been looking at applying principles of equity across university
      1. Observation that Central Administration doesn't seem to be holding schools to equity standards
        - a. Deans are being held accountable
        - b. There was an Institutional Research study on gender several years ago; perhaps it is time to revisit in order to maintain accountability
    - iv. Question of scale: hiring/promoting/letting go of one faculty member is a single confidential personnel matter; decisions affecting the size of a school's faculty, or the school's ability to meet its budget goals, might affect the university more broadly, which could merit interest of the Senate
      1. Yes, but deans are still responsible, with central oversight
3. *In the circumstances identified in question 2, what do you envision as the nature and the process of the consultation with the UFS regarding these decisions?*

*The UFS would like to improve the consultation process that we currently have with the Administration. There are two major concerns. First, there is a growing consensus that UFS input is being solicited at a point in the decision-making process where our feedback cannot have any meaningful impact on policy making or associated decision-making processes. We would like to work with the Administration on ways to make the consultation process more productive, and to avoid situations where there is a mismatch between the expectations on the two sides as to appropriate extent and substance of UFS input.*

*Second, there is a concern about transparency of the information that we are given. For example, in the budgetary meetings which were held over the summer in response to the pandemic, members of the UFS felt assured that the impact on faculty would not be great. This was clearly not the case for faculty at TUSDM. A minor bullet point "School specific cuts" on the PPT presentation to UFS was misleading, and ultimately, contributed to eroding the trust that we think is so crucial in our partnership with the Administration.*

- a. Provost Aubry's response
  - i. Looking at ways to improve communication
  - ii. Administration does want Senate involvement
  - iii. Agree that senate should not just be signing off on already-formed policies, but involved in creation
  - iv. Administration can bring concerns to Senate, before drafting of new language
    1. Challenge of senate agenda access
  - v. Also recognize importance of addressing concerns that originate in Senate, as well as matters raised by Administration
- b. Discussion

- i. How is quality evaluated by the administration?
  - 1. Quality is field-dependent
  - 2. Be open-minded about what quality means relative to disciplines
  - 3. Innovative research & scholarship; recognizing needs of society; excellence in education, service & civic engagement; clinical work
- ii. Has administration thought about how to better involve the Senate in policy making?
  - 1. Looking at how Tufts is positioned in the future of higher ed in a post-COVID world
  - 2. Would like Senate representation on the new environmental task force
  - 3. Additional opportunities will be forthcoming
- iii. Not having access to the tenure system may negatively affect the ability to recruit high level hires in a particular school - should be a consideration in the evaluation of quality of research, scholarship and teaching in a school
- iv. Importance of the shared goal of making Tufts successful; still looking for the right model of engagement with administration
  - 1. Administration values the Ssenate
  - 2. Nadine thanks the Senate for its contributions and time spent in service
  - 3. Looking at how to involve senate in more productive way
  - 4. Would like to move forward with a meeting with Senate and deans
- c. Additional discussion
  - i. Looking at Senate involvement at earlier stages of policy development
    - 1. E.g. Diana Chigas would like Senate input on drafting new MOU policy
  - ii. Over-arching principles
    - 1. Would be helpful if Central could communicate to faculty the ways in which over-arching principles have been applied (e.g. gender equity standards), as a way of providing more transparency
  - iii. Workstreams have put out call for community engagement
    - 1. Suggestion that senate should engage now
  - iv. Meaning of Senate consultation
    - 1. Issues should come to Senate in bullet form of areas/concerns for input/feedback
    - 2. Clear statement of senate concerns to take back to admin is very helpful
    - 3. Standing committees should take on the bulk of the consultation role
  - v. Increase Senate visibility, promote understanding of Senate role
    - 1. Suggestion for Senate to be engaged as early as possible in issues
    - 2. Concerns about school autonomy issue as relates to Senate involvement
      - a. Senate can exert pressure to develop more over-arching principles – e.g. online education
  - vi. Use Feb mtg to prepare a document for deans, then invite to subsequent meeting (perhaps in two groups)
    - 1. Committees can develop their questions

Adjourn