

Minutes of Arts and Sciences Faculty Meeting, December 9th, 2015

12-1, Faculty Room, 207 Low Library

1. Introduction from EVP David Madigan, with brief updates:
 - (i) The first round of applications for Lenfest Junior Faculty development awards had been received; they were 33 in number, a very satisfactory figure which marked a successful launch of this Junior Faculty initiative, albeit not all applicants would receive awards.
 - (ii) *The School of Continuing Education* had been renamed *The School of Professional Studies*. Professor Sharon O'Halloran, the George Blumenthal Professor of Political Economy and Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia, had been appointed Senior Vice Dean and Chief Academic Officer of *The School of Professional Studies* with effect from January 1st, 2016. EVP Madigan's announcement of Professor O'Halloran's appointment was warmly received by the meeting's attendees.
 - (iii) EVP Madigan asserted that in the January 2016 meeting he would give an update on the state of the A&S budget.
 - (iv) EVP Madigan reported that he was convening and chairing a committee on Uris Hall in preparation for A&S appropriation of that space when its current occupant, the Business School, moves to Manhattanville; the committee's charge and composition were yet to be finalized (see 2 (ii) below).

2. Updates on the activities of the Planning and Policy Committee from its chair, Professor David Schiminovich:
 - (i) The PPC was reviewing the Tenure and Promotion process, with attention to such matters as the length of the process, the quality of decision outcomes, etc. A subcommittee within the PPC was tasked with fact-finding, and that subcommittee was at work.
 - (ii) Uris space committee: in relation to EVP Madigan's convening of a Uris committee (see 1 (iv) above), a PPC subcommittee was working on the formulation of a charge for that Uris committee.
 - (iii) In response to Dean Alonso's proposal for modifications to be made to the current MAO pass-through procedures, the PPC was reviewing his recommendations, and aimed to complete that process early in the Spring semester.
 - (iv) The PPC was also assembling data on the use of adjunct instructors, their compensation rates, their prevalence across divisions, and their ratio relative to

regular faculty. The PPC was fortunate to benefit from data-gathering expertise of Rose Razaghian, Executive Director of Planning and Analysis in A&S.

- (v) The PPC was also initiating inquiry into the state of governance of A&S Centers and Institutes (this after questions of appropriate governance had been brought to the attention of the PPC in the case of one particular Institute); there was as yet no fixed timeframe for the projected outcome of this process.
 - (vi) Plans for Faculty Meetings for Spring 2016 included an A&S budget presentation from EVP Madigan (see 1 (iii) above); President Bollinger's attendance at one meeting; a further update from the Global; Task Force; and continuing attention to the fundraising and diversity concerns that were raised by the PPC earlier in Fall 2015.
3. Updates on the activities of the Educational Planning and Policy Committee from its chair, Professor Brent Stockwell, who reported that six subgroups had been set up in Fall 2015:
- (i) The Task Force on Global Education in the Arts and Sciences (see further 5 below).
 - (ii) The Subcommittee on class size and education.
 - (iii) The Subcommittee on innovative teaching practices.
 - (iv) A working group formed to consider pathways to improvement in the inclusive teaching in the sciences.
 - (v) The Subcommittee to oversee the implementation of new course number guidelines which would be activated for Fall 2016.
 - (vi) The Subcommittee to oversee the implementation of new course evaluation guidelines. Some sections of the new evaluations would be made available in *Vergil*; Faculty would nevertheless have the safeguard ability to view evaluations before distribution.
4. Request from the *Columbia Spectator* for staff to be allowed to attend Faculty Meetings. Mr. Michael Ouimette, current Editor-in-Chief of the *Spectator*, addressed the meeting to explain the request:
- (i) Given that the *Spectator* is the newspaper of the A&S, and that the undergraduate experience is directly related to the functioning of A&S, access to Faculty Meetings would allow *Spectator* staff to deepen their understanding of issues pertinent to the functioning of A&S.

- (ii) The *Spectator's* goal would be not to *report* on Faculty Meetings, but to enable its staff to gain information and orientation on A&S matters.
- (iii) No quotes from Faculty Meetings would be published in the *Spectator*.

Commentary:

- In response to Mr. Ouimette's presentation, one faculty member stated a past reluctance to admit the *Spectator* to Faculty Meetings on the grounds of decorum, but now favored the *Spectator's* presence under the proposed arrangement of observation as opposed to reporting.
- If the *Spectator* had access to Faculty Meetings, should other bodies such as BWOG have similar access? If any such request should arise, it would be duly considered.
- How many *Spectator* reporters could or should attend any given meeting? One or more? This question was to be clarified.
- Two concerns: 1. if the *Spectator's* role at Faculty Meetings was to observe rather than report, should it report on truly newsworthy events at such meetings? 2. While faculty might speak freely with the *Spectator* presence, would that presence have a chilling effect on the administrators in attendance, causing them reluctance to speak too openly?
- In allowing the *Spectator* presence at Faculty Meetings in general terms, the case was nevertheless made for reserving the right to confidential discussion (no *Spectator* presence) on matters of obvious sensitivity.
- A straw vote on whether or not to admit the *Spectator* to meetings was broadly in favor of the proposal.

5. Update from the Task Force on Global Education in A&S, from Professor Rosalind Morris:

- (i) Professor Morris gave an interim report on the Task Force's activities in Summer and Fall 2015 in examining activities associated with teaching and study abroad. In its investigations the Task Force addressed three broad sets of issues: 1. Information, communication, and data; 2. Logistics and organizational priorities, including possible contradictions between individual faculty interests, student desires, and institutional needs, especially in circumstances of continued growth in teaching abroad; and 3. Policy issues, including the need for more coherent and integrated planning and faculty oversight.
- (ii) A basic challenge in the information gathering process was that no single office at Columbia coordinated overseas activities, and there was no single data gathering

mechanism. In gathering data in Fall 2015, however, the Task Force had received responses from 26 of 27 A&S departments, a yield of 96%.

- (iii) Professor Morris showed graphics illustrating faculty research activity abroad and the high flow of overseas visitors to Columbia, but her principal focus at the meeting was on faculty teaching abroad. In the last three academic years (2011-12, 2013-14, 2014-15), there was a growth-trend in numbers of faculty teaching abroad (6, 14, 20) and hence in the number of courses offered and Columbia students enrolled; the greatest growth was in summer courses.
- (iv) Large departments might be able to absorb absences of faculty for assignments abroad relatively easily, but smaller departments were clearly more likely to be adversely affected. Ongoing concerns: the need for strong forward planning; the weighing of faculty desire to teach abroad against departmental and core instructional needs at home; sensitivity to inequities in student study-abroad opportunities because of different levels of student financial need; the importance of strong faculty/policy governance over initiatives for teaching abroad; close attention to the sustainability of overseas teaching initiatives when Mellon funding expires.
- (v) Professor Morris stressed that her report was interim, and that the Task Force needed more time before it offered recommendations for future action.

Commentary

- Had studies been done to compare practices at peer institutions? That comparative process was gaining momentum.
- Beyond profound thanks for Professor Morris' work, the hope was expressed for a comprehensive assessment of curricular planning and overseas possibilities when *all* the strains exposed by the current process had become apparent. To the suggestion that faculty who teach abroad arguably contribute to the depletion in teaching resources on the Morningside campus, EVP Madigan pointed out that some 143 faculty were on one- or two-semester leave this academic year; the adverse effect of overseas teaching commitments was minuscule by comparison with this larger leave pattern.
- If the summer is evidently in demand as a prime opportunity for student travel for study abroad, what could be done to assist undergraduate financing of such ventures? A survey of undergraduates some two years ago had already highlighted this challenge in Columbia's global teaching initiative; did the matter not still warrant attention? Professor Morris acknowledged that financial considerations were evidently critical to the growing of overseas initiatives.
- The Mellon grant was meant to grow faculty numbers; but how could it be delivering incremental growth if the overseas programs were straining resources at the

Morningside campus? EVP Madigan pointed to the availability of funds to pay for temporary faculty; yet the larger problem of how to absorb overseas activities within current budgetary constraints remained.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.