Newark Faculty Council Minutes

November 26, 2018

By Beryl Satter, NFC Secretary

Attended: April Benasich, Sherri-Ann Butterfield, Nancy Cantor, Alexander Gates, Jane Gilman, John Gunkel, John R. Kettle III, Haesum Kim, Jiahuan Lu, Rosa Oppenheim, Brandon Paradise, Piotr Piotrowiak, Mary Rizzo, Ashaki Rouff, Beryl Satter, Ted Szatrowski, Miklos Vasarhelyi, Jerome Williams

Chair April Benasich’s Report and Announcements:

1. Requested revision of the minutes of April 2018 to include a motion passed concerning more meetings of Faculty Senate to be held in Newark, so that it is easier for Newark faculty to attend. Approved
2. Approval of the October 2018 minutes (with addition of attendance) requested and passed.
3. Added that after the October update, from the Newark Staff Council – we will be adding a link to the NSC on our webpage.
4. The December 3rd NFC meeting was cancelled due to programming conflicts.

**Report from John Gunkel**, Vice Chancellor For Academic Programs And Strategic Partnerships -- National Studies, Retention and Advisory, and Enrollment:

Description of Strategic Partnership/ Strategic Plan: Execute partnerships with outside institutions. Ex: the ACUE worked to help P3.

Gunkel has been working with Bravin, which has a career accelerating program. It’s designed for first generation college students in particular. Those students sometimes lack social capital and connections to make the most of their college degree. Bravin came out of Aspen Institute and works with universities. Example: they worked with students coming out of San Jose State, helping them compete in Silicon Valley with students from Stanford etc. Now, we’re doing similar work at Rutgers-Newark to help our students compete against more prestigious schools, say with Wall Street firms in the NYC area. The students put in 120 hours volunteering with the program. They work online or face to face with professionals in prestigious jobs. It’s been going for the past 2-3 semesters with HLLC (as a course). The students get internships, and first-career job offers; it is helping students over those who don’t participate by about 20%. HLLC heads are getting more closely involved with Bravin.

Q: is it open to non-HLLC students? Is it a three-credit course? A: Yes to both.

A: They are pushing more for STEM, non-profit and governmental sector jobs. Bravin is only working with 3 institutions – San Jose State, Rutgers-Newark, and a school in Chicago. Career acceleration is tied to local markets and economies.

Q: (Comment): Bravin is good to add to grant proposals.

Q: What goes into the course that they take through Bravin?

A: The Bravin initiative has been going for 3 years. They focus on sophomores or transfer students with a concentration on internships, as these students haven’t graduated as yet. Only now are they beginning to have graduates who they can try to support as they enter the job market. The curriculum includes direct mentoring from coaches – although not discipline specific. Also includes interviewing skills, self-presentation (traditional career development), as well as explanations about expectations within professional contexts (sociological/ organizational context). Leadership training is part of the curriculum – explanations of styles, techniques. When the course is over, the result is a network of ambitious first-generation students who can aid and support each other. The students are paired with a mentor in the field they want to enter, so there are 2 layers of mentors. First, they are mentored within the course and then, by a person in the field.

Q: Who is collecting outcome data?

A: Bravin. We are sharing data with them. Bravin is accountable to the boards that fund them. There appears to be impressive outcomes thus far.

Q: Will be comparing those who participate and those who don’t, post-graduation?

A: Yes, Bravin is doing this as the students move through. Sometimes the student’s move right into jobs at institutions they intern with (ex: one of our interns is now working at Prudential after interning there).

Q: Does it hurt students when internships are unfunded? Students can’t always afford to work for free.

A: They are doing the internship for course credit. It’s not an add-on. When it was purely volunteer, there was a lot of attrition – about 1/3 dropped out. Our students are the guinea pigs in an early-stage operation – it takes a lot of work. But Bravin is great to work with – they are highly professional. Others are now trying to get Bravin to come to their schools. Now, RU-N is frequently approached nationally, as it is seen as a place where things can be tried out; we’re a research university but also are diverse, first generation, etc. Now we get to pick and choose which partners have the most to offer!

Partnerships are diverse; some provide funding for students. Some are organized around technology. Others involve collaborations with other universities to deal with common problems.

Dream.us is also very professional. This is a scholarship organization for undocumented students (funded by Graham – now Bezos/Amazon, maybe). Dream.us fills in for students who are not eligible for federal or state financial aid. Students apply to them directly. They engage with those who have a good record of working with undocumented students. We’ve been partnering with them for three years. They do advocacy work but also provide direct support for their students – updates on policy changes, etc. We at RU-N also provide similar information and support to our undocumented students. But some of our information comes from Dream.us. Dream.us gives $30,000 scholarship support for students.

There are other support groups: For example, “College Knowledge” organization gives high school students mentoring and provides information to local high schoolers. Some of these groups also provide scholarships.

Most of the organizations we work with recognize that while money is helpful, low-income and first-generation students need other sorts of supports as well.

Q: What about student retention?

A: Our main partner there is the EAB (formerly the Education Advisory Board, primarily serving the higher education industry). It now serves as a consulting agency. It’s difficult to figure out what’s happening with our students since our student information systems don’t capture retention information. Now, we’ve created a system called “Navigate.” It’s a communication system to help Chairs quickly identify their students and subsets of students; for example, it will list all history majors, all majors who are seniors, etc. You can segment your student population in order to send out important targeted messages students will need in order to get through their programs. Navigate also helps advisors in various offices to share notes and identify problems early. Perhaps a message can be sent to financial aid from department/ advisor who learned that a student was having problems in this regard. Then the system will let you know if the issue is resolved. Students can sign up online so you know when they are coming for advising. Provides analytics so we can see students who are thriving or those who are facing challenges. For example, we found out that the “foundations” classes for English are mostly being taken in the 3rd or 4th year. This helps English Dept to examine how their major is working on the ground. If the student hasn’t taken the required classes in time, this could signal a problem for graduation. Now we are working department by department to explain how it works.

Q: It sounds like “Run for Success.”

A: It is “Run for Success.” We rebranded Navigate as “Run for Success.”

Q: Can we have notification to faculty as a whole about “Run for Success”?

A: Yes, it’s now “ready for prime time.” Its communication functions can be grouped in many different ways (credits, majors, schools); or, you can create your own tags. Ex: Hope Labs studying completion grants uses it. We set eligibility criteria to be able to select students for it. They can then be tagged. We can tag students who work in Bravin.

It will be used to help with course scheduling. It will work with all sorts of analytics. Among its functions will be a shared course planning; a spread sheet, semester by semester. Faculty advisors and students all have access. We can post possible templates of courses one should take for a particular major (say, European History major). Ex: students delay taking math prerequisites for some majors; this will help students know what to take when.

Q: A module to track students’ academic progress?

A: There are modules within Blackboard that can collect this information. So far we’re not using it. So far it is only for undergrads; later it might spread to graduate students.

April Benasich:

-We will cancel Dec. 3 NFC meeting. We will next meet in February.

Jane Gilman:

-Update on University Senate Representation including all campuses. Jane talked with Joe Markert, who is both an NFC member and on the University Senate. They’ve worked up a motion to the Senate that was submitted to the Senate. A subcommittee of the Senate will consider it. See the NFC Spring 2018 Resolution. The Faculty supported this charge. The Executive Committee of the Senate seems reluctant to arrange for remote/ virtual technology meetings; this could be because they have little experience with such things.

Benasich:

-We can look into how other Big Ten schools deal with University Senate issues on multi-campus universities. We should all ask our colleagues at those places.

Q: 15 years ago, we had meetings on all 3 campuses for some of the financial committees. We should be capable of doing this ourselves and not worrying about what other universities are doing. Why can’t we ask the Senate to have some of their subcommittees meet on various campuses? That would be a good start.

A: It’s a matter of will, and with comfort in accepting new technology. It’s not all that high tech. Also, they agreed to try it on one committee this semester. However, it could take years before it’s fully accepted.

Jane and the executive committee of the NFC will continue to pursue this goal.

**Piotr Piotrowiak – Vice Chancellor for Research and Collaboration**:

Report on Grant Funding Performance and Initiatives

-External funding for research matters. Last week a potential sponsor from California came around – interested in funding our undergrads in sciences. He wanted to see our research labs in progress.

-Our numbers: last year was our best year ever in terms of grant income. We passed the $33 million line. The overall numbers at Rutgers dipped last year by 2%; RU-N did better.

-Most of our externally funded research activity is in SASN. The business school also gets a lot. The other schools get less.

-We hosted a get together for all new faculty members to introduce the Office of Research. Individual training was offered to all who will submit a grant proposal and might need help navigating the system.

-At that event, we introduced our staff members (Patricia Bender, Reuel Mebuin, Joe Broderick, Lisa Condobery). Presently, we are down one staff member and are trying to bring a new person in. We are Rutgers-Newark based, not servicing the wider university. (See page 4 of the Piotrowiak PowerPoint report on the NFC website.)

Q: We’ve having trouble getting help from the research support specialist.

A: We are doing our best. Ideally, the two full-fledged grant specialists should work with faculty even on so-called low-level help. Right now, we’re trying to bridge the gap created by the missing position (we have only 4 positions filled out of 5). Things will improve when we get the fifth hire. The previous director who was overseeing the office stepped down; we are now working on filling this position.

Q: What does the research support specialist do?

A: In departments where there’s no real grant-writing tradition, people don’t know how to handle them. Ex: What is the procedure for applying for seed grants? People in some departments don’t know how to work the bureaucracy and are unfamiliar with RAPPS.

Q: Great that there’s there is a big push to restructure the grant office. However, many of us, are not sure what the role is of Joe Broderick, the research contract and grant specialist. Who should be our grant specialist?

A: It should be whoever is your designated grant specialist. Joe Broderick’s job is to work on large, multi-PI grant proposals. He doesn’t have authority to submit proposals. At present, we’re working on a $2.1 million brain imaging grant proposal. Broderick will coordinate it, so grant writers can focus on the substance of the proposal. He ensures that CVs are collected, are formatted in a unified manner, etc.

Q: Is the research support specialist a pre-award facilitator?

A: We’d rather have people in the departments handle this function. We want to work with departments that don’t have a grant facilitator (such as Philosophy or Social Work, versus Chemistry or Biology).

Q: For some of us, a smaller grant ($100,000) isn’t worth taking because of all the work involved in getting it approved. Can we have an agile, small-grant process?

A: Yes, we would love this. Now there seems to be a uniform bureaucracy of red tape needed for everything, whether $5.00 or $5 million, But we hope that will change.

We are developing a research infrastructure. Right now there are several in progress; for example, we are working on brain scanners/ imaging centers. This requires a 30% cost share with the institution. We are currently focusing on a large infrastructure grant to support an extension of the Rutgers University Brain Imaging Center (RUBIC) located in CMBN/Aidekman.

**Nancy Cantor:**

Rutgers as a system is entering a tough budget year. There are about 30 union contracts being negotiated. Salaries might be beyond what we expected. Over the last 3 budget seasons, the central service units have absorbed all salary increases without increases in budget. Now, the budgets are very tight; if there are retroactive increases, there’s no place to go but making budget cuts. We don’t want to see that. We’re in the midst of a local hiring initiative. We are trying to be strong and autonomous as Rutgers-Newark and not a colonial outpost – but this is a genuinely tough budget year for us and for other public institutions of higher education.

Piotrowiak:

The Central Office of Research has had 5% cuts in two years. We have a good relationship with the office of advanced computing in NB. Researchers buy racks for $5000. Then this is treated as permanent equipment and you don’t pay huge fees to use them thereafter. Newark’s NM3 is now fully integrated into AMAREL; there is server space beyond Engelhard.

Data Science is an emerging program at SASN and RBS-Newark. I’m trying to create more integration between these two hubs.

We’re hosting events to bring NJIT-Rutgers faculties together. In addition, we’re creating other symposiums and research events.

**Sherri-Ann Butterfield:**

Rutgers University does student climate surveys (harassment, etc). We’ll be discussing the findings at future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Very Happy Holidays to All – See you next year!