

**Newark Faculty Council**  
**Meeting of Monday, February 13, 2012 – 11:30 am**  
**Chancellor's Conference Room**  
**Minutes**

**In Attendance:** E. Avakame, P. Axel-Lute, A. Chebel-D'Appollonia, G. Frenkel, A. Gilchrist, L. Mosher, R. Oppenheim, P. Peterman, W. Ren, J. Ruggiero, D. Sclar, T. Szatrowski, M. Vasarhelyi, E. Velez; P. Yeagle; J. Friedland

**I. Chancellor's Report:** Dr. Yeagle reported on the following matters:

- The Rutgers Board of Governors will meet next week in Camden. They are expected to approve a project to renovate the building at 15 Washington Street. Plans call for a 350-bed graduate housing facility to accommodate graduate students currently housed in the University Square facility, freeing up space there for additional undergraduate students. The renovation is largely being funded by Rutgers' central administration.
- The Chancellor's February 9<sup>th</sup> address to the campus in the Robeson Campus Center will be available online shortly.

**II. Chair's Report:** Miklos Vasarhelyi served as Chair for this meeting since Fred Sudit was traveling. The council discussed the following topics:

- **Proposed merger of Rutgers-Camden into Rowan University**
  - Diana Sclar noted that the Newark Law School was in the process of writing a letter to the Board of Governors arguing against this merger.
  - Dr. Yeagle reiterated the statement he made in last week's address that Rutgers-Newark not be cleaved from Rutgers University. He suggested the NFC might want to take a position on this matter.
  - Ted Szatrowski suggested that the NFC express disapproval of dismantling the university as a whole, inclusive of all campuses not just Rutgers-Camden. It was also noted that the Barer report's recommendations to reorganize the university, including merging UMDNJ with the New Brunswick campus, could have unforeseen financial consequences. Council members were further concerned that the Camden/Rowan merger had not been given public consideration.
  - The following motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously:  
*The Newark Faculty Council is of the opinion that Rutgers University should not be dismembered.*
  - Ted Szatrowski, Paul Axel-Lute, Rosa Oppenheim and Miklos Vasarhelyi will draft a statement which will be circulated to the full NFC by Tuesday for approval and transmittal to the Board of Governors.
- **Revisions to Bylaws:** Paul Axel-Lute called for a vote on changes recommended by the Bylaws & Governance Committee (attached). NFC members unanimously voted to approve the changes. The revised bylaws will be posted on the website and circulated electronically to all members.

### **III. Advisory Committee Reports:**

- **Campus Goals Committee report** (full report attached): Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia reported on her committee's recommendations, among which were:
  - *Modification of the Newark Campus Grading System* – to include the full spectrum of possible grades (A-, B-, etc.). The practice of rounding to the next highest grade may not be fair to all students. It is also not consistent with practices at other universities or even across campus - the schools of law and business use a modified system. The committee debated how to transition smoothly to a new grading system, avoiding the difficulties experienced by RBS when it applied for a change around 15 years ago. A campus poll was suggested. Ted Szatrowski will research the New Brunswick Faculty Council's deliberations on this topic and share that information with the NFC.
  - *Teaching Evaluations* - The committee made several suggestions on changes to questions that are now included on the faculty surveys. Discussion followed on how to encourage students to complete them. Linking the process to their final grades is one possibility. Dr. Yeagle offered to provide contact information of staff who can assist in this effort. Also debated were the pros and cons of electronic and paper surveys.
  - *Revision of Website Campus Goals*: Dr. Chebel D'Appollonia summarized her committee's suggestions on which goals to retain, change, or add to the website. The committee focused on the sections related to academic matters. She noted that the list of campus programs needs updating. Diversity data is also not up to date. It may be less important to stress increasing diversity, particularly within the student body, than to determine how to benefit from it. It was noted, however, that faculty diversity is still in need of improvement. Paul Axel-Lute noted that he had suggested to the goals working group the addition of a goal expressing a commitment toward making the campus and its operations more environmentally friendly and sustainable.
  - The council recommended that the committee draft a new set of goals.
- **Deferred Maintenance Committee** report (full report attached): Jeanne Ruggiero's committee consulted with Assoc. Vice Chancellor Marty Ryan who provided a prioritized list of Newark's deferred maintenance projects. None were deemed to be immediate safety concerns. Edin Velez noted, however, that Physical Plant is not always aware of or responsive to complications which arise after the initial inspection. He pointed out that mold in Bradley Hall which developed after roof leaks were reported was not on Marty Ryan's list even though it now could be considered a safety hazard. Dr. Ruggiero will invite Marty Ryan to the April 2 NFC meeting. She noted that her committee also made a list of new deferred maintenance concerns, including some current work orders, which will be merged into Physical Plant's existing list.

Dr. Yeagle commented that it was very helpful to have different perspectives on maintenance priorities for the campus. He thanked both committees for their diligent and thorough reporting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm. The next NFC meeting will be held on Monday, **April 2, 2012** at 11:30 am in the Chancellor's Conference Room – 590, Center for Law & Justice.

Proposed amendments to Newark Faculty Council bylaws,

As initially approved by the Council, February 13, 2012

( language ~~struck through~~ to be deleted; language *in italics* to be added)

Article II section 5 is amended to read:

“5. Should an elected member go on leave, the unit from which he or she was elected ~~shall~~ *may* elect a replacement for the duration of the regular member's leave. “

Appendix: Calendar, February through May are amended to read:

“February- ~~March~~ *April* : elections within units using secret ballots takes place. Election results shall be reported by ~~March 15~~ *April 30*

~~April: the Chair prepares a ballot for the election of a Vice Chair, the Secretary and the three Executive Cabinet members. May: elections for officers and Executive Cabinet shall take place.~~

*May: Chair solicits nominations (including self-nominations) for Vice Chair, Secretary, and three Executive Cabinet members, from among continuing and new members of the Council, allowing members to run for more than one position. Chair prepares ballots with instructions providing as necessary for ranked voting. Secret ballots shall be sent to all new and continuing members of the next year's Council. “*

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Faculty Council

Committee on Academic Affairs

### **1. Modification of the grading system**

Arguments: absence of A- is detrimental to the very best students; absence of B- is detrimental to students with problems (late paper); grading inflation; inconsistent with other US/international universities; inconsistent among units within Rutgers Newark (Business School, Law School have reformed their system long time ago and use minus grades)

All the members of the Faculty Council who addressed this issue in their e-mails agree that there is a need for modifying the grading system (see Annex 1). Faculty members from various departments also agree when I discussed this issue with them.

Suggestion: Knowing that it may be a cumbersome process, we suggest a “top-down” approach initiated by the Chancellor’s office.

### **2. Modification of the teaching evaluation (question 8 on prior interest in the course)**

Arguments: Current teaching evaluations include a question (“I had a strong prior interest in the subject matter and wanted to take this course”) that does not relate to the teaching performance. If the students have no prior interest, this should not score against the instructor.

All the members of the Faculty Council who expressed an opinion about this question agreed about the change (see Annex 2), as well as faculty members from various departments (notably assistant professors).

Suggestions: To replace this question by “did the instructor/course increase your interest in the subject matter?” And, to find an “electronic way” to link answer to the teaching evaluation and access to final grades (as a strong incentive to fill out the evaluation in order to limit the drop in student response rate)

### **3. Goals (strengthening undergraduate education/building academic distinction in research & graduate distinction/increasing diversity)**

Questions asked about the website page: To keep the same goals? To change the content of the existing goals? To suppress/add goals?

The committee focused on the sections directly related to academic issues. There was a consensus about keeping the same goals, although it is clear that the content of each section needs to be updated/improved (see Annex 3).

\* *Strengthening undergraduate education:* No major change suggested, except (a) to update the content; (b) link with other pages (such as Honors College)

\* *Building academic distinction in research & graduate studies:* the distinction between “areas already well-developed” and “areas in earlier stages of development” should be

revised/updated; links should be made with other website pages (such as research centers and institutes); and a new page should be created, listing all student and professor awards (see Piotr's comments)

\* *Strengthening ties between the campus & the community*: we suggest to move this section after "building academic distinction", and thus before "enhancing student & campus life"

\* *increasing diversity*: this section has to be significantly updated

- We need data about diversity (related to both students and professors) – all kinds of diversity (ethnic, racial, religious backgrounds; international students and foreign faculty members; socio-economic background). We cannot rely on one source (US News report 2009, which took into account only student ethnic diversity, and was not updated since 2009)

- We suggest to replace "increasing diversity" by "benefiting from diversity" (benefiting is a goal, increasing is a tool) and to create a link with the page on "A Century of Leadership in Diversity" (which also needs to be updated)

#### Annex 1: responses to arguments related to the modification of the grading system

Rosa Oppenheim: I am very much in favor of allowing all + and - grades. We changed this for our graduate courses at the business school decades ago - it was a horrendous process, which took more than a year to get approved, but it was worth it. No faculty member is forced to give + and/or - grades, so those who are opposed need not assign those grades. For many of us, including minus grades in undergrad courses would be very welcome and enable us to assign grades much more equitably.

Genese Sodikoff: I'm in favor of the full grading spectrum that includes minuses

Robert Patrick: I support including minus grades as well. It will allow more accurate distinctions in evaluating student performance and may provide some impact in controlling grade inflation. I will generally give students that are actually between a B+ and an A or a C+ and a B the benefit of the doubt, which of course is grade inflation.

Edin Velez: In terms of grading, having "minus" grades can effect a much more accurate evaluation of the student's work. Many times I have graded students A when I felt they should have been an A- because a B grade ( or B+) undervalued their achievement. Thus...grade inflation.

Gerald Frenkel: I am ok with introducing the minus grades

#### Annex 2: Responses to the question about changing the teaching evaluation

Piotr: As far as the specific point regarding teaching evaluations is concerned, I fully agree with you: the question about prior interest does not belong to this questionnaire. It would ONLY make SOME sense if it were a scaling factor, i.e. if one gets high scores from a student without a prior interest in a subject, it should be viewed as a plus, but it would be just too

complicated to implement something like this. In its present form as just another additive component, it does not make any sense.

Rosa Oppenheim: I agree that the student evaluation should address whether or not the student's interest in the subject matter was increased as a result of the course

Genese Sodikoff: I agree with your point about evaluations, though personally I do not feel that it substantially impacts the overall evaluation of the professor. But I will support your suggestion

Robert Patrick: On teaching evaluations, the distribution naturally provides more relevant information than the mean, but I don't find the rankings questions, particularly #8, as providing much, if any, information in terms of improving my courses in general.

Edin Velez: I concur strongly on the evaluation comment regarding question #8. I also feel that the averaging system is faulty as one negative comment can really drop the overall number. I understand that averaging is normally accurate, but it seems that in a class with very high positive scores, only one negative comment tends to skew the overall score downward too much.

Frenkel: I am ok with introducing the minus grades and eliminating or changing the student feedback question you mentioned. It appears (anecdotally in my dept.) that the student response rate has dropped dramatically since the survey was put online. If this is in fact the case overall, something needs to be done - either "force" the students to reply or go back to the old system. I would like this issue to be considered by the subcommittee in addition to the specific question on the survey

### Annex 3: responses to the questions related to the website presentation

Piotr Piotrowiak: Certainly a lot has to be done in the area of promoting and rewarding academic excellence both among students and the faculty (these two aspects are inseparable). One small idea which would be very inexpensive to implement, would be to create a webpage which would list chronologically all student awards and awardees. Many departments (most?) already have some awards, named scholarships, etc. which they give to their best majors. Having a web page (not buried so deep that nobody can reach it!) combining all of these would be an easy way to highlight our commitment to excellence... When it comes to promoting excellence in research and graduate studies, we must take a much more comprehensive view of what it takes to succeed in these areas. In the sciences, and probably not only in the sciences, the long term success of research and graduate programs is directly linked to the shared infrastructure and the institutional culture

Frenkel: I would like us to consider another issue which has a big practical impact on students, at least in my dept (Biology) - integration of R.U. and NJIT schedules - academic calendar, class scheduling times, final exams. Just 1 example: we sometimes have NJIT students taking final exams in Rutgers courses after they have been required to move out of their dorms. There are many other unnecessary difficulties created by a lack of coordination.

As to the goals:

- As a start to working on "building academic distinction", I suggest we talk about the specific areas in the two lists - "developed areas" and "earlier stages of development" and see what changes are necessary if any.

- Regarding "increasing diversity" I think current statistics should be looked at to see whether the statement "our record in faculty and senior staff diversity is not nearly as good." is still accurate or needs modification or elimination.

Diana Sclar: I joined your committee because I believe that the goals of the Newark Campus should include the additional goals of maintaining our productive relationship with the City of Newark and the other institutions of higher education in Newark. I did not submit a comment to you because I believe that the Interim Chancellor already has embraced these additional goals, as indicated by his broadcast e-mail of January 30, which I have copied below. I am hoping that he will reiterate these additional goals in his address tomorrow

Genese: I agree with the goals, but for increasing diversity I would specify "faculty diversity" as not so much an issue with student body.

February 13, 2012

**To:** Interim Chancellor Philip Yeagle and Members of the Newark Faculty Council

**From:** Newark Faculty Council Facilities and Services Committee

**Re:** Committee Comments Regarding Deferred Maintenance, Capital Projects, and “Other”

The members of the Newark Faculty Council Facilities and Services Committee have been asked by Interim Chancellor Yeagle to submit a report regarding our recommendations for Deferred Maintenance Projects for the Rutgers-Newark campus. We obtained a list of Deferred Maintenance Projects (DMP) from Martin Ryan, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities. We are also making some recommendations regarding Capital projects and other issues described to us by Vice Chancellor Ryan. Finally, we include a list of maintenance projects resulting from a query of NFC faculty. Committee comments were provided by Piotr Piotrowiak (Chemistry), Wen-Hua Ren (Dana Library), Jeanne Ruggiero (Nursing), chairperson, and Paul Axel-Lute (Law Library), ad hoc member for this project.

#### DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROJECTS (DMP)

- Deferred maintenance facts (from Vice Chancellor Ryan)
  - Newark campus gets about 20% of main university money **based on the ratio of the number of our students versus the total number of students**. If any main university money is left over at years end, we get a portion of that as well given to our campus and it **may be designated for** deferred maintenance **by the Chancellor**.
  - Vice Chancellor Ryan is not aware of any other funding sources for deferred maintenance projects (DMP).
  - Current money available for DMP
    - Some funding left over from 18 months ago, plus \$3 million from 6 months ago.
  - If we had all the money needed for the current list of \$25 million dollars of DM projects it would take approximately 2 to 3 years **to spend based on the current staffing of our project management staff**. **If more money was given to us the Project Manager staff would be increased to allow us to manage the larger funding stream quicker:**
  - The list of DMPs is prioritized, according to Vice Chancellor Ryan, but not written in stone
  - No items are true safety concerns at this time—meaning that he does not believe that an individual will get injured if the project is not done.
  - Updated list of DMPs is attached (the first one was dated 1/31, we were given a new one on 2/10—see attached)



- Teaching lab renovations (formerly Capital projects) are now prioritized on this list, among other changes.
- Committee recommendations
  - Most of our committee members feel that we should not change the order of DMPs on Vice Chancellor Ryan's list; however the infrastructure repairs/renovations (such as leaky roofs, caulking and windows, elevators) on this list should be addressed prior to undertaking capital projects.
    - We feel that, as we are not architects/engineers, etc., that we cannot further prioritize items on the DMP list. However, we are interested in knowing the criteria used to prioritize the list. Based upon the description of the some of the DMPs on the list, we wonder why they are not ranked higher.
  - Other recommendations
    - Teaching labs renovation/expansion (Anatomy and Physiology, Advanced Chemistry, Nursing, and Biology: #1-4) are important, especially those with safety issues. It has come to our attention that an architect has already been hired to renovate Olsen laboratories. Some of our committee members feel that infrastructure repairs/renovations should take priority over these labs.
    - We recognize the importance of repairs and renovations in the Dana Library as many students and faculty are served there. A committee member recommended that Dana Library DMP repairs/renovations should be ordered as follows: (1) #23 wall waterproofing, (2) #9 window replacements, (3) #18 group study room renovations, (4) #10 office renovations.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Vice Chancellor Ryan asked for committee input regarding Capital projects, namely the Renovation of Chemistry and Biology Labs (Vice Chancellor Ryan moved to DMP list on 2/10), Dana Library, Life Sciences Building, One Washington Park. See attached Capital Projects list. We do feel that where any new construction is concerned, it must be reviewed within the individual programmatic perspective.
  - Dana Library/Student Commons/& Shelled Floor Fit-Out. One of our committee members provided the following information.
    - The third floor of the Dana Library has been vacant since 1994. The proposed floor plan will provide space for instructional labs for information literacy (smart classrooms), Newark Computing Services Lab, information commons (workstations/study areas), study rooms (for individuals and groups), conference room,

Camoës Center, multimedia services, reference services, etc. All of these provide services to the whole campus and receive heavy use by majority of the student population. This project will have the greatest impact on students' academic life on campus.

- Life Sciences Building
  - Before ranking this project, we would like to hear who will populate this space, and do we have a logical faculty hiring plan as well as resources to equip the new space.

## OTHER

- Vice Chancellor Ryan asked for committee input regarding other projects around the campus, the following are our recommendations.
  - Increased campus safety
    - We need more better exterior lighting and more "blue light" phones for emergency calls
  - Renovation (modernization) of the key bathrooms, lobbies AND departmental offices.
  - The building of a new dormitory. This will help the Newark campus to evolve from a primarily commuter to a more residential campus. This is critical to our growth and it will drive other positive changes.

## QUERY OF NFC FACULTY

- We asked NFC faculty to consult with their individual departments to gain information regarding departmental maintenance issues
  - Rosa Oppenheim (RBS) reported that there is a need to repair the window caulking of 1WP on the Broad Street side because heavy rains are resulting in water damage to offices and classrooms.
    - There have been repeated requests.
    - There is damage every time it rains
- Wen-Hua Ren (Dana Library) met with library administration and was told that the walls on the north/west side of Dana Library need resealing due to leaks and deposit building on the walls.
  - It is important to fix the leaks because the moisture and mold will damage the collections.
- Paul Axel-Lute (Law Library) provided to us and Vice Chancellor Ryan a list of maintenance issues in the Center for Law and Justice brought to his attention by Law School faculty members. Most of these turned out not to be deferred maintenance items, but rather items that could be dealt with immediately, and for which normal work orders were promptly issued.

Respectfully submitted

Jeanne Ruggiero