

Minutes of Meeting of the Newark Faculty Council
May 17, 2021

Present:

Nancy Cantor
Ashwani Monga
Marica Brown
Amber Randolph
John Gunkel
Ana Rivas

Alexander Gates
Erich Toncre
Fran Bartkowski
Jane Gilman
Jiahuan Lu
Michael Barnett
John Kettle
Ashaki Rouff
Beryl Satter
Joseph Markert
Haesum Kim
Gary Farney
Willie Ray Williams
Mary Rizzo
April Benasich
Miklos Vasarhelyi
Krista White

Gates:

Minutes are approved.

Cantor:

We are aiming to be in person in the fall. We have a vaccine site on campus. Anyone can come get vaccinated, including family members. Gunkel has been working with tech people to outfit classrooms and determine scheduling so we have proper distancing. We are waiting for Office of Secretary of Higher Education of New Jersey to give us further guidance. So far, distancing and masks will still be enforced. We expect distancing to be three feet, not six feet. There will be a "return to Rutgers" manual coming out soon. All the HVACs are being processed.

Randolph:

We are organizing what buildings need to be open. Ventilation etc.

Monga:

If faculty can't teach for medical reasons, they will follow same procedure as pre-pandemic (for medical release from teaching). We have extended tenure clocks, and we have grants for caregivers. Students will be here. We will not be remote.

Q: Should we upload vaccination cards?

A: Yes. It is helpful for us to know how many are vaccinated, so we know how often to test for COVID-19.

Q: Starting June, undergrads are coming in to do research in person. We are wearing masks. Are students required to be vaccinated over the summer?

Cantor:

We will check on whether students should be required to be vaccinated. They can be vaccinated on campus and should be (with exceptions for medical and religious reasons).

Q: We can ask them to get vaccinated, but it's not enforceable until the fall, correct?

A: It is not enforceable until the fall, but there is no reason not to get vaccinated now, since vaccine is available on campus.

Gunkel:

There are privacy issues around asking if people are vaccinated. It shouldn't go through individual instructors.

Q: Many courses have field components. Usually we travel by van. How to social distance in a van or other mode of transport?

Cantor:

Please write to Butterfield about this. Public transportation can be used, so probably van transport will be OK (in the fall, when students will be required to be vaccinated). Still, do ask. There are specific examples that we need to look at.

Q: Any news on the fiscal situation?

Cantor:

The situation is about the same. Conversations with union and state of NJ are going forward.

Randolph:

Are there new questions about the travel policy we just instituted? Just ask if so.

Q: How quickly will travel approval process work (in general)? It looks like an involved process.

Cantor:

It will be done as quickly as they can, but yes, it's a complicated process. You can ask Butterfield if you have a deadline, and we can try to expedite.

Q: We have been working for about a year and a half to update the NFC webpage. I contacted Karla Haley Penn, who has been working on the issue with Ana Rivas since February. They have updated some things. Is the site there to store documents? Or should it be a place to see what we're discussing? For example, documents about sexual harassments that we posted to give an idea of how the process worked?

We haven't let faculty know that it's a place they can find information. We need to advertise it.

For now, it's modeled on the Newark Staff Council website. It lists who we are, how often we meet, and the minutes. The back-up information we get in our meetings should also be included there. We need someone to take responsibility for updating it.

Q: Newark Staff Council has a "Suggestion Box." We need a way for faculty to interface with us. Can we have that, or other interface point with us?

A: Yes, we need to let people know, give them a link to the webpage, and have a suggestion box or something similar. Someone will have to moderate it. It's not hard to do.

Q: How much of this is public and how much is internal?

A: Most of what we do here is transparent. The whole point is to be an interface between faculty and administration, so no need to be secret. We could have a private area, but what would we put there?

A: We used to post everything that seemed post-able. We could post the agenda in advance. That might elicit comments from faculty, which is good. Maybe the number on votes should be private – but really we should be open.

A: We need a webmaster. It shouldn't be hard to upload material. Minutes should not mention particular names. Review before posting.

Q: What about public input by faculty? Is that public or would it go to a private source?

Q: Suggestion box can be anonymous.

Q: We need a subcommittee of NFC to deal with the website.

Q: It's not that complex. Executive Committee can handle the oversight of it.

Gates:

Marcia Brown is here to give some insights before she retires in July.

Marcia Brown, Vice Chancellor:

I've served under 5 chancellors. I've worked with many of you over the years. I was here over 22 years, plus my time here as a law student in the early 1990s. I was asked to run the Minority Student Program. The position of Vice Chancellor was initially focused on community relations (town-gown). Then it expanded to community activists who wanted to use R-N resources (Robeson, the athletic center) or create pipelines to attendance at R-N. Basic commitment to social justice is key. First, 1967-8, there was the 1967 Newark Uprising, King's assassination, the Black students' takeover of Conklin Hall, and the Minority Students Program to bring in non-white students. This led to shift to the campus we have today, the most diverse in the nation. Council on Higher Education in Newark – Essex County, UNDNJ, NJIT, and R-N – all worked together. We created joint pre-college programs, as well as shared transport for students, etc.

Our anchor institution program under Cantor has focused on social mobility and racial equity and institutional empathy. In six years, there have been rises in local, undocumented, and formerly incarcerated students. We have numerous, unprecedented collaborations with local institutions of all sorts. We're of Newark, not just in Newark. All of our formerly general outreach activities have become more robust.

For example, the faculty cluster hiring has led to more faculty connecting to the city. We now have faculty who are embedded in City Hall. David Trout's work on equitable development is key; also the "Invest Newark" program through the RBS. We have three anchor teams – education, economic development, and public safety. They are creating an ecosystem for higher education. We need to document this work and tell the story. We need metrics for showing accomplishments. Then we need to duplicate our successes elsewhere.

We will see more interaction between our faculty and legislators. Legislative Committee on Environmental Justice has been asking scholars for input.

The average person does not get close to academics. Here, we've created collaborations where researchers are talking with parents, seniors, activists, and academics work together.

Q: We have a former academic from Arts, Media and Culture now at the mayor's office in charge of Cultural Affairs. There is a podcast, "Rock Steady," featuring Marcia Brown that we can listen to. Brown will go on to be a theater director!

Cantor:

We will keep her around one way or another. She'll be deeply involved because she cares. There'll be a big party for her probably in August.

Gates:

We submitted a report to the Senate. We'll continue to give reports each month. Two issues: 1) Subawards. Right now, you can't have a subaward between Rutgers campuses. Federal

agencies wants only one point of contact. For example, I had a grant that I shared with others on other Rutgers campuses, but I was responsible for every single expenditure they made; a huge waste of time.

I also have a faculty departmental member who is doing a huge amount of work on a grant in New Brunswick, but since there are no sub-awards, this person gets zero credit or documentation on the grant. This will hurt them when they come up for tenure.

Q: Is it a Rutgers policy that we have no subawards between campuses?

A: It is a Rutgers policy.

Cantor:

You can ask us for help. It will be simpler than going to the Senate.

Q: I'm doing a grant with someone in NB right now. It's awkward that there are no subawards. Instead of going to the Senate, we should go to Cantor etc. because once it's in the Senate, we have no control. Instead, go to the people who control the subaward issue directly.

Q: Only go to the Senate if we can't resolve it directly.

Monga:

We will work on this. Gates' second question is about cross school majors. The RCM is working on it as far as the money trail goes. Deans need to agree on what makes sense for the schools.

Gates:

If there's a program with a professional school and a non-professional school, it automatically goes to the professional school. Is this the case?

Gunkel:

Yes, under the old budgeting model this was the case for tuition. Not sure if it still works that way, even for tuition.

Randolph:

I will look at this with Monga.

Gates:

I tried to get a program going with school of Engineering in NB. They said it was impossible, because someone had to have ownership of the students. Has this changed?

Monga:

There are other examples where the collaboration works. It's up to the deans to agree. Send me this example and we will discuss and investigate it.

Randolph:

We need to foster more intra-campus collaboration, so we can bring this up. SPAA has a shared grant with a school in NB. We should look into how they made it work.

Q: If there's something we can't resolve, then we make a resolution. In those cases, we bring the resolution to the Senate.

Michael Barnett, incoming Chair of NFC:

Are we using our time effectively meeting 90 minutes a month? I sent out a survey in Feb. 2021. Five people responded. People don't feel clarity on our purpose. As chair, I want to figure out our purpose. I'm a strategy scholar and can help us achieve whatever the purpose is. -Are we a representative sounding board on Newark faculty issues? Or are we a sounding board for the administration? Can we be both? If we're a sounding board, then administration should set the agenda. Or, if we're to represent the faculty, they need to set the agenda (and we need to take action). -We are supposed to be both, but structure doesn't work. We have bylaws that we can follow. Shall we follow them, or change them, or ignore them?

Q: We should be both. The administration listens to us and lets us know if the issue can be handled by them or not. We should bring issues to the administration. The chair of NFC can set the agenda. We've gotten some things done over the years.

Gates:

We've had things come up from faculty, or from administration. Publicly Engaged Scholarship was brought in from administrative level.

Q: We tried to get more faculty involvement. We asked them for ideas. We got few responses. We tried to get NFC people to report to faculty meetings. It didn't get very far. We should be speaking more on behalf of the faculty. Are we a representative body? We have three people from one department, for example. Can we get less bunched up? Also, presentations are a bit long. Can they be more like 10 minutes, so there can be more discussion? Another example is publicly engaged scholarship; we didn't have a committee but we had good discussion.

Q: We should loosen up the by-laws. Someone should examine them.

Barnett:

Committees are how issues are brought up, according to the by-laws. We don't have enough people to work on the committees.

Q: Let's have someone review the by-laws over the summer. We should de-bureaucratize the system.

Q: The executive committee was not proactive at some point. Instead of creating a lot of committees, maybe the executive committee can discuss the issues more vigorously before they come up to the full council.

Barnett:

We are trying to create a good structure for a something that has no content.

Q: The issue of complication and bureaucracy is a big issue. We need to simplify.

Barnett:

Maybe we only need to meet once a semester, if there are no issues.

Q: The monthly meetings keep communication open.

A few people volunteered to review the bylaws.

Q: We are privileged to have the chancellor's office with us. The other councils don't have this regular relationship with the chancellor's office.

Q: Sometimes we hear from various schools to talk about what their schools do.

Barnett:

Do we need administration on the by-law committee?

A: Not necessarily.

Barnett:

The by-law committee will meet.

Minutes by Beryl Satter