

Newark Faculty Council Minutes
April 8, 2019

Attendance:

Tim Raphael
Rosa Oppenheim
Jiahuan Lu
April Benasich
Alexander Gates
John Kettle
Fran Bartkowski
Beryl Satter
Haesun Kim
Miklos Vasarhelyi
Jane Gilman
Ray Williams

Jerome Williams
John Gunkel
Sherri-Ann Butterfield
Nancy Cantor
Bil Leopold

April Benasich:

- Minutes of last meeting: approved.
- We'd like an update of online courses.
- We need a statement of willingness to serve by whoever is running as Newark Senator at Large.

Jerome Williams:

-Barbara Lee's instituting a committee re: publicly engaged scholarship. We need to develop evaluation criteria, since many don't have a way to evaluate just how publicly engaged scholarship (PES) should contribute to promotion evaluations. We can expect to have more such cases that have a PES component coming into the PRC in the future, so it's wise to institute some guidelines for decision making.

-Barchi has renewed RU's commitment for diversity hires. There was just an announcement from President Barchi on extension of the Faculty Diversity Hiring Initiative—a nearly \$22 million program initially set to expire in July 2021. The program will continue through fiscal year 2024 with a \$40M commitment. There's also a proposal to make equity advisors available to search committees in order to support a diverse approach to hiring. Committees might not understand the importance of diversity hires or how to incorporate diversity within the job search. So, committees nationally have devised some techniques on how to identify, recruit and retain diverse faculty.

Q: There's been no mention of the fact that Barchi's renewal of commitment to diversity hires was part of a push by the union. Why didn't he acknowledge that his action was in response to the union?

A: I have no idea. Provosts have been pushing this for a long time.

Nancy Cantor:

-We were discussing this way before the union negotiations.

-Q: There was a petition to renew the program, send out from someone in New Brunswick. After that, Barchi renewed it. Is that the case?

A. Not familiar with that.

-Q: We were hoping to recruit a particular candidate – it would have been helpful if the diversity money had been there. It's too late for this semester.

A. It's never too late. There have been and continue to be other mechanisms in place to support diversity hires.

-Q: Are diversity advisors under discussion? Can they meet with departments in advance of hiring?

Butterfield:

-P3 is working on diversity advisors now. We're already planning to meet with departments.

Q: Our department wanted to know what the criteria are in order to tap into the program.

Cantor:

-You propose the hire to the dean, and the dean proposes to us.

Q: Barchi says department must come up with a recruitment plan. What kind of plan is it?

Cantor:

-It's just includes the standard procedures now used in hiring.

Williams:

-In particular, you would need to document that you've looked at certain places to find diverse candidates. How diverse overall was your pool, etc. These criteria have been in place for quite a while.

Q: We've hired from Puerto Rico, Argentina, and someone from LGBTQ community – what counts as "diverse"?

Williams:

-Department must make the case. If you have no women in the department, then hiring a woman would fit.

Cantor:

-Diverse faculty strengthens the intellectual basis of the university. Also, we hire many more people across those categories than Barchi's diversity program pays for or covers.

Q: Are funds distributed to departments? How does it work?

Cantor:

-Deans work with the departments to initiate hiring – after the search is over, the Dean can ask if the person they have hired is eligible for that fund. If so, the diversity fund pays for ½ the salary for 3 years. After that, it's up to us. So, such hires have to be part of our usual hiring.

Butterfield:

-People should not be told they are "diversity hires." Don't push for "main person" and then get a second "diversity hire." If person is good, just hire them.

Williams:

-On PRC: the committee needs to consider ethical standards as part of the requirements for promotion and tenure. There were a few cases where ethical issues did come up. Questions on how publications were counted and claimed, such as people shifting around their names on publications so they seemed to be "first authors" when they weren't, etc. Similar issues sometimes arise with grants. We need guidelines for dealing with such issues going forward.

-Teaching will continue to play a huge role in promotions. In at least two cases, teaching was a major factor and stopped their promotion. Classroom visits would be very helpful in order to evaluate teaching. We found cases where entire department voted in favor of person, but the teaching was terrible – so that issue then had to be dealt with at the dean's level.

-Another current topic is the proliferation of centers and institutes. We need guidelines in order to document that our centers and institutes are "real" centers and institutes.

Gunkel:

-Questions to be asked about centers and institutes include who is the director? What are the criteria for membership? What outcomes are expected? What is their internal evaluation plan?

Q: Are there guidelines to how to judge centers?

Williams:

-There is a policy: 10.1.5 – that describes how to review them.

Gunkel

If a center reports to a dean, the dean does the evaluation.

Q: Does Rutgers require reports yearly?

Gunkel:

-Just need to set a baseline for evaluations. Not yearly – though we do want to set up an evaluation cycle (since many centers outside of Rutgers-Newark had no such plan). So, if we can create a baseline throughout the university that will facilitate ongoing oversight. The policy says no more than every five years; but, for example, Rutgers Business School, which has a dozen or so centers, would need to stagger its evaluations.

Williams:

-Regarding on-line courses, there's been a DOCS external review. (Division of Continuing Studies). We need to develop guidelines for on-line courses and content. Example: Business schools in Camden and in Newark want on-line content; thus there can be competing online programs. We don't want this. It would be better for complementary programs were available. We need to find companies to work with us on the online space. DOCS has gotten some criticism, especially out of NB for not being on top of this.

Benasich:

-So, say, Business Schools courses would be all-Rutgers—the content would apply to all business schools?

Cantor:

-No, there will still be campus differentiation. We just don't want the courses to compete with each other.

Q: How do we differentiate campuses?

Williams:

There's a committee looking into all of this a sit's actually complicated in a number of ways. Example: there's a billboard in NB about Rutgers Online MBA program – but it's actually offered by Camden. However, people will assume it's in NB and part of the NB business school program. Thus the best way to advertise these on-line courses but still retain campus identity needs to be explored.

Q: There's a lot of competition for these programs – though MBA programs are going flat. However, they still make money for the campuses.

Butterfield:

Also we need to make it easier for students, who can't always tell where their online class originates.

Q: Re: Ethics guidelines for PRC: Will there be faculty input?

Williams:

-Yes, we will have faculty input. Faculty can be defensive about things they've done. For example, claim they were key to getting the grant even though their role is not defined in the grant. But sometimes we can't find substantiation of what is submitted, and that's a real problem.

Benasich:

-We've had requests for our neuroscience courses to go online. Students sometimes don't like in-house teaching; at times they can't understand what the teacher is saying or feel the teaching is not good; but maybe having online courses with the best teachers would help. Maybe we can have more hybrid courses, that is those with both class and on-line content. Online exercises often work well for the students as the targeted feedback helps them learn.

Benasich:

-Update on the proposed addition to University Senate bylaws. See attached final proposal from Sanjib Bhuyan, the current Chair of the NBFC, concerning a joint effort by the four Faculty Councils at Rutgers to have these Councils included in the RU Policy library. They've been submitted to the University Senate (on April 4) with participation and approval from the chairs of all four faculty councils (RU-NB, RU-C, RBHS and RU-N). Now we're waiting for Senate response.

Benasich:

New Business:

We need to elect a senator at large for RN. We do have one self-nomination; Christine Bator, an adjunct teacher in the law school. She is a former commissioner on NJ Board of Utilities, implemented NJ Clean Energy Program, and much more. She was also in private practice as well as teaching. She teaches in Holodock (simultaneous teaching here and Camden). She has experience on multiple boards and commissions. She's not been teaching at RN very long, but she is well respected and enthusiastic about serving.

Vote: Dr. Bator is elected as Senator at large (vote is unanimous).

Q: We have opening for 12 RN student senators also. How can we get more in? It can be graduate or undergraduate.

Cantor:

It's hard because all the meetings take place in NB. Corliss and her group are working hard with grad and undergrad associations to get people involved. It's just hard to fit in another thing. But we can push graduate students more.

Q: We should email people who are chairing graduate programs, telling them to let grad students know that this would be great to do, and great on resumes.

Butterfield:

Benasich can send this out; she can contact the dean of graduate school to get list of heads of grad programs, and they can send it out.

Benasich:

-I've contacted Vivian Hernandez about background check issues.

Butterfield

-Will try to get Vivian Hernandez to NFC for our next meeting. This will give us context. As is, we have numbers but no context. To my knowledge, there haven't been many turned down.

Benasich:

-Bureaucratic overload issue: Piotr Piotrowiak came and talked to us about the hiring system. We discussed the ROC system. We discussed the RAPS system. Are there other areas to discuss? These are issues that come with a larger system, merging with UMDNJ, etc.

Q: The Graduate Portal is a very complicated and non-user-friendly system. It's hard to download applications. No way to know if people have applied automatically. The system doesn't tell us when people applied. There's no way to track or manage recruitment. We can't track things like who reached out to this student, etc. It's a university-wide system.

Gunkel:

-We've inherited this system. It can use a refreshing; it was built quite a while ago. We need to look into it.

Benasich:

-It got so difficult that we asked grad students to send their applications directly to us. It was too slow; we couldn't get letters of support in time, etc. They would send GRE scores and three months later they still hadn't shown up.

Q: We hired a regional person – Kasha – a business manager. For the first time in five years we have someone who knows the system, can tell us how much money we have, etc.; it is life changing. She works for SAS-N.

Q: We have one person who oversees all our programs. This person is overwhelmed with grant management etc.

Butterfield:

We are planning to get "regional" people; someone who manages a few departments at once.

Q: The key is to simplify the system.

Q: No – the problem is that we were being advised by people who had not been trained in the software.

Q: It's true that the system is still too complex. They won't spend money to fix it. We need a simplification if possible. Ex: A p/t teacher comes in every year. We have to go through recommendation letters etc. every year, even though this person has taught for us for 20 years. Can we get rid of the fat on this? I won't even bother with a grant less than \$50,000 because the work involved is so complicated. It's like the grad portal problems but worse. We need a taskforce to figure out how to simplify all this.

Cantor:

-A lot of this is compliance regulations that dictates information be collected that we must report to the federal government, to the state, etc. I've heard this exact discussion in every university I've worked at. There is indeed an overload of regulatory oversight—but that can't be resolved at our level.

Q: There are some people who can help us with this and help us to streamline the process. "Business Manager, Dean's office" is the job title of the recent successful hire.

Gunkel:

It's a skilled position – it's not something all faculty can learn to handle. That's just not cost-efficient.

Q: What can we do about the auditing system for reimbursement? I've had to work for a year to get a reimbursement. I made a mistake in an urgent situation by paying in cash for something; it was a disaster.

Benasich:

-It's gotten better. Now they are getting reimbursed in 3-4 days, not 3 months.

Butterfield:

-There will still be bumps on the road, but we are working on it. Sometimes it works well and sometimes not. People were waiting too long to submit (up to two years!). That causes a lot of problems.

Q: They want a copy of the credit card statement as well as the receipt. It goes on and on.

Benasich:

-We all want the systems to get easier to deal with. Some systems seem to have been rolled out before they were ready.

Discussion: Role of NFC for RU at large. How can we benefit faculty at large? How can we expand faculty engagement? How can the NFC serve as a conduit? Is casual transfer of information enough?

Q: We should each report on NFC discussions to a set of chairs, who can then report to their departments.

Q: I share with my departmental chair. I don't know if it gets circulated within the department. Ask them to get back to us.

Q: The one thing that worked is when I asked faculty a specific question. Ex: Have you experienced more bureaucracy? They will answer.

Benasich:

-The faculty need to know what's happening here; that is not the same thing as getting their opinions.

Q: We have faculty meetings; we should have time at each faculty meeting to report on what's happening at NFC.

Q: I don't think most faculty care about what goes on here. They will respond to individual issues they care about. Send them a few issues that they might care about.

Q: If we do that, the information is received by solitary individuals. If NFC reports get discussed at departmental meetings, there's a chance for group discussions

Q: Tell the chairs what our upcoming agenda will be.

Q: Let there be a place at the larger faculty meeting for reports from NFC.

Cantor:

-We can be selective about what goes on to the faculty. Not everything – just the main things. Ask for five minutes – not a long report.

Benasich:

-Attendance at overall faculty meetings is weak. We shouldn't only focus on problems. Talk about the positive things that are going on.

Q: It is good to share the positive.

Benasich:

-Take a two-pronged approach. Share the highlights at the Chair's meetings. Also ask to speak at larger faculty meeting when there is something worth sharing. Highlights to Chairs meeting can go to the chair of NFC. Also create a year-end summary, passing on highlights. Then point those who want more information to the NFC webpage.