

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
FACULTY SENATE RULES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2017**

**Present:** Bruce Baird, Marilyn Billings, David Gross, Frank Hugus, MJ Peterson, Marinos Vouvakis, Rebecca Spencer and Wilmore Webley.

**Guests:** Anna Branch, Associate Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion  
Michele Goncalves, Executive Assistant, Chancellor's Office

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the October 13, 2017 Rules Committee meeting were approved without revision.

**FACULTY SENATE AGENDA ITEMS (For November 16, 2017)**

**C. Panel Presentation on Open Access Course Materials**

Senator Billings will not be on the Open Education Resources Presentation, Librarian Jeremy Smith will be representing. SGA is advocating for open access. They initially wanted to get what they call "legislation" enacted on this issue but that would have been a difficult goal to achieve. The current thinking is that since many faculty members might not be aware of open access choice, this panel will be a source of information for faculty. Panel members will have 15 minutes for presentation, with time added for Q&A.

**D. Annual Reports**

The Rules Committee report is now final since no one added to, or suggested changes to the draft version in Box. There was a discussion on the status of the ICTC report, since it was not in the RC Box folder, but was instead a link that took you to draft on their site. Secretary Peterson will check with ICTC to determine if their report is complete. Each group with a report will need to have a representative at the 772<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Faculty Senate and each will have the opportunity to highlight their report in 2 minutes. The RC agreed that each report should be presented separately.

**F. New Business**

Documents supporting the two items (1) the Creation of an Accelerated Master's Program in Computer Science and (2) the Revision of the Minor in Music, were not available to the RC for review.

**GUEST PRESENTATION: MICHELLE GONCALVES AND ANNA BRANCH (9 am)**

Michelle and Anna came to talk about the new Pronoun Initiative on campus that will allow students to log into Spire and select how they want to be addressed. Options will include: he/him, she/her, they/them, ze/zir, I choose not to disclose. Academic advisors will be able to see these choices when they pull up a student profile. So will faculty members in their Spire class roster. Senator Vouvakis felt that there should be an option for students to state "do not care" about how they are addressed.

UMass will start this initiative in summer of 2018. Amherst College and Hampshire College are already doing this. Students will be able to opt in and they can select their preference. There was a lengthy discussion about how this affects the classroom environment and what this will mean for faculty members who address a student by the incorrect pronoun. Will the fact that it is now in the roster mean failure to use will be taken as more hostile or demonstrate a lack of desire to comply, putting that faculty member's job in jeopardy? Rules Committee members also had concerns about what would happen if a student tweets or

shares a displeasure on social media after an incident of misunderstanding in the classroom on gender pronouns. Anna says that the Chancellor has given assurances that the administration would not cave under such a pressure and therefore a faculty member will not be fired.

However, she did reveal that in the most recent climate survey, 65% of non-gender conforming students felt disrespected in the way they were addressed. Indications from the climate survey suggests that a majority of non-gender conforming students feel disrespected in classroom by faculty. Professors might want to have a clause in their syllabi stating that students should come and talk with them about how they would like to be addressed. A memo on how to address pronouns in the classroom is being prepared in collaboration with TEFD. The Rules Committee suggested that a conversation about these plans should also take place with MSP.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Nominee for Delegate to the BoT** - This item will be on the agenda after annual reports and before new courses. Chair Gross talked with one potential nominee. That person's biggest concern was driving into Boston, but he is willing to be a nominee. RC members will talk with other potential nominees.

### **Faculty Representative for Textbook Vendor Selection Committee**

Ruth Yanka suggested that we provide two names of faculty for the textbook vendor selection committee. RC members suggested a number of people. We discussed whether someone from the Academic Priorities Council, College of Ed, or Isenberg might be a good choice. Senator Vouvakis thought that we should have someone from the sciences and someone from the humanities. Senator Billings is on the committee already, and she reports that the committee will create the bid specs. The RFP is already mostly done. The committee will be evaluating the bids. Senator Hugus mentioned the strong resistance from faculty about Amazon being the conduit for federal reporting on textbook selection, and Secretary Peterson said that plans are already in place so that the textbook reporting tool will be changed to an internal one created by CESD.

**Revision of Faculty Senate Practicum (see draft proposal)** – Students who serve on Faculty Senate Councils and Committees are eligible to enroll in the Faculty Senate practicum (UMass 298A). It has been proposed that we bring the practicum in line with the usual expectation that a one-credit practicum involves 40 hours of work. This would mean that students will be required to serve a full year to receive the practicum credits so that students can get a better sense of what is going on the council. A student would enroll during spring term of the year they are serving on a Council or Committee, and may repeat the practicum a second time in a succeeding year. Students will be able to reflect on their role and what they had learned, then write a reflective piece in order to fulfil the practicum requirements. Since the Faculty Senate is essentially the curriculum committee for this practicum, it should be presented to them for their approval.

**Secretary of the Faculty Senate Term** – Secretary Peterson's term as secretary will end in July. Therefore, the Chancellor will have to appoint nominating committee soon to approve her continued service or nominate someone else.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wilmore Webley