

**FACULTY SENATE RULES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

APRIL 10, 2015

Present: Richard Bogartz, Marilyn Billings, Ernie May, MJ Peterson, Susan Krauss Whitbourne

The order of items was modified so items related to the Board of Trustees meeting and the Rules-Administration meeting could be handled before 9 am.

1. FACULTY SENATE AGENDA ITEMS (For April 30, 2015 and May 7, 2015)

Because of scheduling constraints involving the Chancellor, the Provost, and co-chair Chilton of JTFRA it was agreed that the JTFSO and JTFRA reports with their associated motions will be taken up on May 7th.

Accordingly, the featured presentation on April 30th will focus on the diversity report. This will not be another summary of the report itself which has been presented already; it will focus on the action steps that are already or are about to flow from the report. It was noted that the report has inspired lively discussion in the Status of Diversity Council and there is a possibility that some Council members will offer a separate report.

Dealing with JTFSO and JTFRA on the seventh also means that the elections of presiding officer and delegate to the board of trustees will both be held on April 30th.

After some discussion of ways that Senate meetings can be made efficient, effective at promoting discussion, and also fit within the time constraints of available time, it was agreed that as an experiment the agenda for April 30th will begin with the elections, followed by the motions on routine business, and conclude with the discussion of diversity issues.

Members were reminded that the rules committee meeting of April 24th has been rescheduled to the morning of April 22nd and will serve as the final agenda meeting for both the April 30th and May 7th Senate meetings.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Report on the Board of Trustees meeting of April 8.

Faculty Delegate Whitbourne and Associate Faculty Delegate Billings elaborated on the report they gave to the Senate yesterday. The Board's committee of the whole meeting on the preceding afternoon had devoted considerable time to the University's investment policy, and in particular the question of divesting from investments in fossil fuels. In response to questions they noted that the system holds all University endowment and therefore policy on investment is made at the system level, not at the level of individual campuses. Thus the students who are campaigning for divestiture have been focusing their attention on the Board of Trustees. The Worcester campus is the lead campus regarding initiatives in the life sciences and health, but a significant portion of the money allocated to those areas by the state is also coming to this campus. This campus is the lead campus in areas of computer technology defined generally to include data science and cyber security so it is reasonable to expect that there will be additional activity in these areas. At present it is anticipated that the Board of Trustees will act on the question of reappointing Chancellor Subbaswamy at their June meeting.

Rules Committee/Administration meeting topics for Monday, April 27.

Members noted that yesterday there had been a day-long event marking the opening of a new Center for Data Science, about which they had learned from stories in the *Boston Globe* this morning. The administration had given provisional approval to the center, as it can do under University policy, but the

failure to inform the rules committee ahead of time seemed to strain against the desire for transparency that both administration and faculty have been expressing during the strategic planning process. The rationale for the new center was explained and members were inclined to agree that on the whole the center will be a good thing. However the method of proceeding with it did seem inconsistent with the desire to have a more open and intentional planning process for the campus as a whole. Members agreed that we would ask about this at the next rules committee/administration meeting.

Provost Newman and VC Malone memo requesting Faculty Senate Action regarding Centers and Institutes.

The committee discussed the administration's request to apply the "fast track" procedure to close down 19 institutes and centers which it had identified as inactive. Contacts with a number of the 19 has revealed that some of them are in fact active, one anticipates returning to activity because of a significant donation, one is active under another name, and others are in fact inactive. The committee agreed that this was a matter that could be continued into the summer affording more time for contacting the other centers listed.

Nominations to Senate Councils and Committees.

Members asked about the objections that had been raised in the Senate yesterday to the proposal adding the director of the Life Sciences Institute to the Research Council as an ex officio member. The objecting members, though outvoted on the floor, had provided their arguments against treating the Institute differently from others. Members felt there were good reasons to differentiate the Life Sciences Institute but also agreed that the unhappy senators had raised points that merit careful consideration going forward.

Members had questions about two aspects of the nominations being forwarded from the nominating committee. In one instance, it was felt that three members from a single department meant excessive concentration from a particular area of campus. In another instance, it was pointed out that some of the people being suggested for continuing on a particular Council had not been active participants during the past year. The committee discussed various ways in which these problems might be addressed, such as ensuring an information loop between council chairs and the Nominating Committee regarding who is and is not actively participating and various ways in which the nominating committee or others might work harder to recruit from all areas of campus. It was noted that this is a recurring problem particularly since participation in campus governance is not taken into consideration during tenure or promotion reviews, where the emphasis is very much on research, teaching, and activity in the discipline or in community engagement. There was some discussion of ways in which the Senate itself might provide recognition of this service.

MJ Peterson