

Draft
Minutes of the Intercampus Faculty Council
13 April 2016

Present: Dartmouth campus - Douglas Roscoe, João Paraskeva, Stephen White; Amherst campus - Marilyn Billings, A Yemisi Jimoh, MJ Peterson, Susan Whitbourne; Lowell campus – Eva Buzawa, Michael Carter; Worcester campus - Leslie Shaw

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am.

The minutes of the September 16, 2015 meeting were approved.

Campus Reports

Amherst

The campus has been engaged in several efforts to draw out the implications of the strategic plan and mechanisms for implementing it. This involves two task forces – The Joint Task Force on Strategic Oversight (JTFSO) and the Joint Task Force on Resource Allocation (JTFRA) – and their subsidiary body – the Joint Subcommittee on Administrative Costs and Services.

The JTFSO has been receiving and evaluating department plans, ranking them in terms of the extent to which the department addresses individual priorities in the strategic plan and an evaluation of its performance in areas directly related to those individual priorities. This has involved developing a table which permits placing departments in relation to one another and across time. The JTFRA has been working on a new budgeting system which involves both new consultative mechanisms for faculty participation in budget discussions and a quantitative model which aggregates revenues coming into the campus, reserves some portion of them as a central fund, and distributes the rest among the schools and colleges headed by the Dean. This is not an RCM system. Very early in the process – almost 3 years ago, within a few months of JTFRA beginning its work – the notion of adopting an RCM system was rejected unanimously; this decision reflected consensus across both the faculty and the administration. The budgeting system currently foreseen does involve the use of the quantitative model to provide figures that will be a starting point for budget allocation discussions, not the only factor taken into account. Decisions to augment or reduce actual financial allocations to particular units will be made through an intentional process to ensure that they are consistent with the unit and campus strategic plans.

The Amherst campus Faculty Senate is also considering a number of other issues:

1. A resolution on ensuring that the campus provides a learning environment open to expression and debate of opinions while also respecting the dignity and personhood of each member of the campus community;
2. Coordinating expression of faculty views regarding guidelines on minimum class-size in response to a Board of Trustees query about the campus policy which indicated that continuing to operate under unwritten guidelines is not a viable position; and
3. Adoption of a Policy on Open Access to Faculty Publications, the culmination of about two years of efforts to develop a policy that has general support. Though technically an agreement between the administration and the Massachusetts Society of Professors, the Faculty Senate did add its endorsement of the policy on April 7th.

Chancellor Subbaswamy has provided the Faculty Senate with information about the fiscal year 2017 budget and a set of scenarios for reducing spending depending on the combination of state appropriation and tuition increases that are eventually adopted.

Worcester

Work on revising the Academic Personnel Policy is continuing, with the main concern still outstanding being provisions on evaluation of the work of clinical faculty, most of whose activity involves direct care for patients. The goal is to acknowledge the nature of their main assignments while also indicating to clinical faculty that promotion to the rank of clinical full professor will require producing some scholarship. The resulting publications need not necessarily take the form of articles in peer-reviewed medical journals but should appear in some recognized publication.

The campus administration has not yet made any formal presentations on next year's budget, but feeling around campus is that next year will be tight.

The effort to adopt a Policy on Open Access to Faculty Publications remains stalled over concerns about what many faculty perceived as a significant amount of extra work that will be required of them to fulfill the policy.

The faculty held a general meeting on Diversity, Inclusion, and Unconscious Bias to discuss these issues and, in particular, how unconscious biases affect life on campus. Until this year, the campus was allowed to accept only students from Massachusetts, so student body demographics reflect those of the state. The ability to admit out-of-state students brings with it the possibility of increasing student diversity. The faculty discussion of these topics was informed by information about student experiences and views as reported by advisers in student affairs who have heard about student concerns or complaints.

Lowell

Viewing the primary features of campus from outside, the campus looks like it is doing very well. There is a considerable effort to build school spirit and fund raising is going well. As at other campuses, the budget is tight. The campus has found a new provost, Michael Vayda, formerly Dean of the School of Agriculture at the University of Arkansas. New deans are being sought for the business school and the social sciences. In the meantime, however, there does remain an unfortunate combination of administrative flux and one particularly toxic Dean who in the view of faculty is causing a good deal of damage.

As indicated in the public presentation made to the Board of Trustees by the Adjunct union (an affiliate of the UAW), there are some labor relations problems. Full-time lecturers (non-tenure-track faculty) are represented by the Massachusetts Society of Professors and the MSP contract does include a cap on the number of lecturers the campus can use. Adjuncts, who are part-time, are not covered by that contract or hat limit. Some people on campus have estimated that accepting of all of the demands regarding pay and benefits for adjuncts were accepted, would cost be approximately \$8 million a year.

The current retirement incentive, which applies only to faculty who already have 32 years of service, will have some effect on campus.

Overall, the faculty is feeling the pinch of campus growth because increases in number of students have outpaced increases in number of faculty. This has meant rising student to faculty ratios and a serious space crunch because no new academic space has become available. The campus currently lacks a sufficient number of larger lecture halls.

Dartmouth

The problems with the senior leadership on campus are no secret. The campus currently has an interim Chancellor whose appointment will last a maximum of two years and who is not eligible to be considered for the permanent position. His primary previous leadership experience was at Muhlenberg University, a private school that does not have a unionized faculty. He is still very much in a listening and learning phase.

The primary problem on campus is its identity crisis, which is brought on by the gap between the social discourse about what the campus aspires to be – a doctoral research university – and the social reality that it lacks sufficient resources to support that enterprise effectively. Senior administrators have been ignoring the reality of the region, that it is economically depressed and that the public schools are in dire straits, in their visions of the campus.

The former Chancellor never called meetings of the Budget Committee that provided a channel for faculty input into budgeting even though it is mandated in the union contract. The interim Chancellor has sought to develop a budget process for fiscal year 2018 since the planning for fiscal year 2017 was fairly far along when he arrived.

The campus did go through an inclusive strategic planning process two years ago, but the resulting plan contains too much; it seems to have picked up every element suggested by any constituency and put it into the plan rather than develop a manageable vision.

The Provost, whose primary interests are in STEM disciplines, has created a fairly toxic environment on campus. There have been some grievances filed about the handling of tenure and promotion cases but complaints in this area have little traction because typically the Provost operates by telling people whose records he regards as weak that they should not even bother initiating the process of being considered for tenure or promotion.

The Faculty Council has a large Research Council which has been articulating its views about what needs to be available to foster the kinds of research that the administration says it wants to promote. The campus also has a policy of faculty review of administrators in their third year, which feeds into the more general evaluation in their fifth year of service. In all, the general view among faculty on campus is that the administrators are not really qualified to run a campus qualifying as a doctoral research university because they do not understand what sorts of resources and what adjustments of teaching loads are necessary for research to happen.

The campus's three education graduate programs are all up for review by the Massachusetts Department of Education this year. [name] has indicated that if any one of the three fails the review, all three will be regarded as having failed. [This sounds quite dire but I did not quite catch the implications so suggestions for recording this better are particularly welcome.]

The law school has not met its enrollment targets. It started at an unfortunate time, a moment when law school enrollments around the country were decreasing. Law school enrollments generally continue to fall. Contrary to the promises that the law school would not be a burden on the taxpayers or on the campus budget, it remains a significant burden.

Boston

There was no report from the Boston campus.

New Business

The group discussed the possibility of asking for a meeting with Trustee Lee and/or whichever trustee succeeds her as chair of the Academic and Student Affairs committee of the board to provide faculty perspectives on academic issues facing the campuses.

Members were reminded that the annual election for ISC president and secretary would need to occur at the June meeting. Eva reminded those present that she is retiring and will therefore not be seeking re-election. Members are also reminded that eligibility to run for president is restricted to those who have served on the IFC for at least nine months before the election.

The meeting ended with an expression of thanks to Eva and Michael for their many years of service and wishes for good luck in their retirements.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.