

College of Arts & Sciences

Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2000

1. Call to Order, 3:25 PM

2. President's Report

Clarification regarding Franciscan Renewal Center: Harriett Corbett established a trust in the 1950's, which should become our shortly, now valued at five million dollars. We have an active interest in the property, and the Sisters of Saint Francis (Philadelphia) have an interest in us acquiring the property. We will know more by the Fall.

Regarding some large-scale organizational and leadership issues:

Our last substantial change was three years ago, when two vice-presidencies (academic and student affairs) were eliminated and three deanships were established. Unwittingly, these changes have resulted in increased distance between common services and CAS. There is a need to restore the centrality of CAS within the institution. The Graduate School and the Law School are more outward-looking, with responsibilities to their professions, and require considerable autonomy. Conversely, CAS students must be seen as central to our mission and need close attention.

There has been a diffusion of responsibility within the present structure, and a lack of involvement in decisions by middle management, faculty, and students. The President's role has often been that of chief operating officer rather than chief executive officer, and we lack a person in the chief operating officer role.

This situation has led to a decision to institute an office of Vice President and Provost. Integration is needed not only functionally, but under a common set of values which should be academic in nature. Admissions, information technology, library, facilities, human resources, events planning, and other functions will be pulled together under that office.

Rather than relying on the present Executive Committee, we need a variety of committees, task forces, and teams. Alternative transportation is an example: our motives were pure and we did produce cultural change, but the process lacked lead time and broad involvement. The Provost will engage in involvement processes up front and early on. By collapsing Arts and Sciences and central operations budgets into one, budget-making and resource allocation will be in the Provost's hands. The responsibilities of the Dean of the College will return to those specified in the bylaws. Physical Education and Athletics need to return to the heart of the college, along with academic awards, Pamplin Society, etc.

The physical center for College operations will move to a new center comprising a refurbished Albany Hall and a new Bicentennial Hall. By relieving the Dean of operational responsibilities we can foster greater faculty involvement, getting beyond the "feeling of drift" expressed by some faculty. We need to look at the forest rather than the trees.

As announced previously, a presidential commission is being established to develop a master plan for the next ten years. This commission will include tenured faculty. It does not usurp the usual functions of the academic committee structure. A second commission, on teaching, is also being established. The teaching commission will look at all forms of teaching, including advising and technology. It will include tenured and non-tenured faculty.

Regarding leadership positions:

- Jane Atkinson will become Vice-President and Provost.
- Curtis Johnson will become Dean of the College.
- Gary Reiness will become Dean of Mathematical and Natural Sciences.
- Harry Schleef will become Dean of Social Sciences.
- Tom Schoeneman will chair the Commission on Teaching.
- Jean Ward will continue as Director of Inventing America.

President Mooney has decided to become a teaching President, teaching a section of Inventing America in the Spring 2001 term. He is proposing a section theme on U.S. constitutional history. He concluded his report by asking the faculty to join with the leadership group and "put your shoulders to the wheel."

3. Dean's Report

Yesterday's meeting on classrooms produced a discussion that was long overdue.

As Vice President and Provost, Dean Atkinson expects to work more closely with Admissions on planning. Regarding the Academic Council, "four heads are better than one" at balancing institutional with local needs; the decision process is slower but better. Dean Atkinson offers best wishes to Curtis Johnson, to the Academic Council, and welcomes new deans Gary Reiness and Harry Schleef.

Questions and Discussion:

Q: What is the logic for excluding non-tenured faculty from the presidential planning commission? President Mooney: Tenured faculty are in a special management position, somewhat analogous to law firm partners.

Q: A faculty member expressed concerns, having heard from a student who was visited in the dorm by police and threatened with expulsion. Dean Atkinson: this incident illustrates why organizational changes are important. We need a central place to consider and respond to such situations.

Q: A faculty member expressed concern about a letter to students from the Director of Residence Life. Dean Atkinson: There are multiple cultures coming into conflict in this incident, wants to get processes underway so students feel heard

Q: A faculty member expressed concern about faculty time and resources for these new commission processes. Dean Atkinson: These are not permanent committees, but instead are task-oriented. President Mooney: These commissions can be seen as periodic, once-in-a-decade activities.

4. Reports of Standing Committees

Committee on Promotion and Tenure (Richard Rohrbaugh)

A letter was forwarded to the CPT by Dean Atkinson; written by a faculty member unidentified to the CPT, the letter expressed concern about uses of aggregate data from student evaluations. Particular concern was expressed about Inventing America scores being incorporated into aggregate statistics and pulling these down. Dean Atkinson asked the CPT to consider recommending action to the faculty.

Idea #1: Drop Inventing America from aggregate data. Problem: What about other "service" courses?

Idea #2: Abandon all collection of aggregate data. CPT does not use these data; no member could remember a single incidence of their use by the group or by individual members. Therefore, these data have no purpose. CPT members who are expert on statistics say they are not statistically valid. CPT was prepared to recommend abandoning the collection of the statistics and brought that recommendation to the Faculty Council. Some Faculty Council members said they use the statistics in their own personal interpretations of evaluation data. In sum, CPT needs to know from faculty whether a recommendation should be framed. Options are 1) no collection of aggregate data, 2) aggregate data made available only to individuals, 3) no change to present approach.

Discussion:

There are ways in which aggregate data might benefit applicants for promotion and tenure. Prior to the availability of aggregate data the CPT used "implicit benchmarks." CPT focuses heavily on evaluation numbers, which are seriously flawed. If we don't recognize this we create "different sets of understandings." We've created a culture of anxiety, which is as dangerous as some of the other issues that have been mentioned.

* In the letter, the anxiety was focused on numbers.

* Q: What are the arguments against statistical validity?

A: These are not statistics appropriate for inferential use. These are population parameters. The question is, what is meaningful difference? No technique exists to measure a meaningful difference. Evaluation form doesn't use an interval scale. Medians should be calculated, rather than means. Samples are not random. Numbers

are appropriate only as a prompt for examining the open-ended questions. There are apples/oranges problems. For example, how do we compare an instructor who teaches perspectives courses with one who doesn't?

There is a distinction between numerical scores and statistically-significant scores. What data does the CPT actually use?

The forms should fit that use.

The numbers provide a "shorthand" leading to the written comments. CPT looks for patterns in those comments. Nobody on CPT would make a judgment based on the numbers.

The data is calculated to two decimal points, misleadingly. A culture of competition encourages concern with the numbers.

- We could consider providing aggregate scores only to the individual.
- The letter assumes Inventing America scores are necessarily lower.
- There are concerns with the quality of the written data, as well.
- Faculty have an opportunity to comment on evaluation data in their own written narratives.
- We're far too dependent on these course evaluations, and have handicapped the CPT.

Library Committee (Jim Grant)

Committee has recommended a new fair Use policy to Dean Atkinson. The Executive Committee has adopted a new, more relaxed policy. Procedures are underway for a review of the total package by our lawyers. New policy is more liberal, focuses on intent of fair use; if intent is good, penalties are "minimal to zero."

Curriculum Committee (Steve Hunt)

The Honors subcommittee has chosen a recipient for the Rena Ratte award, to be announced at the upcoming Honors convocation.

The subcommittee on CAS summer school has made two recommendations to the Curriculum Committee:

1. Summer courses should undergo the same approval process as other courses, and should have departmental sponsorship.
2. Summer program should be reviewed. This suggestion has been forwarded to the Dean.

International Programs review will be completed in Summer or in early Fall.

Students on the Committee have reviewed the senior capstone experience on their own, full committee review is underway.

Meeting Adjourned, 5:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,

William Kinsella, CAS Faculty Secretary