

1 William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES –January 28, 2014
2 FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate> --
3

4 **PRESENT:** Aktan, Alon, Andreopolous, Bernstein, Bhat, Bliss, Broome, Colley, Cunningham,
5 D’Haem, Diamond, Dinan, Duffy, Ellis, Falk-Romaine, Finnegan, Furst, Gazzillo-Diaz, Harris,
6 Hodges (for Wicke), Kearney, Kim, Kothandaraman, Ku, Lee, Levitan, Maganuco, Makarec,
7 Natrajan, Nyaboga, Nyamwange, Pavese, Perez, Rosar, Sabogal, Sandmann, Schwartz, Sheffield,
8 Slaymaker, Smith, Snyder, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Verdicchio, Wagner, Wallace
9

10 **ABSENT:** Martus, Waldron
11

12 **GUESTS:** Bolyai, Burns, Chabayta, Ciliberti, Darby, De la Rosa, Feola, Flint, Fuller-Stanley,
13 Godar, Hahn, Noonan, Rabbitt, Richardson, Schneider, Stanfield, Trelisky, Vasquez, Wolf, Yoo,
14 Yucel, Zeff
15

16 **PRELIMINARIES:** Levitan called the Senate to order at 12:30 PM. *Pavese and Dinan moved*
17 *and seconded a motion to accept the Agenda as distributed and the motion passed unanimously.*
18 *A motion to approve the Minutes from the January 14, 2014 meeting of the Faculty Senate was*
19 *made and seconded by Bliss and Dinan. Bliss suggested that “died” be used rather than “passed”*
20 *in lines 27 and 29. The motion was approved unanimously.*
21

22 **CHAIR’S REPORT:** Levitan mentioned some of the issues the Executive Committee has
23 raised with the President and Provost: discrepancies in the posting of the Academic Integrity
24 Policy, the status of policies passed by the Senate, and more generally, how to find official
25 policies, and the academic calendar (which, as Tardi noted) is vetted by the Union. Snyder asked
26 about calendar conflicts around religious holidays, and recommended that the comprehensive
27 New York City school calendar be consulted. The rumor that the number of campus computer
28 labs was about to be reduced is untrue, but there is a review of the computing needs of students.
29 Kristin Cohen has resigned as of the end of the spring semester and a search for a new Vice-
30 President of Enrollment Management will commence shortly.
31

32 **BOARD OF TRUSTEES EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT:** Makarec
33 briefly outlined a number of issues discussed at the January 23rd meeting: Winter session
34 enrollments, retention rates and retention initiatives, applications, the use of early alert, the Blue
35 Ribbon Task Force Report, adoption of Degree Works, tenure reform and the upcoming
36 graduation of the first cohort in the DNP program. A detailed written report will follow.
37 Finnegan reported that when he requested a list of his students in academic difficulty, he got a
38 list of all such students. He stated that he was never given any guidance on how to assist students
39 as an advisor. He also mentioned problems with financial aid, the bookstore not stocking enough
40 textbooks (and suggested that the Administration should give the Library a copy of every text
41 used in classes). Steinhart seconded Finnegan’s point on texts. Lee suggested that the topic be
42 put on a future Agenda, and Sandmann said that he has made a note of this problem.
43

44 **VICE-CHAIR’S REPORT:** Dinan and Perez’s nomination of J. Kim for the Professional Staff
45 slot on the Assessment Council was approved unanimously. There are still Adjunct Faculty
46 openings on the Assessment Council (College of Education) and Technology (College of Arts

47 and Communication). Pavese again urged faculty to reach out to the Adjunct Faculty in their
48 departments.
49

50 **GRADUATE COUNCIL RESOLUTION: MASTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

51 **ADMINISTRATION:** *Duffy and Dinan moved acceptance of the proposal. Yoo detailed the*
52 *corrections and improvements made in the proposal (which had been sent back to the Council at*
53 *the January 14th meeting). After brief discussion, the program was approved with one vote in*
54 *opposition.*
55

56 **COURSES OF CONCERN:** Tardi stated that the Courses of Concern Report should have been
57 given to the departments for discussion before public distribution. Sandmann took responsibility
58 and promised to be more sensitive in the future. She further stated that the Report seems to
59 expose specific courses and faculty members, and that untenured and adjunct faculty might feel
60 pressured by it. Sandmann said the budget is OK for next year, but that there is very limited
61 room for growth. \$1,000,000 has been set aside for strategic priority requests for things aimed at
62 improving: retention, graduation, student learning and student success, etc. Funding is more
63 likely for things that build upon faculty strengths and that have the potential for significant new
64 enrollment growth (e.g., programs that they can't get elsewhere).
65

66 Bolyai added that strategic initiatives that have already begun will continue to be funded, and
67 that the process of applying via the website has been simplified. Deans and Chairs are moving on
68 new initiatives. We need smart projects where the need can be justified. Verdicchio and Lee
69 asked about capital projects. Bolyai explained that they are being undertaken as funding permits,
70 but every major project takes years to plan and complete. Finnegan and Maganuco asked about
71 student fees, especially those for things like online courses. Bliss suggested differential pricing
72 for courses taught at more desirable times. Tardi said that student learning and costs must be
73 considered. She called upon stakeholders to become involved with urging the state to support
74 college affordability. Bolyai said the bottom line is that the University needs a certain amount of
75 money to operate, no matter how it is collected: tuition, fees, etc., and that supporting greater
76 bandwidth is a key item.
77

78 Sandmann stated that there is no plan to attack people with high DFW rates. Every college has
79 courses with high failure rates. The DFW Report is intended to stimulate discussion on topics
80 such as: Are the students ill-prepared? Are they not studying? Is there too much work? Are
81 different learning styles involved? Are students with problems in one course having problems in
82 other courses? We must identify why these things happen. Pavese wants practical solutions,
83 while Diamond asked about any data collected previously. Sandmann said there are patterns at
84 WPU and nationwide: entry level courses for programs, science courses, any courses with heavy
85 mathematics (e.g., economics, science, psychology) as well as things like English composition.
86 Snyder observed that non-weed-out courses bring in more students, and Sandmann reiterated the
87 situation regarding state funding and WPU's dependence on tuition.
88

89 Sheffield said that this is the second grading type report she's seen in 41 years at WPU. The first
90 dealt with grade inflation. She prefers the DFW name since it focuses on the problem of under-
91 performance. She agreed that it is a nation-wide problem, but suggests it is not due to the faculty,
92 but more that students are ill-prepared and lack a work ethic. She called for an integrated

93 approach involving: an institutional study starting at the department level that goes beyond mere
94 numbers and seeks to understand why students are under performing; better academic mentoring
95 and counseling, involving the First Year and Sophomore Year Experience programs; a “constant
96 alert” not just an Early Alert program; smaller classes; a review of UCC entry points (too many
97 students are taking upper level courses before they are ready for them).
98

99 Perez noted that the College of Business is studying what are the criteria for grades and why
100 students can succeed in some courses but not others. Steinhart expressed a liking for big data,
101 and pointed to a factor not yet mentioned that may contribute to the problem: major switching.
102 Bhat called for an ad hoc committee to generate suggestions on how to change things and foster
103 student learning in hard courses. Sandmann agreed we need a venue to do more with this.
104 Levitan urged the campus community to forward comments and suggestions to the Executive
105 Committee and the Provost.
106

107 **ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Cohen made the first of several appearances
108 before the Senate this semester, primarily to answer questions. She reported that overall
109 enrollment is stable, with improvement on the graduate level. Fall to spring retention rates are
110 normal. She raised the question: Why are we losing 10% every fall? Kim agreed that this is a
111 most serious issue. He distributed three articles detailing what other institutions are doing and
112 urged that WPU do similar things and come up with new solutions. Tardi asked for comparative
113 data from sister institutions, which Cohen promised to provide. Finnegan raised a question about
114 how Mercer is advertising its affiliation with senior institutions and was assured by Noonan that
115 WPU is getting equal treatment. He called for better ways to contact students (who don’t respond
116 to e-mails), and stated that Early Alert isn’t working since faculty can’t tell why the student was
117 given the early alert. Andreopolous reminded the body that enrollment goes with reputation:
118 students want to spend their tuition dollars on a school with a good reputation. Cohen agreed
119 and said that WPU must do a better job getting the story of faculty and student excellence out to
120 the public. To Levitan’s question about transfer students, Cohen referred to the IRA Factbook
121 and the Enrollment Report. In short, students who transfer in with more than 45 credits do much
122 better than those who come with fewer than 45 credits: They are really freshmen.
123

124 **NEW BUSINESS:** Rabbitt reminded the community of the memorial for former Provost
125 Chernoh Sesay that will be held during common hour on Thursday February 6th.
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127

128 **ADJOURNMENT:** *Tardi and Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was*
129 *unanimously approved at 1:52PM.*
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131 Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary pro tem.
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133 THIS AND OTHER SENATE DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:
134 www.wpunj.edu/senate