

William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – November 12, 2019
FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>

PRESENT: Andreopoulos, Aktan, Christensen (for Ranjan, Chung, Crick, Diamond, Duffy, Ellis, Gazzillo Diaz, Griswold, Hack, Helldobler, D. Hill, Jurado, Kalaramadam, Kaur, Kearney, Kecojevic, Kollia, Liu (for Natrajan), Marks, Nyaboga, O'Donnell, Orr, Owusu, Potacco, Powers, Pozzi, Ramos, Rebe, Rosar, , Silva, Simon, Snyder, Spagna, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Vega, Verdicchio, Vishio, Wallace, Watad, Weisberg, Williams (for Finn)

ABSENT: Ashnai, Brillante, Janos, Shekari

GUESTS: Andrew, Astarita, Bartle, Bolyai, Brenenson, Cammarata, Cannon, Corso, Ginsberg, Godar, Griffin, Gritsch, Harris, Hawk, S. Hill, Jackson, Liautaud, Lincoln, Marshall, McLaughlin-Vignier, Moore, Noonan, Refsland, Rosenberg, Ross, Schneider, Tiernan

PRELIMINARIES: Chairperson Natrajan called the meeting to order at 12:30pm. Orr and Nyaboga moved acceptance of the Agenda, which was then approved unanimously. The Draft Minutes of the October 8th meeting, moved and seconded by Aktan and Griswold were approved with one abstention.

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT: Andreopoulos and Duffy nominated XXXXX for the Graduate Programs Council. XXX was approved unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

The SEC met with the President and the Provost last week. We discussed the following:

- 1. Administrator Evaluations** → The President spoke to the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees. They are open to the idea of an 'environmental' approach to the evaluations, as different from a performance evaluation. Such feedback from faculty would be taken into account by the Provost as advisory. The SEC has requested more concrete measures in this regard and stressed the need for institutional practice. Talks are still ongoing and the President has requested some more time to get everyone on board.
- 2. Academic Partnerships** → We had a brief presentation by Gamin Bartle (Director of IRT) on how things were progressing on the data integration front. As of now 10 graduate programs from Education, Business, and Nursing are being prepared to be offered starting May 2020. Courses would be offered on an ongoing basis and will be 7-weeks fully online. The administration expects faculty teaching these courses to have about 12 weeks to develop them. More updates are expected about how this is progressing in terms of getting the institutional support to be able to prepare the right number of courses and faculty ready in time.
- 3. RTP Process** → As mentioned at the previous Senate, there is a Committee being set up for examining the current RTP policies and process. The Committee will need to make recommendations to the Senate by end of Spring 2020. It will comprise two co-chairs

(Provost and Faculty Senate chair), 6 faculty members, 1 AFT member, and one Dean as an ex-officio member. The call for faculty nominations will be sent out later today. Please note that we are looking for faculty who can make a very significant contribution by way of knowledge and experience. We will also plan to get inputs from pre-tenure faculty through focus groups.

4. **Academic Reorganization** → The SEC shared our concerns about the lack of much news or updates from the Colleges regarding discussions underway or about any move for consolidation or new programs being envisaged. We stressed that while the members of the faculty were serious about retention and enrollment issues at our university, faculty feel that the pace and degree of change that is aimed for requires much more communication from the administration about the objectives and vision of the reorganization. Reorganization could have very long-term implications – for students, faculty, and the university community as a whole. When the President stressed that there was no ‘end-game’ in mind, the SEC requested some detailing of the expectations from such an effort at reorganization of the university. The Provost then laid out the broad principles and schedule for reorganization in **two phases**.
 - a. **Phase 1** (currently underway) has two parts. The first part (which is nearing completion by end of this semester) is to facilitate conversations within and between departments and Colleges, and for Deans to forward a set of recommendations by December 2, 2019. This part, as the Provost underscored, required ALL departments to participate in conversations as per guidelines that he had put out to the community. The second part of Phase 1 is scheduled in Spring 2020 when the Provost would direct faculty based on the recommendations he has received. This would include details about logistics.
 - b. Phase 2 would begin immediately thereafter - in Fall 2020. At that time it is expected (by the administration) that ALL departments have had conversations based on the need to move enrolments. To this end departments need to have thought/dialogued about how to build distinction, what to offer (in terms of degree programs) and how to offer (in terms of modes of delivering courses and pedagogy). This would be the time when innovative new programs would be sought to be initiated and institutional structures put in place to facilitate them and meet pedagogical needs.

To a question from the SEC about what the broad units of a reorganized university would be, and specifically whether departments and Colleges would continue to exist, the President was clear that this was not going to be the case. It was again stressed that no degree programs were going to be discontinued, but new programs that would contribute to ‘institutional vitality’ were actively sought. Finally, it was also emphasized that there would be an effort by the administration to invite external experts to present on various issues such as labor needs, demographic trends, and new emerging fields in the market to aid us in reorganization.

In concluding this part of my report, I submit the following as part of how the SEC is thinking. From our past conversations and the discussions in the Senate, it has become clear that some of the drivers for reorganization are the budget issue, which is linked to a systemic enrollment issue, which is also linked in turn to retention. All of these have regional and national drivers, not the least being a trend toward what Derek Bok has called the “commercialization of higher education”, or what Henry Giroux has called “Neoliberalism’s

war on higher education”. In this context, as I have argued in the chair’s report of 9/24/2019, it is important to not lose sight of one major fact: that our students not only need skills for getting jobs in a volatile and fast-changing market, **BUT** also need critical thinking knowledge, skills and dispositions. The reason they need the latter is because to be nimble in a volatile world demands attention to the conditions that make a different world possible. Our students need to be able to imagine and build that different world since this world as it exists does not seem able to generate jobs with ease, nor with any guarantees of stability. And, as is seen in the mobilizations of the young for doing something urgent about climate devastation, **no one feels the need to change our world more than our students.** Our students’ survival then, as full human beings with the right for all to develop to the fullest of their abilities – rests upon their ability to change our world. So, our attempts to reorganize our university better take into considerations what our students need *in the short and long run*. This demands that we have a deep, broad and meaningful participation of every unit on campus and not take any decision that would compromise our responsibility to our students as a public comprehensive university.

I now move to the next item on the agenda. Discussion on Reorganization

DISCUSSION ON REORGANIZATION: D. Hill pointed out that the CHSS is the college most impacted by this process. She is concerned about representation. She hopes that the University’s core values will be preserved.

Verdicchio urged everyone to think big. Financial crises often lead to making impulsive cuts. He quoted NY Times columnist, Thomas Friedman, who wrote that “Average is over.” We must guide our students not just to jobs, but to careers. We must think beyond just saving money, but toward thinking bigger.

Williams noted that WPU is the only college in New Jersey that has “civic engagement” as a graduation requirement.

Kaur said we must be nimble. While we must recognize the demographics of our students, we must show them the visionary careers, not just the nuts and bolts jobs. There should be collaboration between colleges, not just within them. WPU needs a paradigm shift.

Andreopoulos acknowledged that we need to save money, but followed up on the previous speakers’ remarks: We need to think big and create new programs that lead not just to jobs but to students having success in life. We must not just look at the supply side – what we can offer now – but study the demand side: what society and the labor market want of our graduates.

Steinhart wryly noted that while we need to be nimble and agile, it takes endless hours and reams of paperwork to get courses and programs approved. The administration must streamline these processes.

D. Hill said we must not lower the bar to become nimble.

Helldobler agreed that the colleges can get together. Faculty must do it and administrators will not block this. He also note that the American Association of Student Government Organizations reported that the most important things students value in their college degrees are: guaranteed employment, low tuition, class schedules that fit into their lives and training in the areas that employers need. He said that our student hear about jobs, not careers. \$12,000 a year must lead to a job. Once we have students enrolled we can work on their careers.

Natrajan agreed that students need jobs and wants to see follow-up studies of our students' success in jobs and careers. He also agreed that cooperation across colleges would lead to innovative synergies.

Simon noted that in our concern for diversity, inclusiveness and the global marketplace we must recruit, retain and support all students, including those with disabilities. We must build "welcomeness."

Griswold asked how the new First Year Experience was doing.

Andreopoulos said that while students need well-paying jobs, they should find careers that reflect their passions. Many of our low-income students give up their passions in order to just get jobs.

Verdicchio urged that we not devalue our students. They should feel that the world is in front of them. They need jobs but we must talk with them about careers.

Powers feels excited by these remarks and hopes to facilitate further conversations. He has told the deans to do so in their colleges. The discussions within colleges must not isolate or marginalize any departments. There must be resource stewardship that will lead to downstream benefits. Cross-college discussions are to be encouraged.

Helldobler said our students must graduate without debilitating debt. He noted that WPU ranks in the top 10% on the Social Mobility Index. Our students are doing well five years out.

Nyaboga gave two striking examples of our graduates' success stories.

Tardi urged realism. Our students' parents want them to get good jobs and have good lives. We should not make promises that the majority of our students will not achieve.

Vega questioned whether we are providing the support systems and services that our students need to succeed.

Natrajan added that retention is not just a classroom issue. Student success varies by each student.

Helldobler agreed that the University must provide tutoring, financial aid, etc.

D. Hill noted that we can do both: prepare our students for jobs and plant the seeds for growth and success to change the conditions of their lives, and that this includes our Latino and black male students.

RETENTION, TENURE AND PROMOTION PROCESS: Natrajan said that he would send faculty an announcement about the formation of a committee to discuss and make recommendations regarding changes in how WPU approaches these issues. The Boyer Model may be used to focus the discussions. Powers added that this ad hoc committee would have to work intensively for the next couple of months, examining what other institutions do, what are considered best practices, etc. The committee will have strong faculty representation and a dean. The work must be completed by the end of the academic years.

ADJOURNMENT: Natrajan promised that the program proposals that weren't considered today would be high on the Agenda for the next meeting.

Upon Crick and Tardi's motion, the Senate adjourned at 1:36pm.

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate, will be held on Tuesday, November 26th at 12:30pm in Ballroom C.

Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

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www.wpunj.edu/senate