Tuesday, December 3rd, 2019

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

12: 30 – Call to Order; Approval of Minutes

12: 35 – Raymond Ou, Vice Provost of Student Affairs

I have an expansive portfolio across Student Affairs, from Hiatt to Health and Wellness. We are in a state of transition across the university, and are looking at both mental health needs and career service needs. There is a real need for us to look at student life. We want to ensure we are accessible to students. I am still meeting with the various key stakeholders to open up communication channels and I am eager to hear the ideas of the Faculty Senate as I proceed in guiding my division.

Question: [Comparing us to Yale College] I felt that there was greater connection between faculty and students at Yale while I was there. That is partly because of the college system and the proximity of faculty. Is there some way to engender something similar here?

Answer: Learning about the residential college system at Yale was very rewarding. What was so wonderful was the assumption that there should not be a separation between the faculty and students. It helps to make a community.

Conversation around mental health concerns in higher education.

We have to define what it means to take care of students’ mental health. Many universities are set up to operate with a short-term model rather than sustained long term care in mind. Many incoming students believe that they can receive and are entitled to this longer-term care. We should have a multi-pronged approach - community building, mental health services, peer support, spiritual life, etc. all can help student care. We are also addressing how we triage students coming in for care and looking to tear down the barriers for students to receive care. I am forming a working group to look into these areas as well as to garner support and buy-in across campus. We have to welcome the tensions created by these conversations. Through dialogue we can dig deeper about all of student life not just mental health.

Orientation is such an untapped moment - we want to inspire faculty to get involved.

Comment on orientation: Students and new faculty and staff are bombarded with information during orientation then there is a cliff. Think about extending orientation through September into October.
Ans. - There is a cliff. I found out that Residential (RA)CAs don’t hold regular floor meetings. Which really inhibits community formation for students after orientation.

Comment: I would love to see faculty “adopt” a dorm and get more involved in student life.

Ans. - It’s definitely an untapped opportunity - we want faculty buy in and investment into student residential life.

Comment: This issue has come up before but has been dropped. But a potential solution might be emeriti faculty who still want to be involved with students.

Ans. - I would love to pull in past faculty as well.

Comment: I was part of a number of similar efforts “Living Learning Community”, including teaching in the dorms. It seemed to me to be very successful but they were dropped. I formed many relationships with the students and it created different kinds of relationships. It was over a whole year rather than a semester which helped. But this doesn’t work for all faculty members as some aren’t available outside of regular class hours. Finding a way to engage with faculty who have children/family/after hour concerns.

Ans. - I don’t know what happened to the Living Learning Community but we want to build out sustained efforts like this.

Comment: This might be a mental health issues— their home lives are often multigenerational while their campus life is mono-generational. We should create a multigenerational community on campus.

Ans. - Yes, this and working to create an interpersonal community.

Comment: I wonder about the academic advising on campus. Is there a way to connect that into this?

Ans. - We are planning to discuss exactly this. Through the Framework we want to integrate academic advising into the residential life. We are hoping to integrate this.

Comment: Most of the students I dealt with as an advisor didn’t really know who their freshman advisor was. There are so many services we offer students that they get overwhelmed. I’d like to see them offered a bit less so that they can take greater advantage of the services they’re interested in.

Comment: facilitate some type of Cohort experience and structure it in a sustaining way.

Comment: We are heavily siloed as faculty so hopefully this is the start of more conversations between the faculty, the senate, and your office.

**ACTION ITEM:** Plan to have Raymond Oh back for another meeting.
Next week is the alleged last meeting of the Working Group. We have come to some conclusions but have hit some wrinkles. The process of the working group - we will finish editing the by-laws and then put them on our website for faculty to comment on the by-laws for about 3 months. I will have the fully edited by-law versions shared with all of you before the end of the month. I am most dubious about the President’s thoughts on the All Faculty Meetings and what they are for. There was a suggestion to hold no faculty meetings. Another suggestion was to hold the same number of faculty meetings but only two are full faculty meetings and the rest are open senate meetings with committee reports. Another suggestion is to amend the handbook to limit the number of years someone can hold the role of chair of the senate.

Comment: Can you tell us more about the President’s opinions on the Faculty Meetings?

Ans. - He, along with other members of the working group, is concerned about poor attendance and worried that they can often be useless.

Ans. Correction - The senate would take over two Faculty Meetings. Two different visions of the faculty governance - one is moving toward concentrating power in the senate and the other is pushing for more democratic governing assembly.

Comment: Several thoughts on this proposal and the timing of it. Many are concerned about upcoming cuts - the Faculty meetings are a place we can come together when there is a crisis and these cuts would be that type of crisis. Additionally, years ago we would have a timeslot set aside for faculty meetings so that people would not have scheduling conflicts. Additionally, the president used to run the meetings which gave them a bit of gravitas. I understand why the Senate took over but still.

Ans. - I share your concerns with the timing and have my own concerns about the selection of the working group/committee. But their proposals still have to go through us. Currently it seems to me that the President is ambivalent about which way we go, rather he wants to see effective change. I don’t think that the President or the Provost should be proposing governance changes.

Comment: I think removing the faculty meetings is a bad idea.

Comment: You really risk losing faculty governance if we stop having faculty meetings.

Comment: Without the scheduled time to meet it doesn’t work the change in the Block System has been a disaster.

Comment: There was a decent way to balance faculty work in the 3-Block system

Ans. I’ve been putting this off until we have a proposal

Comment: Having a selected/set time block would help departments have meetings as well.
Moving on, in representation there may be no solution. The one change we might make will be from at-large university wide to at-large Arts and Sciences, maybe two of these seats. It would give us options and flexibility. I want a union seat but there are legal issues (not with us but in the union aspect itself).

1:10 – Discussion of Campus Climate Report

Discussion next year, I found strange the lack of addressing faculty. I didn’t see much space for faculty action. Dorothy Hodson wants to shift to mandatory training. As a senate we can support this but we need to discuss before we officially do so. Thoughts on supporting mandatory training? It is standard in corporations and state universities.

Comment: These can be very poorly structured and can get push back.

Ans. There does seem to be faculty push back

Comment: It needs to be good training

1:30 – Increasing Attendance at Faculty Meetings

Reach out and ask colleagues to come. Only need about 55 for a quorum. ON the docket in the DEISJ, memorials, framework. This is where we need to pay attention and start arguing. Not just about what we are going to do but also what we are going to stop doing. We have to read between the lines.

Question: What’s the Board’s reaction?

Ans. - All over the place. Several proposals. President may release the updated framework the night before the faculty meeting.

Comment: This has to be sent out a week before.

1:40 – Updates: Dignity at Work Proposal

Larry wants to have this meeting in January

Attendance: Grace Zimmerman, Jane Ebert, Danielle Igra, Sue Lanser, Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, Joel Christensen, Dmitri Kleinbock, Rajesh Sampath, Sarah Mead, William Flesch, Pu Wang, Sabine von Mering