

Minutes of the Dornsife Faculty Council Meeting (Feb 6, 2019)

Date: February 6, 2019

Room: Irani Hall, Rm. 321

Present (17): Brian Bernards; Iva Bozovic; Jessica Cantiello; Marianna Chodorowska-Pilch; David Crombecque; Gerald Davison; Bob Girandola; Devin Griffiths (*vice-president*); Assal Habibi; Yuka Kumagai; P.T. McNiff (*secretary*); Joe Palacios; Jessica Parr; Dan Pecchenino (*president*); Michael Petitti; Sergio Sanudo-Wilhelmy; An-Min Wu

Absent (2): Shannon Gibson; Sri Narayan

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

P.T. submits the minutes of the January 9 DFC meeting for discussion and approval. **Gerald** motions to approve; **Devin** seconds. 16 of the members present vote to approve them, with zero nays and no abstentions.

Update on DFC Website

Dan and **P.T.** discuss the training that the latter has received on how to edit the Council's website. It is noted that this access will allow for more direct communication with the faculty. They conceive of website maintenance becoming part of the duty for the DFC secretary.

Discussion and Vote on DFC Resolution regarding Consultation on Faculty Development Programs

Dan distributes the text of the proposed resolution to the Council. In the ensuing discussion, members state concerns that the resolution focuses too much on potential negative changes to policies, while the Council should also be consulted to help improve policies. **Devin** proposes an amendment to the first line of final paragraph to read: "As changes are considered for faculty support programs..."

Further discussion along these lines leads to a further amendment proposal developed collectively upon a suggestion from **Jessica C.** This amendment is so the second line of the final paragraph reads: "...shall be consulted to ensure that any adjustments will uphold the intended..."

Council members inquire about the policy changes this resolution is in response to; it is clarified that the resolution was drafted after changes to the computer support program and the RTPC faculty development funds. A history of the implementation of these policies is explored, along with a conversation about how Research faculty are affected by the change to faculty development funds. There is also a discussion

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of what the cap is for RTPC faculty development funds, ways in which people might approach that cap, and whether the distance from that cap affected the allocation of funds from the Dean's office this year.

Gerald proposes an amendment to correct the order of "Letters, Arts, & Sciences" in the second line of the first paragraph.

Council members discuss what happens to resolutions like this after they are passed, what impact they have, and how to distribute them so more faculty could be informed about them.

Dan reads the amended resolution aloud. **Devin** motions to adopt the resolution as amended.

The Council votes 17-0 in favor of approving the resolution.

Discussion of Upcoming DFC Election

P.T. reminds members that the call for nominations for the spring election will happen before the next meeting. Beyond emails to the whole faculty, the officers plan to reach out to the chairs of departments to request they encourage people to run. **An-Min** mentions the number of seats up for election (four for Humanities, five for Natural Sciences & Mathematics, and one for Social Sciences). **P.T.** says he will be using candidate statements from some of the current DFC members as examples for the nominees.

Assal inquires over whether potential candidates could attend future DFC meetings to see how the process works. The response is affirmative, with the caveat that advance warning is helpful to ensure logistics like enough seats in the room. The conversation ends with a general call for members to spread the word about the Council and its Senate seats.

Reports on Meetings

Jessica P. and **Dan** discuss the RTPC Teaching Caucus' meeting with Dean Stott, Jane Cody, John Holland, and Mark Grimes. They update on the hiring of Mr. Grimes as a new curriculum coordinator focusing on assessment and assisting with the ten-year cycle for department & program review. The meeting focused on mentoring recommendations and new Teaching faculty promotion guidelines. The administrators in the meeting agreed to provide money for brown-bag lunches to help spread the word about mentoring programs and the new promotion guidelines, as well as to create faculty learning communities within and across divisions. These would be opportunities to share pedagogy will help people build relationships and a network, which helps with fulfilling promotion guidelines

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Dan then speaks of meetings concerning the developing Dornsife Signature Undergraduate Experience. Topics have included providing an option for students to apply without declaring a major, how to achieve a better distribution of students across different majors, and ways to make the Dornsife experience feel more unique. He feels that the discussions have been interesting. He also notes there will be a town hall-style event sometime in April.

Updates on Academic Senate Meetings

Members of the Academic Senate contribute to a discussion of the January meeting. **Dan** says that IT's new policy to allow students to change their names was discussed. **Jessica C.** notes that many of her students made changes right away. **Brian** says he contacted IT to request an added field to indicate preferred pronouns, which they said they were going to do.

Michael Quick's visit to the Senate is discussed in relation to both diversity week and the presidential search. Quick's update was that the committee was interviewing a short list of candidates. From there, Council members discuss rumors on the progress of the search, the relationship between the Board of Trustees and faculty, and concepts of how the Board may be reconstituted in wake of work being done by its members.

Returning to Provost Quick's appearance at the Senate, there's discussion of updated admissions statistics and the size of the student body. Quick's memo about how salaries are determined is brought up; the problems created by not taking cost of living into consideration when making salary decisions is a focus. **Devin** notes that Quick discussed progress on developing new procedures and policies for Dean reviews to include more faculty in the process, including a select group that would have access to all confidential materials.

Elizabeth Graddy's forming of a committee to examine the role of research faculty on campus is mentioned, highlighting that **Assal** is a member. Possible topics, based on earlier work by the Senate's RTPC Committee, will be increasing support, especially with gap funding, as well as codifying longer contracts at promoted ranks.

The discussion shifts to the upcoming Joint Provost/Academic Senate retreat, where the two main topics will be barriers to working across schools and composition of the faculty. In examining the question of barriers, the Council discusses different investments in undergraduate research across the university, a lack of money for new courses, the lack of compensation (whether through stipends or course releases) for faculty who work with undergraduate researchers, and how these issues can exacerbate problems of inclusion.

The conversation moves to whether real and honest discussions can be had in settings where administrators are also present. This leads to inquiries about the cost of lawsuits the university has faced, the financial impact on the reorganization

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of General Education, and whether new tax laws will impact the willingness of everyone to engage with cost of living issues. The emphasis the university has placed on growth without attention or resources being paid to maintaining the infrastructure necessary for that growth is discussed.

Council members shift to the other retreat topic, faculty composition, with the presumption that the conversation will be about divides TT and RTPC faculty. Members bring up recent instances where RTPC faculty have been told their contracts would not be renewed due to restructuring in their departments, which generally seem to be tied to hiring more TT faculty. The focus on rankings when administrators discuss expanding the TT faculty is discussed, with members bringing up questions about the impact a downturn in the quality of undergraduate teaching may affect rankings as well as the positive impact the school saw in those numbers from moving away from adjuncts (which was possible due to the increase in RTPC faculty). The need to discuss the status of part-time faculty is noted. Amid concerns over how the administration's desire for more TT faculty might impact the job security of RTPC faculty, there are questions as to why the Senate has not addressed the use of postdocs for teaching. The need to have standing meetings and a Faculty Council presence within the Dean's decision-making cabinet is emphasized. **Dan** notes that he now has a standing meeting with Undergraduate Education Dean Andrew Stott; he hopes that such engagement can help the faculty and administration have more frank conversations.

Upcoming Meeting with Dean Amber Miller

Dan segues from that conversation into one about the issues we would like to discuss with Dean Miller when she visits in April. Topics brought up, whether from earlier points of the conversation or as new thoughts, include: issues related to the cost the university is facing from lawsuits; questions around Dornsife's debt level and how it got to where it is; and having access to basic information such as teaching loads at various full-time ranks and tracks.

Dan says he hopes to have a clear set of asks to present at the meeting in order to set clear and reasonable expectations of what the faculty need and what the Council can do to help fulfill those needs. Members note that prioritizing and grouping potential issues is important, since time is always of the essence when the Dean visits. Council members will begin collecting potential topics through a shared document; work on this will continue through the March meeting to prepare for April.

Concerns about how the lack of clarity in various roles in Dornsife (faculty, teaching assistants, postdocs, etc) are brought up. The impact this can have on the experience of graduate students and their preparation for future careers is emphasized. The need to engage with department chairs around issues like this is noted, as they also deal with the disparities and tensions being discussed.

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DFC Caucus Updates

Moving to discussing the caucuses, **Dan** notes that any reports for the Dean to read should be prepared and submitted by mid-March. **Sergio** says that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Caucus will have their report prepared by March in order to present it to the Dean.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

P.T. McNiff, Secretary

The Dornsife Faculty Council