

Villanova University Faculty Congress

Academic Year 2016-2018

FACULTY CONGRESS MEETING

February 22, 2017

**Present**: Sheryl Bowen, Joseph Betz, Sohail Chaudhry, Jerusha Conner, Alice Dailey, Mirela Damian, Rick Eckstein, David Fiorenza, Ruth Gordon, Marylu Hill, Stephanie Katz, Christopher Kilby, Michael Levitan, Eric Lomazoff, Peggy Lyons, Mike McGoldrick, James Peyton-Jones, Alan Pichanick, Jennifer Ross, Joseph Schick, Catherine Warrick, Kelly Welch, Tina Yang.

**Absent:** Aronté Bennett (NIA), Danai Chasaki, Gordon Coonfield, Angela DiBenedetto, Jennifer Dixon (NIA), Diane Ellis, Shelly Howton (NIA), Jeremy Kees, Rory Kramer (NIA), Joseph Micucci, Elizabeth Petit de Mangé (NIA), Salvatore Poeta (NIA), Michael Posner, Rees Rankin, Quinetta Roberson, Mark Wilson (NIA), Dennis Wykoff (NIA), Rosalind Wynne.

**Other Guests:** Liesel Schwarz (University Staff Council) and John Puszcz (Student Government Association).

The meeting convened at 1:00 PM in the Idea Accelerator.

**Housekeeping**

1. Jerusha Conner welcomed Liesel Schwarz from University Staff Council and John Puszcz from the Student Government Association.
2. Minutes from the January 26, 2017 meeting were reviewed. Following some minor editorial corections, the minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Jerusha reminded the FC members to send feedback to Randy Weinstein, the Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, regarding his vision statement: <http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/provost/teaching-learning/AVPTL/Vision.html>
4. Faculty Congress donated $250.00 to Dr. Masako Nakagawa's recovery fund. Individual donations may be sent to: <https://pages.giveforward.com/medical/page-j3y9534/>
5. Jerusha reminded FC members to complete the academic integrity survey.
6. FC members were asked to encourage their colleagues to complete the HERI survey. Jerusha noted that FC had suggested three questions on the survey (including the Public Safety question); in addition, the survey provides useful data and helps to inform priorities for administration.
7. Jerusha announced the Research Ethics at VU 2017 co-sponsorship invitation: 3/23 Webinar with OHRP. Various leadership groups on campus were invited, and it seemed appropriate for FC to be a co-sponsor. The webinar is related to the Belmont report concerning research ethics working with human subjects. FC will co-sponsor and help to publicize.
8. Jerusha updated FC on the membership of the Faculty Scholar Advisory Team led by Amanda Grannas, Associate Vice Provost for Research. Another Arts professor, Sally Scholz, was added to the membership to balance out the representation from Arts.

**Discussion of Standing Committee Reports:**

In an effort to better focus the discussion of the FC, members are now asked to read the committee reports (appended to the agenda) rather than spending time in the FC meeting reviewing all of the committee reports. Members are asked to identify issues from within the report that need to be elevated to full discussion.

At this point, Jerusha asked if there are issues to raise for further discussion from the standing committees or whether there was any new business to report or add.

Joe Betz noted that, regarding the FRRC report on the belligerent student policy, the Student Bill of Rights should be consulted to help the process.

Jerusha gave an update regarding the protocols being re-written for the various committees affected by the demise of Faculty Senate (APC, et al.). Fr. Peter Donahue met with all of the representatives of these committees, and indicated that he would adopt the protocols proposed.

**New Business:**

1. Under new business, there was a discussion of benefits priorities for faculty, based on information gathered by FC members from the departments to which they have agreed to serve as liaisons. Concerns included employee share of medical insurance, retirees’ health and life insurance, and tuition benefits. Questions were raised regarding access to contraception through all VU health plans.

Regarding tuition exchange, it was suggested that the benefits committee gather data regarding the number of faculty with eligible children and how many end up using tuition exchange. Further questions were raised regarding retirement benefits for FTNTT. It became clear that FC needed more information regarding who is covered and for what type of benefits.

All agree that the benefits committee should be encouraged to take a stand against the erosion of benefits. It was noted that these concerns do not simply impact existing faculty; it also impacts we VU attracts and retains excellent faculty. There was also a brief conversation about adjunct faculty and the lack of benefits available to them. Finally, it was suggested that FC should do some research into the exact details of various benefits, before taking our concerns to the benefits committee.

2. Jerusha invited FC members to review the “teach-in series” guidelines listed in Appendix II of the agenda. A short conversation ensued about appropriate parameters for discussion, including concerns about potential belligerence from participating students. Concerns were raised regarding how to lead potentially controversial topics, and suggestions were made about inviting conversation and debate, as well as including a reminder that it should be a respectful conversation. Similar “pop-up” classes have been held at the VU Law School with no problems in terms of belligerent students; there were differences of opinion, but no hostility.

All of the dates for the Teach-In Series have been filed with the exception of the first Friday; Jerusha noted that they were still hoping for a climate change/environment session.

3. FC members reviewed a proposal for a faculty/staff Ombudsperson. FRRC suggested that there is a need for an external and impartial third-party advisor on conflict resolution. Several important characteristics concerning the role of the ombudsperson were identified, including: independence; neutrality; confidentiality; informality.

The conversation explored multiple questions including: what might be the appropriate qualifications for an ombudsperson, and whether s/he should be a faculty member or professional; who s/he would answer to, and who would his/her salary; whether they would have renewable contracts; and whether s/he would be hired specifically for the role, or whether faculty would rotate into the role.. Other questions raised addressed whether the same ombudsperson would work with faculty, staff, and graduate students; and finally what his/her job duties would entail.

A preliminary discussion reviewed models used at other universities; the suggestion was raised to consider examples from universities that are more similar to Villanova.

4. Jim Trainer, Associate Vice President and Executive Director of OPIR, offered a short presentation on the initial analysis of the pilot project of on-line CATS from fall 2016. He offered an overview of the pilot in several ways. The rationale for moving to on-line CATS was to streamline the evaluation process with a system that offers greater flexibility, and is more effective, confidential, and environmentally-responsible. The key difference between the electronic and paper systems is that the electronic version is open for a two-week window, unlike the 15 minutes offered through the in-class paper version. The pilot included 400 section. OPIR worked closely with faculty (first Paul Pasles, then Michael Posner) to make certain that vulnerable faculty (tenure-track, part-time, FTNTT who are not on long-terms contracts) were not affected. The goal of the pilot was to test the electronic system, ensure data quality, and examine differences between traditional and electronic versions. The pilot included 240 faculty who had one of each type of CATS. 4900 students were in the pilot. 8100 electronic CATS forms were available; 6740 were returned, with a response rate of 80% or higher. Traditional CATS have a 85% response rate. Of all of the forms returned via the electronic CATS, 58% appeared to have been completed outside of the class time. Jim gave some preliminary analysis of the comparative results between the on-line and the paper CATS. The initial analysis suggested that there were only minimal differences between response rates, mean scores, and quantity of comments; however, concerns were raised about how OPIR arrived at the response rates, and other suggestions for analysis were proposed. An APC subcommittee will continue to work with OPIR to evaluate the pilot.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Submitted by Marylu Hill, Faculty Congress Secretary

March 16, 2017