

Faculty Council Meeting
October 27, 2021
3:00-5:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Baber; Berg Blackmond Larnell; Brown; Cornelius; Dahari; Dentato; Desai; Dong; Dunderdale; Elsky; Gawlinski; Gupta-Mukherjee; Haske; Holschen; Johnson; Jules; Kang; McGuigain; Moran; Nicholas; Ohsowski; O'Rourke; Pope; Rosenblatt; Shoenberger; Silva; Tangarife; Thiruvathukal; Todd; Waller.

Guests: Provost Margaret Callahan; Lee Hood (University Senate, filling in for Heer)

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes of September Meeting

Meeting is called to order and September minutes are approved by acclamation.

II. Chair's Report

Jules begins discussion by reminding the group that we are still living through a pandemic. He encourages faculty to extend grace to their students and to themselves.

Jules thanks Alan Shoenberger for his service on the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC) and thanks Jenny O'Rourke for stepping forward in his place. The Executive Committee has conveyed its concerns about the BAC to the President and Provost and hopes to have an update next meeting. The recent letter about negotiations between the medical center and AETNA has raised concerns for many. The President and Provost hope to have an update by the end of the semester. If Council members are asked about this by their constituents, he asks them to relate that the Council is aware of the issue and in conversation with university leadership.

Jules changes subjects to the question of shared governance. The Taskforce on Shared Governance looked at question of shared governance on a university level, but the question of shared governance within particular schools was beyond its purview. In some places at least, there is a disconnect between shared governance at university and divisional levels. We do not need to be following the same model everywhere, but we should have some sense of what is going on across the university. So Jules has convened a small group, led by Education Professor Lorenzo Baber, to look at practices at the divisional level. The provost sees the importance of this initiative. The report of the Task Force has yet to be released, since some recommendations are still under consideration. Jules' hope is that this is resolved quickly, so that the proposed updates to the Faculty Handbook can be considered. The Provost affirms this, indicating that the final Task Force report will be coming in very soon; some items will need continued discussion by a smaller group. Then we can "dig into the revisions to the Faculty handbook." She expresses the hope that the handbook group would convene "in December, before we all broke, so that people could maybe spend a little bit of time over break reading . . . so we could dig in in January."

The Presidential search committee is the subject of the next update. Jules thanks those who volunteered to serve and apologizes that he was picked. He shares that he consulted with the head of the Senate and submitted a joint list of names and reasons for their selection. They wanted to ensure that somebody from the shared governance bodies served on the committee. Council wrote to the Chair of the Board to suggest the automatic addition of either the Chair of the Council or of the Senate. He is not sure why he was selected. He is not sure if he was picked because of that objection, as a kind of impartial person, or because he is Black. He acknowledges that there were other strong candidates, hence his apology. Many members express confidence in having Jules on the committee. There are concerns about the lack of representation of the College of Arts and Sciences on the committee, especially since it generates about half of credit hours at the university. Many of these concerns have been relayed to him. Jules takes this responsibility seriously and will use his position to ensure that the voices of many faculty are heard on the committee. He wants faculty to be vocal about what they want. He hopes for open sessions between the committee and faculty. But the general faculty will not know about a new President until an appointment is announced. One member says our job should be to turn people out to these open meetings, especially because of the concern about CAS not being represented. They consider Tavis to be an honorary member of CAS, which he might or might not consider to be a compliment. CAS has languished under the current President, but if nobody comes to these meetings and says that, we have no leg to stand on. A different member emphasizes that Jules need not apologize, given his position, commitment, and experience. Seeing Jules on the committee was a good part of the announcement; the lack of CAS representation and fact that there were only two faculty were the disappointing parts. Jules closes this topic by noting that the committee anticipates seating a new President by the end of the Spring. Faculty need to be able to convey what kind of qualities they want in a leader. Some have written him saying it is time to have a President of color.

Jules moves to the question of the release of the Deans evaluations. This was mentioned in a recent newsletter. We are working on having adjuncts as a part of the evaluation. He assumes that we saw the messages about whether the evaluations of the SES and Quinlan deans will be shared. SES has been shared, but not Quinlan's. This goes back to the fact that the previous provost had struck an agreement not have those evaluations sent out. He is unsure about the ultimate outcome of the Quinlan evaluations. The Provost indicates that she has discussed this, and she will be giving the Quinlan dean the chance to write up a response before it is shared; since he is no longer Dean, this will be different than other ones. Jules indicates that the evaluation process last year was changed, and it was not for the better. It has led to problems, which he is now working with the Provost on addressing. One member expresses outrage that a decision was made to not distribute an evaluation, without discussing the matter with Faculty Council. Faculty are still entitled to see the results if a Dean has departed. Deans do not generally like the process; they do not want to be publicly responded to. They add that to their knowledge, there has never been an evaluation of an acting Dean. A different member clarifies that the Quinlan evaluation will be released. The member

reiterates their sense of outrage that there are Deans in place on an interim basis for three years. The Provost responds that there are interims in two schools because the future of those schools was under consideration. She does not know why her predecessor did not move on these matters. Only so many Dean searches can be done in one year. She thought it wise to have evaluations of interims, both of whom actively want to be evaluated. The Provost says it is highly unusual for data to go back to the entire unit, rather than just the Provost.

III. Discussion – HR Trainings.

Discussion then moves to the question of the response about mandatory trainings from the Provost and the head of Human Resources. Jules notes that there are certain trainings that have to be done to comply with various laws and regulations. The European Union's data protection policy is a subject because we have a campus in Rome. Many questions were raised as to whether we need to do every model every year. The recent message we received was in response to our expression of concerns about penalties, including removing access to email. One of our suggestions was factoring noncompliance into annual evaluations and potentially even merit raises. The timetable this year for taking the trainings has been more reasonable. The Provost indicates that her office did try to schedule things more reasonably this year. She is not interested in punitive measures. Another member indicates that they were kind of overwhelmed by the length of the inclusive hiring module, which was closer to two hours than one. A different member says knowing in advance for the year would be very helpful. Another member says they appreciated acknowledgement of other forms of diversity, though the whole thing was too long. Jules adds that some of the trainings seem more oriented at business than at higher education.

IV. Committee Reports

The floor is yielded to the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. Their update begins with the question of a new course management and course catalogue software. The Committee met with administrators about this recently. The software would interface with LOCUS and supersede DocFinity, which many faculty find very cumbersome. The current software does not allow for the generation of a course catalogue, which it would be beneficial to be able to do. The Council votes to endorse the acquisition of this new software.

Academic Affairs also wanted a discussion with the whole Council about how research mentorship is counted in various units. Hence the resolution, which was circulated for discussion purposes, but not with the intention of voting. The floor is opened to feedback. One member observes that the resolution seems focused on tenure stream faculty, but many faculty not on the tenure track mentor undergraduates. Another faculty notes that most support this kind of counting research mentorship, but quantifying and counting it can prove tricky. A different member says that quantifying this kind of service would incentivize it. They also note that faculty of color often do additional mentorship, either of students or faculty. The School of

Education has tried to count and honor such mentorship. This takes the burden off of individual faculty. Another member weighs in, noting that there are multiple issues bound up with this – defining research intensive faculty and giving due credit to research mentoring. They doubt whether this is an area where one definition can work across different academic units. A different member says that the announced goal of moving to an R1 university under the last provost might have been helpful in this regard. One outcome of the current system, in their unit at least, is that a lot of people spend enormous amounts of time training graduate students, to the benefit of the whole department. Yet they get no credit for this.

The floor is yielded to the Chair of Faculty Affairs. They have discussed the HR trainings. Health care, to be discussed later, has also been a major focus. SAC – the Student Accessibility Center, was another topic. Need for it is growing, not just at Loyola but across the country. They encourage members to write with their sense of whether this has been disruptive to faculty. One member says this has been difficult for their unit because SAC has not been able to proctor tests for them, which makes giving time and a half or twice time difficult, given the pandemic circumstances. Another member says that SAC recommendations for them are very general and vague. A different member says accommodations sometimes result in long delays, which make it difficult to give the kind of timely feedback that the provost has been discussing recently. The Provost responds that that kind of delay was not reasonable, that is beyond grace. A member says this issue has been discussed in their unit. A particular diagnosis does not necessarily lead to the right accommodation, or much specificity. SAC seems overwhelmed by the numbers and understaffed. This makes it hard for faculty to work with students and address the specific issue. Another member observes that the accommodations do place a substantial burden on faculty, especially pre-tenure faculty, for whom student evaluations weigh a lot. If SAC provided more resources or more concrete recommendations it would be a great help. A different member says that sometimes accommodations in terms of time have run into subsequent classes in the same space, thereby causing friction between instructors. Another member notes how often these issues arise with faculty of color, which should make us think about who carries most of this burden. The Provost acknowledges the increased demands on SAC and indicates that space is a real problem.

The floor is given to the Communication and Service Committee Chair. They indicate that there is a new mechanism for the composing of Council newsletters. The Committee has begun work on Dean evaluations for this year. A new question about diversity has been added, which breaks things down by different kinds of diversity. Several members note positive feedback they have received for the newsletter.

The Faculty Handbook Committee has been doing lots of work, Jules indicates, praising English Department faculty. He estimates that they are about two weeks out for a draft for the Provost's office. After it is sent to that office, a committee will be established, combining administrators and faculty. In the future, a standing committee will see to smaller, ongoing changes to the handbook. The Provost reminds us that the Handbook must be approved by the Board of Trustees. A member observes that past Councils have taken a decade to work on revisions. They have been involved in two

revisions. At the end last time, they had somebody go through for style purposes to smooth out the entire document. A different member discusses the enormous amount of work that has gone into this document, sometimes late at night. Several members giggle.

V. Potential Resolution about Health Insurance

Jules notes that the Executive Committee met earlier with the President and Provost and this issue was discussed. One issue was the ongoing negotiations between Aetna and the hospital about their contract, which expires at the end of the year. The other issue is the functioning of the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC). Given ongoing discussions, do we want to consider this resolution? Jules calls on another member, who points out that there was also discussion of support for mental health services, which is a top priority for many faculty. Jules adds that the third item is that the BAC will be conducting its own survey. A member says that the BAC has been meeting and a survey will be going out. They chide the Chair for misinforming the President and Provost. A different member disagrees, saying they were surprised that the BAC was not involved in negotiations with Aetna and the hospital. They observe that HR has been talking about a survey since we left Blue Cross Blue Shield. The Executive Committee is very frustrated with HR, and believes the President and Provost need to intervene to ensure these concerns are taken seriously. There is no information on the web, and information about BAC was removed after the switch to Aetna. They want to hear from the Council if these issues are so important. The previous member observes that the BAC has been reconstituted recently. They warn about the dangers of ad hominem attacks. Several other members discuss the wisdom of having a joint resolution from shared governance bodies. Jules discusses this point, advising that the Council confer with other shared governance bodies. Another member expresses agreement with this. The Provost says that she is finding out about the delay in the survey going out. Some of it has to do with the timing in regards to a faculty climate survey. She emphasizes that health benefits is an issue at the top of her mind for the next year. She and the President have heard the faculty loud and clear.

The meeting adjourns.