ARTS, SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING
FACULTY MEETING
COOLIDGE ROOM, BALLOU HALL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

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PROF COUCH: I first want to introduce the members of the Executive Committee: I’m Alva Couch in computer science, Harry Bernheim in biology, David Proctor in history, Vida Johnson in ILCS, Vickie Sullivan in political science.

The chair now calls on David Harris to make an introduction.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Amy Freeman, Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Provost
David Harris, Provost and Senior Vice President

PROVOST HARRIS: Good afternoon and welcome back to the academic year 17-18. Amy Freeman is our new chief diversity officer and associate provost. She comes from Penn State, where she had a long and illustrious career working on diversity issues and committees. She brings both experience in scholarship and practice to the position. She will be thinking about the how and why – how we organize central diversity inclusion efforts and why. She will be in contact with you more about her work.

PROF COUCH: I now call on Dean Nancy Bauer to give an introduction.

Introduction of Dina Deitsch, Director and Chief Curator, University Art Gallery
Nancy Bauer, Dean of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts (SMFA) and Dean of Academic Affairs for A&S

DEAN BAUER: I am pleased to introduce Dina Deitsch who has a long and storied history in the art world and academic settings of the art world. She comes to us from the Carpenter Center at Harvard and she is still working on a project there until mid-October. She spent time at the deCordova Museum as a curator and at the MFA as a curator, and she is very well-connected in the art world and she is already doing exciting work at the SMFA and the Tufts University Art Gallery. The gallery is having its opening tomorrow from 5-7 PM. You know the panel in Tisch Library when you walk down the stairs? It is a piece of a mural that was commissioned by Tufts in the 1980s; the artist will be here to show the entire mural in the gallery and there is also an exhibition in the Slater Concourse with work by staff and faculty.

PROF COUCH: I now call on Carmen Lowe who will make two announcements.

New electronic form for Senior Honors Thesis
Carmen Lowe, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

DEAN LOWE: The registrar’s office has been working on transforming paper forms to electronic ones. One that is up and ready is the senior honors thesis candidate form. A student will go online and submit the form; if they have spoken to you, you will get this email that you can approve or deny, and then it will go to the registrar’s office. They will be rolling out more forms over the year.
Affording Textbooks
Carmen Lowe, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

DEAN LOWE: My second announcement is about what faculty can do about affordable textbooks. Some students may come to you early in the year and sometimes you find out later in the year that they never bought the textbook. You can adopt textbooks early and send it to the bookstore; students then have time to look for options to purchase it elsewhere. Tisch Library has a reserve program for the highest enrolled courses. Students can spend up to four hours with the textbook in the library before they must return it. You can see on the library’s website if your book is on hold or not and you can add it. For students with high financial need, Dowling has a textbook lending library. Your academic dean can help you or the student figure out textbook options. The student senate is starting a student-run textbook exchange; students are selling used books at discounted price on their Facebook page.

PROF COUCH: The chair now calls on Lindsay Riordan from the Secretary of the Faculty’s office.

Faculty Meeting Logistics
Lindsay Riordan, Office of the Secretary of the Faculty

MS RIORDAN: Hi everyone. I want to remind you to please use the microphones when you speak so the SMFA can hear you, and I will be taking the minutes and I am still working on learning everyone’s names. Also, I am trying to get us to do better in our recycling program so please remember that everything goes in the recycling bins except for dirty plates, napkins, and food. Thank you.

PROF COUCH: I now call on Vida Johnson to make an impromptu announcement.

Faculty Senate Update
Vida Johnson, International Literary and Cultural Studies

PROF JOHNSON: I wanted to let everyone know that the first Faculty Senate meeting was today with at least 20 of the 29 members in attendance. The Senate voted for A&S to have a dedicated member of the SMFA so there are now 30 members. We had a presentation from Julien Carter on retirement and are putting together some subcommittees that will talk about how these retirement decisions are made. Also, our meetings are at 8 AM and I never had an 8 AM class in my 47 years here and now I know why. Thanks.

NEW BUSINESS

Summer Semester in Review
Joe Auner, Dean of Academic Affairs for A&S, and Karen Mulder, Director of Business Development, Office of the Executive Vice President

DEAN AUNER: We’ve had a good start with the new summer session and we are here to give you a report on it.
MS MULDER: So much happens in summer across the university. How we define summer session in AS&E is that there are undergraduate courses offered for credit. We have other programs like work for credit, independent studies, master’s programs, BEST, BLAST, Summer Scholars, K-8 on all three campuses, SMFA workshops, the Talloires abroad program, and Executive Education at Fletcher.

DEAN AUNER: We have some information about enrollments and revenues. Keep in mind that most of the work that was done this year was to create an infrastructure for the future, so we can develop courses and grow the program. There were some rough patches with certain parts of the operation.

MS MULDER: There were 184 courses in AS&E including ones at the SMFA. That was an increase of 18 additional courses from last year. We are excited that we grew and met the needs across departments. There were 91 more students this year for a total of 2,079 this year, showing 5% growth. We wanted more than that and in the future, we will see incremental growth; this year was just to put processes and procedures in place, not to grow. We saw rev $4.5M in the program, about $985k in growth. The margins were $2.3M; that’s $774k in growth. We are looking forward to additional growth in the coming years.

One of the big things we talked about last year was our university-wide marketing campaign aimed at driving enrollments to these courses. Some of our awareness tactics included digital campaigns, Facebook ads, display ads, ads on Pandora radio, and local Patch advertising in towns around the Boston metro area. Last year, 47 people contacted us to get more information; this year it was 450 people. We will work on sending more follow-up emails and phone calls for this year to increase the numbers of applications and enrollments. Overall, it was a success and we continue to refine the process going into summer 2018.

DEAN AUNER: The department administrators are getting more information on how to improve summer session regarding faculty and student experiences and on how to choose which courses to offer in the future. One hundred and sixty-seven of the 2,000 people enrolled in classes submitted a response to our survey and we didn’t see any strongly negative responses. In general, people had a fairly good experience and say that they would recommend Tufts Summer to a friend. One of my students took linear algebra and really liked it, so that’s one data point from me. It’s important to hear what the students say and to know how we are competitive in the marketplace. We have strong faculty and a beautiful campus.

There is a lot of interest in basic introductory courses that fill students’ requirements, and there is also a demand for more rigorous courses that students can really focus on during the summer. Some students take classes to accelerate their career or make up for things they missed. We want to increase our course offerings, something between bread and butter and specialized, caviar courses – the good risotto courses. We are already talking to the biology department about offering BIO 13 next summer and it takes a lot of work for this to happen.

As for instructor satisfaction, there was not an overwhelming number of responses, but overall faculty was satisfied with teaching over the summer. We do hear about people who have had
difficult experiences, but generally people like it. Contact me if we didn’t capture your frustrations.

Some people think that in the summer, you won’t get regular Tufts students and that it will be a different student body. Right now, it is mainly Tufts students and they are dedicated. People generally like teaching small classes and online courses. Teaching intensive courses is a very different experience over the summer and you can do really good courses in a compressed way.

Some concerns: there were some communication issues about canceling courses like when to do it – we try to wait as long as possible – and faculty teaching minors, like high school juniors and seniors, and faculty having to do a CORI check. For facilities, there were some issues, like when David Proctor found his classroom under renovation. We will continue to work on connecting summer courses with university facilities and operations.

We will work on increasing enrollment, and we want to get the course lists in soon. We had 30 online courses this year and there were a few frustrations, but overall people said it was a good experience; we will work with Educational Technology Services to upgrade the system.

In figuring out course lengths, we are trying to work out if a course should be offered in the first or second session and at what time of day. As the SHU process continues, we can start to offer short courses for 1 or 2 credits. Lindsay will send an email to A&S chairs after this meeting about the process moving forward and things for you to think about. We want you to get things in by September 28th so we can get things on the books, especially new offerings. If a course never existed before, you should go through your school’s curricula committee. The biggest change this year is in the past, the course list was built from scratch each year, but this year there will be a new SIS portal and courses will roll over each summer and the departments can decide easily if those are the ones they want to offer again. December 1st is the deadline for this all to be set so we can launch into marketing and then faculty hire letters after that.

MS MULDER: Planning has already begun for summer 2018. Our priorities are addressing barriers to growing the program, updating the website, implementing a university-wide summer planning and registration process, and addressing challenges in independent study and work for credit programs. We want to expand enrollment in pre-college and intensive study programs.

PROF PENVENNE: How many courses were canceled? What’s the threshold number of students?

DEAN AUNER: About 50 overall were canceled; the numbers we showed you before did not include these cancelations. A course with 3 students loses a little money, but not much and is the cutoff; having 4 would be better.

PROF RICHARDS: If a Tufts student take four or five summer courses, will they be able to graduate early and how will this affect the revenue lost? Did you take this into account?

DEAN AUNER: Carmen helped collect information on students who graduated early. There was a big bump around 2008 during the financial crisis and some used summer courses to graduate
early, but there has been a decline in the number of students finishing early. With the new SHU process, the bar might be a little higher to graduate anyway. We will monitor it and address it if it becomes an issue.

PROF POTT: Some of my advisees say they will take summer courses at a local state school because it’s at home and cheaper. Will you try to tap into that?

DEAN AUSTIN AUNER: We did raise tuition slightly, but we benchmarked it carefully across the board, and we are lower than some of our peers. If a student is taking a course and significantly advancing their degree progress, summer courses do have a discount compared to taking courses during the regular year. We also have a pool of money available for those students who really need it in the summer. No one who submitted a feedback form said anything about tuition though.

MS MULDER: We put a lot of time and effort into setting costs in relation to our peers, not local state schools. We offer about a 50% discount compared to taking a course during the academic year.

PROF NAPIER: Where was most of the growth in engineering – were they bread and butter or new courses?

MS MULDER: They were pretty much all in computer science.

DEAN AUNER: The A&S chairs will get this information and we will be reaching out to faculty. Please let us know if you have course ideas to attract our own and other students. There is a lot of potential for growth and we have the people and classroom space to do it.

Update on course credit conversion to semester hour unit (SHU)
Carmen Lowe, Dean of Undergraduate Studies

DEAN LOWE: I am going to talk about what, why and what’s next in the credit conversion process. Over the summer of 2018, Tufts is transitioning to a new academic credit system, which is the standard academic American credit system. The reason is because NEASC said our system didn’t make sense and the credits need to accurately reflect students’ work. The curricula committees, departments, and EPC have been converting the course catalogue. The committees are done with their work and will, if they have not already, contact departments about the results of converting the thousands of courses we have, many of which have not been taught in decades. There is variety in the SHU value assigned to undergraduate- and graduate-level courses. EPC is updating our policies to reflect the new system and policies for students who will straddle the two systems. TTS and the registrar’s office will be working on training faculty advisors.

So SHU, which stands for semester hour unit, is a temporary term while we talk about the new and old credit systems. For any transfer credits and those students in the middle of the switch, 4 SHUs is equal to 1 Tufts credit. After June 2018, there will mostly be 3 SHU courses, but it generally varies between 1 and 5. The course load, curriculum, and degree requirements won’t really change. The grad course load won’t change. The SMFA will be familiar with this new
system as they were on it before they changed to the Tufts system. We now tell freshman to sign up for four or five courses and that won’t change either. On average, students will take 15 SHUs every semester, and that’s four or five courses. The degree requirement changed, though. Before they needed 34 credits for liberal arts, 36 or 38 credits in engineering, and 10 credits for a master’s degree to graduate; now they need 120 credits and 30 credits, respectively. Grad students still need to take three courses to qualify for full-time status and the federal financial aid requirement. No other requirements change, but the language and distribution course requirements changed in that instead of 2 credits, they need 6 SHUs.

As for the big picture: in March and April 2018 when students register for fall and summer courses, the courses will be listed in SHUs. In May 2018, the last class in the traditional Tufts system will graduate, and in August the first class to completely be on the new system will matriculate. Some graduate programs start in the summer and we are talking to them about that. We are using temporary degree sheets in place of the online student advisement progress report. For advising, and most of you are advisors, we roll out training this fall for faculty and advisors and we will send more information to students and parents about the credit system. Nothing changes for students graduating in May 2018. The GPA and tuition won’t change for students straddling the two systems. The academic residency requirement and most curricula requirements won’t change. You should tell students to take “these courses” not “these credits” when you are advising them. Training for department administrators through the registrar will begin soon.

PROF ORIANS: Chemistry 11 is 5 SHUs, but students need 6 SHUs for the natural science requirement. How do they do that?

PROF MAHONEY: There are no 2 SHU courses for natural sciences and languages right now. EPC can refine these rules. But right now, it’s the case that students could take CHEM 11 for 5 SHUs and something else for the rest of the credits. Some students already take four half credit courses to fill certain requirements, so it will depend on the departments to offer smaller courses.

PROF GALLAGHER: I use the degree audit program in SIS. I see this is going away, is there a way to accelerate the replacement of this tool?

MS SNELL: TTS is working with a vendor to get the product in place, and the timeline is based on the date we are going to use it. We will get it implemented quickly and carefully, and the degree sheets will help for graduating students if the audit report is missing.

PROF BERNHEIM: For 120 SHUs to graduate, students will need to take five 3 SHU courses per semester. How will this affect student burden?

DEAN LOWE: We saw this concern from the beginning. If a student only takes 3-SHU courses every semester, then they will have to take 5 courses each semester. Quite a few courses in each department have SHU values that are 4 SHUs each, especially the freshmen courses, so the number of courses taken per semester will vary.
PROF RANKIN: I wanted to clarify what will happen to students straddling the systems. Will the old credits be given 4 SHUs even though they might actually be listed as 3 SHUs?

DEAN LOWE: Yes, that’s correct.

PROF SCHWARTZBERG: Can information be streamlined to us?

DEAN LOWE: Yes, we will send out information in smaller chunks and we will have a trunk site you can refer to.

PROF SCHILDKRAUT: What will happen with AP credits?

DEAN LOWE: Students who are already here get 1 credit for the AP courses, and those will be converted to 4 SHUs. Those who matriculate later, the pre-matriculation and AP credits, which are capped at 5 credits now in A&S and 8 credits in engineering, will now be based on the course that it replaces, for example, one engineering course gets 3 SHUs, but 5 SHUs for certain chemistry courses.

PROF CARLETON: A lot of language courses are 4 SHUs, but if a student elects to take six 4-SHU language courses or a mix of 3- and 4- SHU courses, that could have a negative impact on the language and culture requirement.

PROF MAHONEY: Most students now take more classes than necessary to graduate. We are not sure if they will gravitate to fewer large-SHU courses or more small-SHU courses – we can’t predict what they will want to do. We are trying to figure out what we meant by one course equals one Tufts credit. What EPC did and the faculty voted on last year was put together a system that we think will work, but we can make tweaks as we see how it goes.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully Submitted,

Margery Davies
Interim Secretary of the Faculty for Arts, Sciences & Engineering

Minutes taken by Lindsay Riordan
Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Faculty for Arts, Sciences & Engineering