ARTS, SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING
FACULTY MEETING
COOLIDGE ROOM, BALLOU HALL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROF COUCH: At the chair’s discretion, I recognize Jim Glaser to make an announcement.

DEAN GLASER: I hope you got the message that we will not be serving lunch at these meetings. We are in a tight moment budgetarily and it’s for good reason: we are invested in the future. We are really trying to absorb all these costs into the budget, but with the first quarter numbers now in, we are really trying to make it work. I hope that you enjoy what we have provided and hope to restore lunch when things get better.

DEAN QU: The crowd might be thinner, but I promise you, it’s still bigger than the last presidential inauguration.

NEW BUSINESS

PROF COUCH: The committee recognizes Lynne Pepall, Chair of the Tenure and Promotions Committee.

Proposed Bylaw Change from the Committee on Tenure and Promotion

Lynne Pepall, Chair, Committee on Tenure and Promotion

PROF PEPALL: The Tenure and Promotion Committee bylaws begin by describing the structure of the committee: “A Committee on Tenure and Promotion, consisting of eight tenured members of this faculty elected by the entire voting faculty, and the provost, without vote.” The Provost, at least since 2007, has not really been a member of the committee. You’re probably familiar with Statement 11 and how it describes the steps and how the committee meets and makes its decision. The Provost is not there when the committee meets or votes. I think this bylaw change will describe the T&P process more accurately. The committee does meet with the administration including the Provost, but there is no vote at the meeting, it is only informative. To be consistent with our practice we will discuss this change today and vote on it next time.

PROF GROSSMAN: I’m unclear whether having the Provost present would undermine faculty deliberations. Is there a potential reason why the provost’s presence would be advantageous?

PROF PEPALL: This is the time when only the committee meets to discuss a case, and then there is a meeting with the administration. I don’t know the history of the Provost as a part of T&P, but it might affect how the faculty deliberate.

PROF JOHNSON: It was maybe changed in 1980.

PROVOST HARRIS: When I walked in in 2012, I was told this is how it works. The change seemed appropriate to me because the process goes T&P, dean, provost, president, then the
Board of Trustees. There shouldn’t be any meeting that I attend that the deans do not, so this proposal makes sense to me.

PROF KRIMSKY: I was on T&P for many years and there was a time when the committee presented the case to the provost and the president, but then presidents began recusing themselves from the process until the end. I can see how the provost at the administration meetings would have an effect on the deans by maybe their facial expressions before the deans have made their decisions. I wonder what the loss of the provost at that meeting would be?

PROF PEPALL: When a case comes to T&P, the committee meets at various points; the first is to discuss the external evaluators and make its recommendations to the departments. Then the departments do a lot of work for a while. Then there is a time when the T&P committee meets in full to discuss the case. Before we take a vote, there is a meeting with the deans and provost, and that does not change with this bylaw amendment. This bylaw change is to say that the Provost does not come to any T&P committee meetings before the meeting with the administration. All of these meetings are described in Statement 11.

PROF JOHNSON: Statement 11 is our most important document and every T&P committee prides itself on going over it and being careful about following what is written. The assistant professors really need to know who is there every step of the way despite the fact the meetings are confidential.

PEPALL: We will put this to a vote at the next meeting.

Student Life Review Committee Update
Anthony Monaco, President, and Mary Pat McMahon, Dean of Student Affairs

PRESIDENT MONACO: The Greek life investigations were initiated by an article in The Observer about egregious incidents at fraternities. We are taking a wider look at student life on campus, not only in Greek life but also in athletics and different performing arts groups and clubs, which may have had a tint of hazing, but if we were going to look at the health and safety of Greek life, we should look at all of student life. Some determinations and sanctions have been made and some are in the appeals process. Mary Pat put up a very clear announcement about the outcome on the website for students and parents to see.

The committee did great work in a short time and sent out a report to parents and alumni, and I thought they came up with an innovative set of recommendations to look at diversity and inclusion, social geography, what students need in a shared community, the first-year experience, and alternative social spaces. We have done a lot of work over the summer and there is an Implementation Steering Committee, of which I am chair, made up of deans and others. Students have been positive about the results, but some are unhappy that Greek life wasn’t shut down, yet are still happy to work with us. We are lucky to have one of the best dean of student affairs in the country and the TCU President Benya Kraus is also really engaged in this process.

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DEAN McMAHON: I add one other thanks to the Committee on Student Life who have done incredible work; Greek life cases are particularly a lot of work.

We sent the information to incoming parents that 70% of students have already consumed alcohol before coming to campus and 30% have used marijuana. We talked about this at a previous faculty meeting, and students have been much more likely to use our counseling services. Students are coming from more racially and economically diverse backgrounds. 600 students now have accommodations through Accessibility Services. I quote Julie Ross that the full effect of social media on our students’ habits and identities is not fully understood.

Tony talked about Greek life. Sororities have 50% more enrollment than they used to. The Tufts Observer article called out the issue to us. A lot of universities that pride themselves on campus tradition now have to look at health and safety of organizations like finals clubs.

We engaged more than 1,000 community members in Boston and New York and online through forums and focus groups and we have incorporated their feedback in our findings. A healthy, engaged community puts ready learners in your classroom. Hazing, high-profile conduct matters, and student well-being have reputational impacts on Tufts. The undergraduate community experience impacts university metrics and how the world engages with us, too. I think if we can tackle this, we can become significant national leaders in this area.

The University needs to provide and promote programs and services in support of a vibrant co-curricular experience that are coordinated, collaborative, and student-centered; and integrated with, and supportive of, the academic experience; and authentically and transparently communicated, delivered, and assessed. We want to create a co-curricular experience that gives them skills and competencies to use at Tufts and after they leave. We are trying to get short-term, tangible changes in front of students now and also think long-term. There are seven inter-related areas of the student experience: safety and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, campus-wide community, residential experience, first year experience, Greek life, and space. When students talk to each other about their schools, they talk about space.

During the summer and early fall, we joined the University of Maine’s second cohort of consortium schools that are talking about hazing to establish steps that we can take and be able to evaluate how we are doing. We’ve improved our substance abuse prevention training with money from a donor. We have 800 students in our club teams and athletics, which is always a large part of student life even if it’s not at a varsity level. We are examining the systematic barriers to inclusion, like if you get involved early in a group or program that affects your social connections and activities. We connected with Mark Brimhall-Vargas and now Amy Freedman our new CDO about textbook exchanges, how students prep for job interviews, if there are costs associated with clubs, and trying to build on the Diversity Report from 2013 and the Mental Health Report, which is currently underway.

Space was quoted as the big issue on campus and big flexible spaces are important. What was Brown and Brew will now be a flex space. If anyone has walked down Avenue of the Arts on a
weekend, there is always something scheduled in the Sophia Gordon room. We are creating new ways for students to reserve spaces and trying to reduce the room fees for student organizations. We are also trying to think about programming in outdoor spaces. If the bookstore relocates, the space could be repurposed. We are trying to get juniors and seniors back on campus through the villages, and looking at the G6 spaces.

Only three students weren’t very or extremely satisfied with the presentation by Jason Kilmer last year. We are thinking structurally about diversity and the diverse identities of our student body. We’ve combined the OL program with the RA program and are investing in the Res Life staff to work with first-year students. Almost all first-year students live in first-year housing. We offer great resources, but if students don’t know about them then we aren’t doing our job.

We have a new person looking at housing and managing the 3,300 beds we have on campus. We have scholars in residence, residential education, and are hiring an off-campus housing specialist, which is in process.

Now, 800 or 900 incoming students have a pre-orientation trip, but 400 students don’t participate. The programs are fee-driven and are affected by a student’s ability to get here early. We want to have a trip built into everyone’s orientation so they feel ready to start school and feel connected. We want to build student skills around backgrounds and political differences, and are investing in theme houses and how we can support students academically.

We are reviewing Greek life over the next three years. Some of our changes are going to cost money so we are working on fundraising.

PROF MAHONEY: It seems like you’re approaching the co-curriculum and housing separately from the academic curriculum, and I wonder how they can be more integrated because we are not a residence at a college but a residential college?

DEAN McMAHON: My background experience is working with faculty and how we can work with faculty on advising and in other opportunities. My work is to support your work.

PROF POTT: I’ve been affiliated with two other schools that had advising groups in residential halls and faculty affiliating with residential halls, and I’d like to see more of that here. Also, could you tell us what you mean about an acute diagnosis in mental health and what preventative steps could be taken?

DEAN McMAHON: The criteria for acute has changed a lot in the last 15 years, and includes major diagnoses like harm to oneself or to others.

PROF ALLEN: I just want to say that the students love Mary Pat. The faculty play an integral role because these are all intersecting issues. Faculty involvement is welcome, but not everyone sees it as their role. Based on the Mental Health Task Force data, we need to increase the budget, which has remained the same despite the usage of our counseling services tripling.
DEAN McMAHON: We have one of the highest utilization rates of counseling services in the country. The graduate students and staff have told us that it’s about building a community of care and recognizing when someone has a need and offering intervention when you already have a relationship with someone.

PROF ERNST: Congratulations to everyone who worked on this. For many years, I’ve been a transfer advisor and they come in with problems and have trouble because they come into a class that’s already bonded with each other.

DEAN McMAHON: We have to ask how do you help people starting over so they feel included?

PROF ORIANS: A while ago, President Bacow said that Tufts students are great because they burn the candles at both ends, which I took to mean that they put a lot of time and effort into their education but also let loose and party. Many of our students will be taking five classes because of the new SHU system and already the students doing it are exhausted. How will they balance schoolwork and social life?

DEAN McMAHON: As a caring community, it’s a good time to think about the new SHU process and how scheduling our courses affects them.

PROF GROSSMAN: Community is essential and whatever departments and programs can do to foster that sense organically is so beneficial. Student groups are becoming more aware of creating inclusive communities, and in drama and dance, we have a class that introduces students to everyone in the department and different areas of the major.

PROF GARDULSKI: You’re not really supposed to be counseling students on medical issues, and it’s tricky that faculty don’t overstep or cause more problems. We need guidance on drawing boundaries.

PROF LOVE: What about the NCAA overlap with the fraternity culture? Does anyone at the university do anything about concussive brain injuries and long-term effects on the brain that the NFL does not address?

PRESIDENT MONACO: As a group, the NESCAC presidents have been very aware of this issue and mitigating measures have been taken, like not tackling at practice.

DEAN McMAHON: When there are intercollegiate athletics involved, I feel lucky to work with so many coaches who value safety and inclusion in sports, but we also have to think about reaching the athletic groups that aren’t under a coach’s guidance.

PROF RANKIN: What are you doing for the other three classes, particularly about substance abuse prevention?
DEAN McMAHON: Jason Kilmer came last year and we are trying to get the students the information they need. Tonight, the sophomores, the TCU senate, and I are talking about the class of 2020.

PROF GUZMAN: How does the SMFA fit into the integration of the campus? Students are excited about having the SMFA, but I am surprised by how many students don’t know about what they can do here.

DEAN McMAHON: I see the museum school and the museum as a way to engage and connect, but getting the word out is a continuous job.

DEAN GLASER: What metrics do you think we should be looking at to keep track of addressing the problems identified?

DEAN McMAHON: The alcohol transports and emergency hospitalizations numbers are down. We want to intervene with students at an earlier, safer point.

PRESIDENT MONACO: I think having the alternative spaces will play into student satisfaction. I wouldn’t be surprised if the sophomore class is dissatisfied because of Greek life being shut down last year, but non-Greek life is gaining in influence.

PROF POTT: Is there any thought to organizing the villages around interests?

DEAN McMAHON: At a meeting I was at, we were talking about that and would like to do it.

PROF PEPALL: There is probably a group of students that doesn’t engage in these opportunities. Are there opportunities to partner with majors to connect with students academically? Do certain majors have more challenges in that there is less one-on-one time between faculty and students?

DEAN McMAHON: They would like to do something about this.

PROF JOHNSON: I have a suggestion for faculty that the curricular advising course program is a great opportunity. Students pick a course that you teach, and instead of meeting only when a student comes to his or her advisor, you interact with them regularly. When a faculty member sees students a couple of times a week during classes, he or she will see when they are absent or upset or sick, and it’s easier and productive to reach out to and engage with first year students this way. Parents are often equally as anxious as the students and it’s reassuring to know that someone is there regularly for their child.

MAHONEY: Thank you, Vida, for saying that. We’ve all observed that the curricular advising course programs can be helpful for both students and faculty, who were already teaching the course anyway. You’ll learn the pleasures of first-year advising.
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