
Members Absent: K. McDonald, L. Wild

Excused: T. Deer, J. Haefner, B. Trager

Guests: Sandra Connelly, Fernando Naveda, Tom Policano

CALL TO ORDER: 12:07 p.m.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER'S REPORT: Minutes of September 6, 2012 were approved with three abstentions.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- Shirley Bower, Director of Wallace Library reported on a copyright policy that had been tabled at senate in the past and this now needs to be addressed. She requested two senators to volunteer to serve on this committee or two faculty. Liz Lawley, GCCIS senator and Michael Ruhling, CLA senator volunteered to serve.

- Per the Cost Containment Reports, P. Tymann said he had a conversation with President Destler and the president would receive these well in advance before budget decisions are made and all the governance groups would see these reports as well.

- Per the minutes discussion from last senate meeting, it is feasible for these meetings to be recorded by Tech Crew and then have them transcribed through ETC. A summary version would be compiled to come to senate for approval. Once this summary and the transcript of the recording was posted, the recording would be destroyed. The yearly cost for taping is approximately $5000 for the year and the transcription is $100 per hour. The Provost has been unable to attend the Fall senate meetings, but conveyed that he would pay for these costs.

  - C. Hull: Detail is great but I don’t think it is worth $5000 per year. Let’s go back to simple minutes.

  - V. Serravallo: This is poor use of money and staff will have to be paid as well, and didn’t agree with doing this.

  - Doing the summary can be very time consuming.

  - L. Lawley: Commented that she is in favor of having the recordings available as well as a video recording. The minutes don’t necessarily convey the nuance of what is talked about. These recordings will not go viral and it is good to know what has been discussed as senate is an open meeting for all.

  - H. Yamashita: Had concerns if the minutes or transcription is posted and someone misspoke that that would be a problem and could we go back and review this?

  - M. Laver requested that the minutes be abbreviated as these are disseminated among his colleagues and prove useful.
o L. Lawley: Comments to be displayed can be set up on the video for corrections but the video/audio recording should not be edited.

o P. Tymann asked for a straw poll from senators regarding looking into the cost of video taping the senate meetings in the future and the majority wanted to know this information. This quote will come forth to senate at the next meeting for discussion.

PLUS/MINUS GRADING PRESENTATION - See first link on the Provost’s website: https://www.rit.edu/provost/priorities_keyfocus

Fernando Naveda, Director of Academic Affairs Calendar Semester Conversion introduced Sandra Connelly, Assistant Professor, School of Life Sciences, who gave the presentation today on Plus/Minus grading.

Brief historical background was given as the Academic Senate studied +/- grading to our current grading system and the Academic Senate approved the plus/minus grading system as follows: A, A-, B+, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F (Refined Grading System). On January 25, 2010 the Provost announced the partial implementation of the RGS under three guiding principles in AY2010-11.

1) Greater grading granularity for faculty who choose to use it
2) Minimal impact on retention, student’s ability to retain financial aid and progress to degree completion
3) Fair and consistent implementation

Full implementation of this was to take place in AY2011-2012. Yet the Provost announced a moratorium on the implementation of the RGS as now there was going to be conversion to semester and the new SIS (Student Information System). In April 2012 the Provost listed the moratorium. In midsummer 2012 the taskforce agreed on three complementary strategies and process to implement the Provost’s recommendations.

A timeline was reviewed and can be seen in the report posted on Provost’s website.

The Plus/Minus taskforce has worked on three implementation strategies as follows:

1) Agent-based simulation (already in progress)
2) Dual-grading
3) History-based grading

Per strategy #1 with undergraduate and graduate classes, the committee will look at a large amount of data and will conduct a number of simulations under various assumptions to understand the impact that the RGS might have on students.

In regards to strategies 2 and 3, listed above, because of the need for faculty participation a mailing went out to randomly selected faculty (238 which is 20% of the faculty at RIT) to participate in dual-grading (#2 strategy). Joseph Voelkel (KGCOE) will process the data and report the results of his analysis, which will include impact on student GPAs of the RGS as compared with the current whole letter grading system. Input from participating faculty is due November 18th. These faculty will be contacted by committee members to explore willingness to participate in strategy #3. This fall 605 graduate courses are being taught (15%) and 3,445 undergraduate courses, 85% are being taught. The taskforce expects the same proportion of graduate and undergraduate courses reported from strategies 2 and 3. The final grades deadline for this survey is November 18, 2012. In winter of 2012 the committee will evaluate the data, produce reports and share this with the Provost in spring of 2012.
S. Connelly continued the report with input given from the Provost in winter 2009, that departments need to formulate their own guidelines on how the RGS will be used. She noted that the Provost, under advice from the Deans, on September 17, 2012 had said there will be one grading system at RIT starting Fall 2013, the RGS. The choice of using plus or minus or letter whole grades will be a faculty prerogative. Colleges must develop specific policy and guidelines regarding the implementation of the RGS in a variety of cases such as multiple selection course offerings (same term offerings), course sequences, and same course offerings (different terms), among others.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- L. Underhill: Commented that she saw that adjuncts were included in this survey and discussion.
  S. Connelly: Adjuncts were invited to participate as they represent a significant group of faculty who teach our students. She added that she has already had a number of adjuncts contact her who expressed their willingness to participate in Strategy #2.
- H. Shahmohamad: The distinction for receiving an A+ is not shown in this presentation.
  S. Connelly: This grade distinction shown on slide 2 was approved by Academic Senate and most schools use this distribution of grades. Yet she said she would love to see D+ and D- be given as well.
- S. Connelly: Once this gets implemented it will go into SIS based on the approved Refined Grade System.
- L. Lawley: C-‘s could have an impact on this as some courses require a C.
  F. Naveda: The Provost has already indicated that with the RGS, C- will replace C where a C or better is a pre-requisite.
- S. Maggelakis: With faculty choosing plus or minus, how will we deal with complaints per those students in favor of this system and those not in favor?
  S. Connelly: In sequence classes you will have to decide as a College and in large multi-courses, again you will have to decide as a College, or minimally as a Department.
  F. Naveda: This was shared with the Deans who were advised to start the conversation in their colleges to develop policy/guidelines to implement the RGS. He added that even today, some faculty do not make use of all the letter grades available in the current grading system.
- J. Hertzson: How was the committee structured as it is not even among all colleges?
  S. Connelly: Self-selected. The Provost called for volunteers.
- Per some questions about the process of the polling going on and gathering GPA data, S. Connelly said data collected will produce a report that will show how GPA’s are affected by letter grades and how much this changes the GPA’s of our students, if at all.
- P. Tymann: Is the implementation of the policy conditional and in doing the study it shows GPA’s are cut in half, and if so will the Provost then say “No, we will not implement this?”
  F. Naveda: The Plus-Minus Task Force is not the right group to ask if the RGS will be implemented; the decision has already been made. However, if based on the results that will be shared with the RIT community by the Task Force, the Academic Senate feels that it needs to discuss implementation of the RGS with the Provost, Naveda stated that he is in no position to say that the Provost will be happy about it but that he is certain the Provost will not turn down an opportunity to hear and to be heard.
- President Destler: At RIT we require a 2.0 GPA and we have to look at this issue to ensure that we do not negatively impact retention.
- M. Richmond: Since adopting this policy would mean more work, then if it makes no difference but causes more work, why use this?
- Other senators commented that with this plus/minus system it would be more of a workload for faculty.
- L. Lawley: This is valuable for students going to Graduate School, as a B+ is higher than a B.
Q: Have other schools been contacted?
F. Naveda: Yes, I have read about 16 reports from other schools and shared a number of them with the Task Force.

STANDING COMMITTEE CHARGES (CEC, RABC, SAC)

Campus Environment Committee (CEC) charges were given as follows and discussed. It was recommended to take the final charge and place it first, which was agreed upon and now the charge reads as follows:

1) Examine the impact of the proposed Innovative Learning Institute on the academic environment at RIT.
2) Finalize the RIT definition of “sustainability” for ASHEE STARS assessment purposes.
3) Review how RIT can better utilize/promote its campus resources (managed spaces, wetlands, forests and agricultural fields) to enhance the learning experience of students and visitors to campus.
4) Consider ways in which the CEC can reach out to campus groups involved in environmental and sustainability initiatives to improve communication and coordination between these groups.
5) Review the access, awareness, and contributions of museums, collections, galleries, etc. as they inform the cultural environment at RIT.

   o M. Laver: Two faculty in his college asked about the Smoking Policy on campus and when would this be addressed?
   A: P. Tymann said that the Smoking Policy is not a senate policy but an institute policy yet senate can make recommendations.

Vote to approve the CEC charges as amended carried with 32 in favor and 1 abstention.

Resource Allocation and Budget Committee (RABC) charges were presented, discussed and the following charges with some changes made were voted upon:

1) Review the final reports of the four cost containment committees. Report findings and recommendations to the Senate by the end of October.
2) Review the Institute’s faculty (tenured/tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and adjunct faculty) benchmarking plans and current progress.
3) Assess our progress towards ensuring that PhD programs, current and planned, are financially self-sustaining.
4) Assess our needs and recommend a plan for improving the library’s holding and for increasing our standing among peer schools.
5) Review how operating costs for new buildings are determined and incorporated in the annual budget process.
6) Review policies and procedures regarding the redistribution of research overhead.
7) Review RIT Controller’s policies related to allowable vs. unallowable operating and grant-funded expenditures across the institute, especially with regards to discretionary expenditures.
• S. Boedo: The Academic Support committee spent much time reviewing the Wallace Center and is this the same (charge #4) or something different?
  A: P. Tymann said RABC will look at budget matters only.
• K. Davis: Does charge #4 include the library changing to more digital access as some universities refer to this.
  A: “Holdings” encompasses both.

Vote to approve the RABC charges as amended carried with 31 in favor and 2 abstentions.

**Student Affairs Committee (SAC)** charges were presented, discussed, edited and one additional charge (#4) was added to this list of charges and voted upon as follows:

1) Review institute procedures and policies as they relate to RIT’s GLBT population.
2) Review what training is available for faculty and staff to help them manage the behavioral challenges of working with the changing characteristics of the student population.
3) Review the transfer student experience.
4) Review institute procedures and policies as they relate to RIT’s growing international student body.

Discussion ensued per the changes made to the original charges.

• C. Hull asked about the ratio of men to women at RIT to be reviewed in regards to the male dominance at RIT and do a charge relating to this.
  A: A. Phelps said recruitment of students to campus is an enrollment issue and studies have already been made, so he disagreed in putting this in the SAC’s charges.
  M-B. Cooper, VP of Student Affairs said a report on enrollment is coming forth soon to all Governance Groups.
• J. Hertzson commented that charge #2 as originally written was too vague and wanted to be more specific with this charge as behavioral challenges take up a broad spectrum of things. (i.e. someone who is blind, etc.) The original wording was “Review what training is available for faculty to help them manage the challenges of working with the changing characteristics of the student population.”
  M. Ruhling: Is there a federal act we can reference?
  M-B. Cooper: No, it is not as clear as just one thing. This is a faculty training issue. Wording was changed to say “to help them manage the behavioral challenges …”
• It was suggested change the original wording of charge #1, which read: “Review Institute procedures and policies as they relate to RIT’s transgender population, to now read, “relate to RIT’s GLBT population”.
• H. Yamashita: In the original proposed charges, there was no mention of reviewing the international student experience on campus.
  Charge #4 was added to include this.

Vote to approve the SAC charges as amended carried with 31 in favor, 2 opposed and 2 abstentions.
FACULTY LEAVE FOR PROFESSIONAL/CAREER DEVELOPMENT - POLICY E18.0
Proposed Policy E18.0: http://hdl.handle.net/1850/15320

Tom Policano, FAC member presented the changes to Policy E18.0 and explained that there was concern about timing of leave and having to have an extra year that would have had to occur. A contingent phrase was added to allow leave after 7 years.

Proposed changes were made under “2. Eligibility”, paragraph one and the proposed changes and additions are in red as follows:

The candidate for leave shall have served as a full-time member of the faculty for a minimum of six years. Only tenured faculty are eligible for a faculty leave. If a pre-tenure faculty applies for a leave, then approval for a professional leave is contingent upon the granting of tenure. After having been granted a leave, a faculty member will again become eligible for a leave only after serving six years as a full-time faculty member at the university, dating from the end of the academic year during which the previous leave took place.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- A. Phelps: Is there any provision for non-tenure track faculty to go on leave?
  T. Policano: This has not been addressed yet but can bring this back to the committee.
- J. Hertzson: I served on the Leave for Professional/Career Development Committee and started to get requests from faculty who wanted time off to complete their book etc. and so this is a very gray area. Maybe this needs to be addressed and people not yet tenured were granted leaves. The committee would say they were concerned about this and gave the report to the Provost.
  T. Policano said this is a paid leave and also it specifies “tenured faculty” to get this leave so non-tenured faculty getting leave was against policy and this is not fair, especially in regards to funding.
- A. Phelps: He said this is dealt with within the fact that any leave that extends the time prior to tenure review has to go to the Provost’s office, so what J. Hertzson shared is beyond the scope of this particular policy.
- S. Boedo, having served on the Leave Committee as well said they never saw the case of a pre-tenure person asking for leave.
- S. Manian Ramkumar: Pre-tenured faculty can negotiate terms with their dean.
- T. Policano: Faculty pointed out last spring that for pre-tenured faculty it would not be until 8 years for them to ask for leave and all tenured faculty, it would be 7 years. If a pre-tenured faculty person applied, them being granted leave would be contingent upon becoming tenured.
- S. Maggelakis: Because applications are due in October, and their evaluation process started in October, faculty in her college were told not to apply for sabbatical yet. Other senators felt the new wording was confusing as to when one can apply and when would they be taking leave.
- M. Richmond: If you are tenured, can you apply after 6 years at RIT?
  J. Winebrake: They can apply in their sixth year.
- M. Laver: People who come to RIT with years toward their tenure, does that count?
  T. Policano: No, they have to be here at RIT six years and have had to have completed 6 years here.
- Friendly amendment approved in the beginning sentence under Eligibility reads as follows: “A faculty member awarded a leave of absence at RIT shall have served.”

Due to time constraints this agenda item will return to senate for continued discussion and vote.
ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Phelps, Communications Officer
Vivian Gifford, AS Senior Staff Assistant