Call to Order: 12:07 p.m.
Communication Officer's Report: Minutes of 3/20/2014 were approved as amended. http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17249

Academic Senate Nominations Committee
Eileen Feeney Bushnell, chair of the AS Nominations Committee has senators to consider serving on the executive committee for next year as elections will be taking place on April 24, 2014 and there are still openings for various positions (Communications Officer, Operations Officer, and Vice Chair).

Executive Committee Report
Link to original senate resolution given by Michael Laver, AS Chair and Amended AS resolution given by S.M. Ramkumar: http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17252

M. Laver presented a resolution in response to the attacks on Professor Lawrence Torcello, and in support of the Principles of Academic Freedom. The motion to approve this was seconded. An amended version of the earlier statement was presented by S.M. Ramkumar.

The amended resolution in Support of the Principles of Academic Freedom reads as follows:

On the 13th of March, 2014, Professor Lawrence Torcello, a faculty member in the department of Philosophy, wrote an article entitled “Is Misinformation about the Climate Criminally Negligent?” The piece has been garnering a lot of attention in the media and in many cases misrepresented. Not only has Professor Torcello’s work been misrepresented, but he has also been the target of a personal smear campaign, of direct hate mail, and the target of personal threats to his safety. As the elected representatives of the academic community at RIT, we members of RIT’s Academic Senate stand fully behind Professor Torcello’s academic freedom and sense of responsibility to place these issues before a wider public.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Academic Senate at RIT:

1. Affirms the strong and unequivocal stance taken by the administration of this university as seen in the statement released by President William Destler (appended below); and

2. Commits itself to the principles of academic freedom and publicly responsible engagement. In so doing, we proudly uphold the highest traditions of academic integrity and so decry the aggressive misrepresentations of any academic research. We stand with Professor Torcello and all faculty in supporting the principles upon which academia is founded, the free exchange of ideas, the integrity of the peer review process, the ability to pursue research even in controversial areas without fear of reprisal, and the freedom to conduct research in good faith without fear of personal harassment or intimidation.
President Destler’s Statement, 3/31/2014
The search for truth is the animating force of a university, and it behooves those who support open and respectful discussion of controversial issues to get the facts right. Recently the views expressed by a member of our community, Professor Lawrence Torcello, have been misrepresented by some in the media. The misrepresentation follows a pattern similar to other incidents of misrepresentation involving academics that work on topics related to climate change. We encourage people to carefully read Professor Torcello’s article itself rather than rely on distortions of its contents circulating on the web.

The Institute wishes to acknowledge, with Professor Torcello, that a strong scientific consensus exists in support of anthropogenic global climate change. Otherwise, RIT takes no official position on the views independently expressed by its faculty members in the course of their research. Faculty members speak for themselves, not for the institution or the institution’s leadership. The university does endorse our faculty member’s rights to free speech and recognizes our faculty’s academic freedom to express their views.

Colleges and universities, of all organizations, must remain forums for open and respected discussion of controversial issues. We are part of a learning community, and much of our learning comes from each other. Respect for the opinions of others, even when we strongly disagree with them, must be a cornerstone of our campus community.

The vote to amend the statement passed with 24 in favor, 0 opposed and 4 abstentions.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- T. Engstrom commended the Academic Senate and the Institute Administration for their statements in support of Professor Torcello and academic freedom. What Professor Torcello has endured is extraordinary; responding to his attacks provides us with the opportunity to occupy the high ground socially and intellectually, and to confirm principles that matter to all of us. The proposed resolution gives the senate a wonderful opportunity to take the lead and to accept active responsibility for affirming the public role of the academy and its faculty regarding issues of global importance.
- B. Hartpence shared some comments from his college (GCCIS) and these referred to academic freedom. Basically summed up they said “inflammatory comments will come as this is expected, but we should not expect to receive pushback on controversial work.” Faculty in his college were very much in favor of President Destler’s comments on academic freedom but do not believe we must agree with every statement on any particular issue given by our colleagues.
- H. Ghazle: Faculty and administration making statements together sends a strong statement to the outside world.
- G. Beck: Has RIT taken steps to ensure the individual’s safety in regards to the threats received?
  President Destler: We are aware of these issues and have alerted our legal office and our campus office, so we are doing what we can.
- Professor Torcello thanked the senate for taking this issue up and commented that he did expect blowback but did not expect hate mail and threats. He stated his belief that no faculty member should be asked to expect, or tolerate, hate mail and harassment as a result of their academic work. The statement on Academic Freedom that President Destler made is incredibly important and saying that RIT “recognizes” the scientific consensus, which is not the same as an official endorsement, shows a responsible commitment to intellectual honesty regarding a politically charged topic. The statement made does point people to the actual article, which is good as it may cause people to read the article itself. The vast majority of harassing messages I have received has come from people who freely admit to not having read my actual article. What happened to me typically happens to climate scientists and it is important for universities to recognize that this form of harassment is becoming increasingly common against academics who write on climate change and other hot-button topics. RIT is getting great credit for taking a stand in the broader community of climate researchers. It is unfortunate that such a strong response by RIT is so rare among other universities.

The Academic Senate vote to approve the amended resolution in support of Academic Freedom passed unanimously.
Policy E5.0 on Tenure: Motion 7 Regarding External Letters

President’s Letter to Faculty: On Policy E5.0: [http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17254](http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17254)

Michael Laver applauded President Destler for being so open and candid about E5.0 as he had come to the Executive Committee to discuss Motion #7 on “can senior colleagues see external letters in the tenure evaluation process?” He presented the motion to reconsider Motion #7 and this was seconded. Vote to reconsider passed. President Destler was then called to the floor to give his position on this portion of E5.0.

President Destler:

- He thanked the senate for approving the Resolution on Academic Freedom. In regards to the previous discussion regarding this, my position is well known on Global Climate change issues and a recent survey done on the climate science literature showed that 97% of the authors endorsed that climate change is real so this is supported by real data.
- This is the first time in seven years I am asking senate to reconsider a policy that senate has already passed but was reminded that length of semester was a previous topic at senate.
- The policy presently disallows access of external letters to all but a certain group, which is the faculty in the department where the person is being considered for tenure.
- The concern is that the most important factor in the promotion/tenure process should be those people immediately above the candidate; those who are aware of their practices. They need to be fully informed.
- This is actually a tenured faculty obligation. This responsibility to protect the faculty lies with the faculty itself and to make right decisions about tenure.
- At some other institutions the dossier of all the faculty’s information, including letters, is made available to the senior faculty; the faculty vote and the chair writes a separate letter. I would prefer this procedure myself.
- I am troubled that RIT could forbid faculty from seeing external letters.
- I would be content to leave the decision to colleges at RIT.
- I am speaking more as a tenured faculty as this is an obligation of faculty.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- T. Engstrom: I appreciate the option to allow colleges to make their own decisions regarding process, but I think it is important to be consistent regarding fundamental principles across all colleges. Moreover, were we to vote and permit tenured faculty to read the letters in one college but not another, this could, particularly in the case of joint appointments, be problematic, especially if, after a negative decision, a grievance were to be pursued on the basis of thinking the decision might have gone otherwise if another college’s process had been followed. In such a case, I’d rather contradict my previous position and make external letters available in all colleges. President Destler: I would be happy if the letters were available in all colleges. Concerning faculty seeing the external letters, there is a legitimate concern about confidentiality but there have been breaches in other institutions regarding this. The faculty are responsible for keeping information confidential and all should be kept confidential.
- K. Mousley: Does the candidate have the right to read the external letters? President Destler: No, only the right to see an explanation of the decision.
- P. Darragh: I appreciate being able to see letters in regards to decisions of this sort as extra information can be very valuable. President Destler: We want to be as fully informed as we can and have worked with the Provost regarding regulations of external letters. We are making progress as this is a very sensitive issue.
- M. Laver: I want to limit the senate discussion to the box in Table 2 concerning external letters. Currently it says “No, senior faculty cannot view external letters” and previously it said that the “college decides.”

T. Engstrom moved that this box be changed from “no” to “yes”. This motion was seconded.

- S. Hoi: If this “no” is changed to “yes” then we must see how to change the timeline to give Assistant Professors less time before the deadline as presently the department chairs must submit their letters by September 15.
K. Waterstram-Rich: The deadline for the department chair’s letter had been changed and there is no deadline for them specifically. The college sets the timeline.

- J. Voelkel asked for those who feel “No” strongly to please speak now.
- P. Darragh: Consistency is important.
- H. Yamashita: I support “College Decides” as each college has its own discipline and has its own standards. It is difficult to find external reviewers in some fields.
- V. Serravallo: Consistency is a good principle, but this should not be an end in itself. In some cases departments are joint. I was impressed by “No” voters. We need to get to know our colleagues and not rely on external letters. We should leave it up to the college to decide.
- G. Hintz: It is also transparency, not just consistency. The more transparent we can make things across colleges, the better.
- B. Hartpence: The senate vote on this item was 13 in favor, 12 opposed, which is a narrow decision. He asked that the President comment on this matter.
- President Destler: It is an issue of who will you give authority to regarding tenure decisions. It is best that faculty can be a part of this decision and they need to have access to these external letters.
- S. Ramkumar: He gave an example of a faculty person who had an external letter that was negative, yet this person did much with scholarship that benefited greatly the department. External letters may have only confused the issue in that case.

Question was called on the motion to change the “No” to “Yes” in regards to senior faculty having access to external letters. The vote passed with 22 in favor, 6 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Motion 7 in its entirety was now voted on with this change being made, and the box reading “Yes”. Vote passed with 23 in favor, 3 opposed and 3 abstentions. Amended motion 7 passes.

M. Laver moved to have Academic Senate approve Policy E5.0 as a whole with amended motion 7. Motion passes with 26 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 abstentions.

**Revised Policy E7.0 (Annual Review and Development of Faculty)**

A summary of changes were presented by Tom Policano. See full PPT Presentation for details presented and Revised Proposed Policy – [http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17253](http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17253)

Changes made:

- All faculty with multi-year contracts will be evaluated.
- Expectations for each faculty member will be reflected in a Plan of Work.
- Categories listed in the proposed policy are: Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory and each description was read.
  - For faculty review, after much discussion, the policy now provides “guidance” rather than a “rule” and exceptions can be made with the categories listed
  - Language was found for the low-bar
  - Faculty receiving “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” overall should work with a department head to seek assistance in improving their performance
- Timeframe for the period of review should be December 1st through November 30th.
- Plan of Work must be approved before a contract takes effect.
- Faculty who are rated in lower two categories may be eligible for Faculty Improvement Funds (FIF).
- Many lecturers at RIT have multi-year contracts and these lecturers should receive a performance review.

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- M. Laver noted that in general Academic Senate has disseminated documents well but we should be careful to distinguish between:
  - a) items that the Faculty Affairs Committee is proposing to change and
  - b) existing items, not under consideration, which will be addressed next year.
V. Serravallo: Regarding the overall guidance, is the phrase “reflects disregard of previous reviews or other efforts to provide correction or assistance or 2)… and then asked clarification of what “other efforts to provide correction or assistance” mean?

K. Waterstram-Rich: This wording is different than the existing policy but not different from the proposal presented before.

T. Policano: It could be a contractual thing for more training in an area. And anything you have been asked to do, but have repeatedly not done that is what this refers to.

V. Serravallo: Some of this is negotiable when the review is being written up. What about comments by external reviewers and will the candidate be responsible other than what is already being discussed by the chair?

T. Policano: If it is not written in the Plan of Work, it would not be applicable.

J. Pelz suggested adding “documented efforts” to this portion of the policy.

S. Boedo asked for clarification on the category name where it says “Does not meet expectations” and then later it says “needs improvement”.

K. Waterstram-Rich said this was a typo in the one slide (needs improvement).

S. Boedo: Would it be possible to get “Meets Expectations” if one had “Needs Improvement” in all the categories (overall performance)?

T. Policano: We will address this.

J. Pelz: We decided not to try to build an entire table for all possibilities as this table is meant to act as guidance. So it would be possible.

S. Boedo: What if someone wanted to raise the bar and could get “Meets Expectations” but needs improvement in this categories, would that be possible?

J. Pelz: No.

T. Engstrom: Slide 8 and 6 state that an “Unsatisfactory” in one category should lead to an “Unsatisfactory” overall. The “should” suggests something both too automatic and potentially biased. If the candidate meets very high expectations in other categories, there is no reason to prejudice the overall judgment as requiring an “unsatisfactory”. This seems quite unfair. Wouldn’t it be wiser to leave such circumstances up to good collegial judgment?

T. Policano: We have heard this and discussed this and the consensus of the committee is that we want a low bar standard for the Institute. The word “should” was heavily discussed.

T. Engstrom: Regarding “Meets Expectations”, if someone is terribly honest and establishes high expectation in the POW, this may lower one’s overall rating. One would seldom if ever exceed them. It seems deeply flawed if the review is pegged to meeting expectations. The more ambitious the POW is, the more likely one will only ever “Meet Expectations.”

T. Policano: The Plans of Work are negotiated with the department head.

K. Waterstram-Rich: We will take this back to committee.

H. Yamashita: Regarding “Teaching, Scholarship and Service” on slide 4, this refers to tenure-track faculty and not to lecturers. She suggested to reference lecturers as well.

T. Policano: We will modify this.

B. Barry: The words “reflects disregard” is too hard and could the wording be “has made unsatisfactory progress toward…."

T. Policano: We don’t want to see faculty receive unsatisfactory ratings or get fired before they get tenured, so the language is intentionally harsh. And we expect no one to ever get this category of “unsatisfactory.”

J. Lisuzzo: To get an “unsatisfactory” you have to do something unethical or blatantly disregarding. Others in the senate disagreed.

V. Serravallo: We cannot be expected to plan for specific performance ratings. For example, what if a faculty person plans on service and says “I will be on two committees” but then isn’t voted to serve on a committee?

T. Policano: I do not see this as a problem. Getting on committees is not a problem.

V. Serravallo: The same holds for plans for scholarship and teaching.

Provost: In slide 8 (II D Faculty Review Overall Guidance) I am uncomfortable with the language under “Unsatisfactory” item #2 as these are words that are typically used as criteria for Dismissal of Cause. Are we asking a single individual to make this sort of judgment? There are lots of challenges when making this assumption and I have concerns that I would like to talk to the Faculty Affairs Committee about.

B. Hartpence: “Does Not Meet Expectations” does not appear in another place in the policy, line 53, as it should say “Needs Improvement”.

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Comments and suggestions from today’s meeting will go back to the FAC. M. Laver moved to postpone this discussion on E7.0. It was seconded and passed.

**International Education Task Force Report - Perspective on Global Education**

PPt and Document (Statement and Principles): [http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17248](http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17248)

James Myers, Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs and Zack Butler, Chair for the International Education Task Force presented today the Global Education Task Force Report.

- Having a taskforce focused on this topic is a big step forward for International Education and the administrative and governance issues related to it.
- Delighted to now have two Miller Chairs: Zack Butler and Clark Hochgraf and these are faculty members committed to international education. It is a rotating chair who will rotate through all of the colleges and thanked the Provost for making this happen and giving resources to it.
- Finalized and expanded exchange agreements which historically have not been extensively developed at RIT.
- Now all of the MOU’s are signed by the Provost, not just by Enrollment Management.
- Expanded exchange agreements which has opened up opportunities for students to go to other institutions on a Study Abroad Program.
- Major changes have been made to the Study Abroad program approval process and changes have been made to the financial model to provide incentive to the departments and colleges.
- More services are available to support international scholars and exchange visitors.
- Communication has improved with more forums, a completely new website, and a newsletter that will come out this spring. There will be a forum on Research Collaborations with the Research Office (Ryne Raffaelle) sponsoring faculty to engage in Global Research.
- There is a new focus on Asian and Latin American partnerships.
- The taskforce has been critical in laying the foundation for strategic planning.
- Primary work of the ITEF was shared, along with the Global Statement that covers how we are to engage with other cultures, what are the obligations we have, aligning with core values and how are we to respond, and the five Guiding Principles (Comprehensiveness, Faculty leadership, Academic excellence, Engagement and Student-centered inclusiveness).
- Strategic Planning and goals were shared.
- International education involves engaging with people from different cultures. We believe this is best done by creating opportunities for students to study abroad, but we recognize the need to develop multicultural experiences for students in their classes here in Rochester and through other innovative approaches to international/multicultural education.

Here is the link to view the full PPt presentation and the document on the RIT Global Engagement Value Statement and five Guiding Principles for International Education. [http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17248](http://hdl.handle.net/1850/17248)

Discussion and Q&A ensued.

- M. Richmond: How will RIT support the goal of “100%” of RIT students to have a global experience and how are you planning on getting 100% of the students’ involvement?
  - J. Myers: Many faculty and departments already have such courses around international, global and multi-cultural things and this needs to be elevated in the classrooms, rather than creating a new, specific requirement. For example, Imaging Science is a discipline that often, especially in the field of remote sensing, focuses on global natural systems and the interaction of natural and human systems at a global scale. This should be recognized as supporting our international and global education goals. It is important to recall that the university defined a set of essential program outcomes and Global Interconnectivity is one of those outcomes. We are taking inventory of these courses to see how they map to the goal of having 100% of RIT students having a global experience.
- T. Engstrom: This is a fantastic initiative and these are very important steps you are taking. But to suggest we need to have a “balance” between our own core values and those of other countries that contradict them,
especially at basic levels of rights for women and different ethnic communities, is deeply problematic. Negotiating such large gaps requires a much more nuanced, richer, and explicit engagement with such concerns. J. Myers: We welcome a richer conversation on this topic.

- H. Ghazle reiterated what T. Engstrom’s statement as he himself comes from another country and global education is a 2-way street. Our students can learn so much when we bring people from other countries to RIT. The figure of 100% involvement of students to have a global experience may be too ambitious. Perhaps saying 80% would be better. And can we have an assessment process in place that is qualitative, not just quantitative. Yet overall I am in great support of all that was shared.

J. Myers: Please view our website - http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/global/ and we will create an annual report to track progress and are creating an assessment framework working with Ann Wahl.

- H. Yamashita: Languages are part of the global connections and she asked that this be emphasized in their documents.

- J. Beck said one of his faculty expressed views similar to T. Engstrom's views and asked what policy would be if a student was arrested for behavior in a foreign country which RIT does not consider improper?

J. Myers: This is more of an issue with Risk Management and is a complex issue. Part of Risk Management is education of travelers regarding politics and laws overseas. We must also consider legal compliance and we would be happy to facilitate an open forum on this topic.

Adjournment: 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Richmond, Communications Officer
Vivian Gifford, AS Senior Staff Assistant