

**University at Albany
State University of New York**

**2005-2006 Governance Council
Friday, December 2, 2005
CC375 3:00pm to 4:15pm**

Minutes

Present: E. Bell, S. Birge, R. Collier, D. Dewar, R. Hoyt, A. Israel, A. Lyons, J. Pipkin, M. Range, H. Strother, S. Turner

Guests: S. Herbst, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
W. Locust, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
S. Mahan, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs

Emergency Meeting: Chair D. Dewar called this emergency meeting to expedite the selection of members for the new "Student Retention Committee". There were concerns generated by a document as put forth by Vice Provost Locust and Assistant Vice President Mahan. Prior to putting forth the names of faculty members for the committee membership, as requested in the document, further discussion was deemed necessary. Vice Provost Locust and Provost Herbst were asked to attend the discussion.

Chair Dewar thanked S. Mahan for attending the meeting, as well as Vice Provost Locust and Provost Herbst.

Retention Committee Membership concerns: The Governance Council quickly brought forth concerns on an issue that could be a problem with the committee composition. They felt that there may not be enough faculty representation, and "new blood" on the committee. They felt representation may be leaning too far towards the administration end. Vice Provost Locust addressed the concern, giving some history on the reason that it was composed as such. He stated that when they first began pulling together representatives, they found 20 people from 20 offices, would all be beneficial to have on the committee, but they decided that they needed a more manageable group size, in order to get the committee to move forward. The members also questioned the chosen chair of the committee, and the possible need for a new prospective on these issues. They would like to support the ideas of the committee. In response to the choice for the chair, Vice Provost Locust stated that he thought himself as ex-officio and he asked S. Mahan to chair the committee.

Retention Committee's Charge: The Governance Council asked what kind of things they envision the retention committee to be addressing, particularly from a faculty point of view. Vice Provost Locust stated that advising is one aspect; there is an advisement task force which is in need of an overhaul. He would like to see the committee focus on why the University has such loss of retention. It is a pretty significant number; and there is major fallout in every cohort and every interest group, including programs such as Project Renaissance, EOP and Presidential Scholars which still have an increasing decline in retention. "We need to reverse that trend, by finding out what is causing it". First year transfer students' – have an 83% to 84% retention which is okay, but 95% is a realistic target. In 4 to 6 year graduation rates, it is getting worse. We need an understanding of what those issues are, and what interventions can be put in place to bring these numbers up. University-wide, interventions need to take place-- programs need to be developed and handled in every department. Academic advisement is improving, but there is a great need to reduce the "run-around" from frontline staff, as well as Student Accounts and Advising. These are enough to work on for a while. The current mission of the committee is information gathering and retention. It should come up with specific recommendations that will be implemented. The charge of the committee would be action-oriented.

Faculty Representation: The Governance Council raised concerns over faculty representation on the Committee. Members felt that two faculty members cannot represent the diversity of the departments. The discussion continued on the aspect of getting faculty involved in more specific areas, i.e., working as Chairs of the sub-committee's, that report back to the Retention Committee. Too many administration representatives, and not enough faculty representatives on the committee, were also discussed.

Discussion turned to suggestions of having the Senate and its bodies, approve legislation, and also creating groups to carry on the recommendations of the committee. Provost Herbst stated that work is being done now on this front, including reviewing course registration and availability, and also investigating what the demand is like for courses.

Assistant Vice President Mahan noted that the system is not really badly broken. The Governance Council members voiced concerns that a prior statement by Vice Provost Locust stated that “it should be blown up”. The members also voiced concerns that a lot of the people on the committee have been involved in these areas for several years. They share responsibilities for the current state of affairs. Vice Provost Locust agreed that this was a fair assessment. They are open to restructure the make up of the committee. However the members must be ready to roll up their sleeves, get to work and create action items in a hurry. They will need to get down to the “nuts-and-bolts” of issues. Provost Herbst asked how this could be done without representation from the admissions office and suggested that the Committee will need to deal with the person that is most accountable. R.Collier, suggested that it is not necessary for an Admission’s representative to be on the Committee, but someone from Admissions should be available for advisement, assisting the Committee, and to be invited when needed.

Administrative Members: The Governance Council recommended five possible members from the Administration. The Council members would like request that Vice Provost Locust speak to the nominees and request their membership and let them know that they came with a strong recommendation from the Governance Council. These nominees are:

W. Locust Chair, S. Faerman, C. Carr, G. Stevens, Bruce Szelest and C. Bouchard.

Faculty Members: The Governance Council will create a list for the faculty representation on the “Student Retention Committee”. They will give the issue careful thought, and talk about some guidelines for choosing the faculty members that they will recommend to the Committee. They believed they should choose faculty with diverse areas of expertise, centered in both large and small departments, professional schools and Arts and Science. It was suggested that at least four faculty members are needed to get the Committee started, and then they can add on faculty as sub-groups are created. Vice President Mahan found in the freshman year at other schools, that there is a universe of information out there. She suggested that this Committee should act as a funnel doing more by way of research and bringing that to other groups. But there is a need to start work quickly, divide into sub committee’s and come out to larger campus for discussion.

Provost Herbst discussion: Provost Herbst reported that they have all the reports for 10 to 15 years of research by committees on which “Distinguished Service Professor” John Pipkin served, regarding student life in UAlbany. Everything is in the reports -- it is just a matter of prioritizing and implementing plans. Let this retention committee not start from scratch; the “Student Life Committee” has already touched on a lot of good ideas; a lot of hard work is already done. Provost Herbst noted that the administration is grateful for all the work the members of the earlier committees did, but it is unfortunate that it never went anywhere. For example, first year experience for “Project Renaissance” was taken for granted. It has all sorts of benefits, and did raise some doubts about the demonstrated values of the project. “It could be an example of where we value what we measure, but we should actually measure what we value instead”. It wasn’t taken into consideration that students in this program are self selected. “Project Renaissance” has changed quite a bit, and it should be looked at. It was suggested that the “Council on Academic Assessment” should be given a charge to look over this program to expand it or make changes to it.

W. Locust on Project Renaissance: Vice Provost Locust stated that “Project Renaissance” has a strong retention and graduation rate. Vice Provost Locust, then asked if the “Governance Council”, concerning the make up of the retention committee, could zero in on the number of faculty members and where they should be from. Four were suggested to start with. The “Governance Council” suggested that Vice President Mahan should serve as a resource to the committee, given her knowledge of the area. Vice Provost Locust asked the members to expedite these nominations.

After the guests left, there was additional discussion.

Subcommittee Structure: Chair Dewar stated that the next step would be to gather the names of the faculty for this committee. Also suggest some recommendations for Sub Committee structure. It was agreed that the sub-committee chairs should be the faculty on the committee.

Choosing Names: The council worked on choosing appropriate people for the committee membership. Members decided it must be done quickly, but correctly. Candidates should be strong advocates, have experience, and the Committee should include diverse representation from all levels of faculty. The University needs to rethink the structure and requirements within the disciplines. Mr. Collier stated that “advisement” and “Gen Ed” are broken. Students cannot get courses they need, sometimes faculty don’t put the courses in. The Governance Council members decided to begin choosing good nominee’s based on their considerations.

Faculty Committee Members: In choosing the Faculty representatives, the Council developed the following list:

Stanley Isser, Robert Geer, Helmut Hirsch, Carol Anderson, David Smith, Martha Rozett, Hayward Horton and Starr Wood.

The Council agreed to allow the weekend to rethink, and add any names that they came up with, giving the final list to Vice Provost Locust on Monday.

Governance Member: The members encouraged R. Collier who then accepted his nomination to join the committee.

Committee Reporting: The committee will report back to the Governance Council quarterly.

Performing Arts: A. Lyons talked about the Performing arts and the various kinds of students the department meets. Students may come in to take a class and then find out that there is a major offered in an area they would like, that they were not aware of. There is not enough face in the University for the Programs offered in the Performing Arts. Dean J. Wick-Pelletier has done a wonderful job and been very committed to trying to place the arts somewhere. It is difficult to make it apparent that it is a part of the University.

Project Renaissance: Project Renaissance was discussed. It was recommended that a motion be made to the Senate that the CAA reviews it at some point. There has been changes in personnel and there are no longer any senior faculties involved. The whole idea was to get freshman involved with senior faculty. There continue to be fewer dismissals, but there may be other reasons such as their efforts to work together in groups which could be conducive to their continued success. The social impact may be a more important aspect to these students and their academic success, which shows within their higher retention rate. Statistics could help identify the value of retaining and reviewing this project.

Distinguished Service and Teaching Professor Selection Committee: It was brought up that R. Bosco need to know who was to be given which term of one, two or three years, of the nominated committee members. The Council should choose names, and submit to R. Bosco as soon as possible, as the committee is beginning to work.

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