

Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes, 2-15-2019

Donnie calls meeting to order at 12:48

President Kesselman addresses question submitted prior to meeting.

Six Themes:

1. State wide Issues

Our new Governor's administration is more interested in higher education than the prior administration. The emphasis, however, is on community colleges; expanding their role, articulation agreements so students can do two years in high school then transfer to a two-year school and get a four-year degree. The goal is to have 65% of adults in the state with higher education degrees. Rutgers, Rowan, and Kean now have presence at community colleges near us, though it has not hurt us yet. But this has potential to influence Stockton, especially their 3+1 and other similar programs. They are targeting students in our area. These are threats to the four-year institutions in New Jersey and we need to convince the public of this. Given Seth Grossman's anti-higher education positions and the level of support he received from constituents in our area, it is important to convince the local community of the importance of higher education.

One faculty member had a question about potentially joining administration of hospitals. President Kesselman pointed out that the current policy is legislated, so there is little we can do regarding this.

Q: Why are we going to try to compete with "fast food" educational offered by Rutgers, Rowan, and Kean rather than offer "fine dining" education that we do well? Why offer more and more of the "fast food," while cutting our "fine dining" programs?

A: We don't know that offerings by other schools constitute "fast food." Other schools are starting new programs. We haven't been growing as much – not so many new full programs. We need to be conscious of what is going on around us considering where state monies are going. There is no hiring freeze here. We didn't give less money to Academic Affairs. And we cannot just ignore what is going on around us.

Q: Some of us have tried to start new programs, but we have not been given the resources needed to make them strong programs.

A: That is a fair opinion.

2. Coordinator's Agreement and Faculty Lines

Last June we extended the coordinator agreement but also decided that we would consider further revision. Since then, there was a joint taskforce to consider further revisions. My concern is that the equivalent of 38 FTE faculty have been doing administrative work, which takes you out of the classroom. So we need to look at other models like using lecturers in administrative roles. Other schools are doing it and it is cost-effective. The current system doesn't work and is inefficient. And we cannot keep hiring tenure-track faculty at the same rate we have been.

Comment: We are not just talking about coordinators. We are talking about every position in the agreement. Everything is up in the air after the current agreement ends. The amount of changes involved in this process is enormous. The process that is involved here must consider surveys that have been done in the past and do further research. If we work hard and get something good from the

taskforce, I do not see a lot of opposition to change. What I see is a respectful request to have adequate time and adequate discussion before making changes.

Q: The number of meetings faculty are expected to participate in is onerous. Is there a way to streamline? There is a lot of duplication of efforts.

A: We are working on this. We need to know from you what the best ways are for us to communicate with you. There is some duplication of efforts. There is no easy answers on this and I am open to suggestions.

3. Strategic Planning

For this to work, it requires your input and the Provost has been soliciting your feedback. And there is a genuine hope that there will be a plan that we can get behind. We know financially what we need to do and while we don't want finances to drive the process, we need to carefully consider them.

Provost Vermeulen: We are having the open forums with people meeting in small groups. What we are hearing so far is concern about things that are not currently emphasized in the current plan rather than displeasure with what is in it. It seems like a lot of the issues people have are related to people not understanding what different people on campus are doing. A good implementation plan will help us understand this.

Q: I have heard some people say that we should reorder the topics emphasized in the plan.

A: I am trying to bring together all the feedback to see if this is a shared concern.

4. Faculty lines

Q: Why are there now delays in decisions about hiring, which inconvenience programs in hiring?

A from Provost: We are asking programs to submit requests and then we consider all requests together.

A from administrator: I don't have a good handle on the timeline but we are trying to have a common procedure.

A from President: For a long time programs kept lines. Now we are reprioritizing the allocation of lines.

Q: A concern that people have about this process is that all lines are going into the same pot and lines reprioritized. I am concerned about the priorities used in allocating lines and loss of lines to liberal arts programs.

A: We consider what the line would teach and what the needs are for the institution, and work with the Deans in making these decisions.

Q: Is one of the priorities to protect the liberal arts?

A: Yes

5. Enrolment

We have tried to be more transparent related to enrolment. We've tried to be a lot more strategic in enrolment management that includes faculty.

Administrator: We have a great deal of involvement among faculty and staff in the strategic enrollment plans.

6. Student needs/success

There is a real and growing need among more and more students for counseling help.

Administrator: This has been the number-one issues in Student Affairs and the Wellness Center. We don't have the resources that are needed but we can expand the network available. For example, we are looking into how we can integrate information on counseling to students in the first year. We are also looking at how we can use technology. Anxiety and depression are the most common issues that students have and we are looking at ways to use technology and self-help options to address this. We are also looking at ways to use providers in the community to help with student needs like these.

President: It looks like time has run out. Please provide your feedback on the strategic plan and let's also celebrate it.

Comment: It's unfortunate we didn't get to the issue of diversity.

A: Our largest growing group among students is Latino.

C: Can we schedule another meeting, perhaps an online meeting, to discuss diversity?

A: Yes.

Meeting closes at 2:09.