

Faculty Council Minutes: January 28, 2016

Present: Charles Swencionis (Ferkauf), Nora Nachumi (SCW), Will Lee (YC), Jeffrey Freedman (Stern); Gary Stein (Wurzweiler), James Kahn (YC); Gabriel Cwilich (YC); Abraham Ravid (Syms); David Carlson (Cardozo), Leslie Salzman (Cardozo); Neer Asherie (YC), Joseph Kerstein (Syms), Marina Holz (SCW), Alex Citanna (SCW), Ruth Bevan (YC), Daniel Rynhold (Revel).

The FC approved the minutes from the November and December meetings.

Neer Asherie conveyed an invitation from Jane Gonzalez to come speak to the FC to discuss the latest health insurance plan issues and explain those things that the Benefits Department had the ability to change, and those they could not (such as the current requirement that all prescription medication be ordered by mail). Because YU is in the process of hiring a new Director of HR, the FC decided that it would invite Jane Gonzalez and the new HR Director to come speak for a defined time period at the next FC meeting, which will be in March.

Zafira Cohen attended the meeting to discuss whether it would be appropriate to modify YU's tenure and promotion standards in light of the current demands placed on faculty to devote significant time to teaching and service. After significant discussion, a motion to review the standards for promotion and tenure was not passed for reasons that included the fact that the standards had been revised within the last two years and that the language of the standards seemed to have sufficient flexibility for appropriate review of faculty promotion and tenure.

The Speaker informed the FC that the YU Board has assigned two Board members to evaluate the costs of educating each student in each unit, with the objective of identifying additional sources of revenue and making recommendations for budget priorities. The FC discussed whether to create a subcommittee or small task force to set budget priorities for the Council. The consensus was to wait until the Administration provided the requested financial information so that any subcommittee could recommend budget priorities with a fuller understanding of YU's current financial situation.

Gary Stein raised serious problems with student access to on-line courses since YU Global has ceased operations. FC members noted concerns that faculty had not been consulted regarding the discontinuation of YU Global until after the decision had been made. Gabe Cwilich noted that all of the YU units will be migrated from Moodle/Angel to Canvas, but not until the fall. The recommendation was to seek assistance from Jay Savage, current manager of IT to secure student access to the on-line courses. The FC also passed a motion authorizing Gary Stein and Charles Swencionis to write to the Provost demanding urgent action so that students currently enrolled in on-line courses can get on-line access to those courses.

The FC elected Jim Kahn and Avri Ravid to serve as joint Vice-Speakers who will assist Charles with FC Speakership next year.

The FC will need to elect a Parliamentarian-elect who can become familiar with the role over the coming months and serve as Parliamentarian next year.

The FC discussed the Board's decision to allow two FC members (one each from the undergraduate and graduate units), to serve as silent observers on the YU Board's Academic Affairs Committee. The FC voted to accept the Board's offer to have two observers on the Academic Affairs Committee with the explanation that the faculty believed it would be useful to express faculty opinion on matters before the Committee. Gabe Cwilich and Jim Kahn volunteered to serve as the FC observers on the Committee.

The FC discussed the faculty bonus being given by the Administration. Daniel Rynhold raised the issue of sending an e-mail to the faculty explaining FC involvement in encouraging the Board to give these bonuses (in light of the fact that this was the only option being offered by the Board for any increase in compensation). Daniel will draft a letter conveying this information to the faculty.