

Minutes of the Faculty Standards Committee, University Senate, 11/2/2015

In Attendance:

- Sandra Bellini, Nursing
- Pam Bramble, Fine Arts
- Preston Britner, Human Development & Family Studies
- Jack Clausen, CAHNR
- Dipak Dey, CLAS
- Maria-Luz Fernandez, CAHNR
- Michael Fischl, Law
- Gerald Gianutsos, Pharmacy
- Doni Ivanov, USG
- Thulasi Kumar, OIRE
- Dustin Lavoie, USG
- Shariq Mohammed, Graduate Student Senate
- Sally Reis, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (*Ex Officio* Member)
- Del Siegle, Education
- Lisa Werkmeister-Rozas, Social Work

In Jc Beall's absence, Jack Clausen chaired the meeting, calling it to order at 1:33 p.m. We started with a round of introductions, given the presence of some newly appointed members.

Agenda Item 1

FSC revisited our charge from the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) to consider a statement regarding Academic Freedom.

Background: There is currently a proposal (an informal one) to point to the National AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom as the FSC's recommended UConn Statement. See <http://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/resources-academic-freedom>

Jack circulated the relevant sections in the University By-Laws, which do address academic freedom. A subcommittee will review the national AAUP statement, the current by-laws, and best practices elsewhere (e.g., U. California) to determine if changes are required.

The sub-committee, consisting of volunteers Pam Bramble, Michael Fischl, and Doni Ivanov, was formed. The subcommittee will attempt to have a report for our next meeting.

Agenda Item 2

FSC revisited our charge from the SEC to consider a statement concerning Free Speech and Civility.

The committee was reminded that various materials had been shared since our last meeting, with respect to legal perspectives and current efforts on civility at UConn (e.g., Something's Happening Committee).

A sub-committee was formed, consisting of volunteers Jack Clausen, Maria-Luz Fernandez, and Dustin Lavoie. The subcommittees should be in position to report to FSC by the February 2016 meeting.

Discussion:

Michael Fischl raised a possible conflict between “civility” and “free speech” and noted how difficult it would be to do anything other than a broad statement.

Preston Britner reiterated the issue of the “scope” of Faculty Standards.

Sally Reis raised issues of faculty civility concerns (in rare, but notable circumstances) in emails/listservs, meetings, and in other settings. Are there violations of free speech when we attempt to respect civility?

Old Business

Sally Reis noted that Mike Eagen has been collecting workload documents across the university, which might be of use. FSC might make such a request, if they are deemed useful to workload discussions.

New Business

Sally Reis shared a letter from the Office of the Provost re. library resources, in addition to the original letter from a large number of faculty protesting library cuts. [Both letters are in the Appendix.]

There was a question about process (i.e., such letters and responses vs. face-to-face discussions) and what would be most constructive re. future matters.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted respectfully by Preston Britner.

APPENDIX

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I write in response to your letter about the University Library dated October 30, 2015. We are all very concerned about University finances and the cuts to our operating budget due to the state fiscal challenges of \$82 million. Our budget situation has been very challenging and prospects for the near future are worrisome with predictions of state deficits as high as \$250 million for the current year. In this environment, we've all had to make difficult choices and sacrifices. We have, however, done our best to protect critical academic and research programs. For example, over the last four years, we hired 260 faculty across all disciplines, increased the number of undergraduate course offerings by 33%, and added 7,000 seats to ensure that our students have access to the classes that they need to graduate on time.

I appreciate your thoughtful letter and the concerns you have raised about the reductions in funding for the University Library, which is a critically important resource for research and scholarship for our faculty and students. I also want to correct some inaccuracies in your letter so that we have a consistent understanding of the situation.

- 1st - **Acquisitions have not been reduced by two-thirds this year in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.** In fact, during the current fiscal year, the projected acquisitions/ collections cuts a total of \$115K (which is less than 2% of the total collections budget) across a variety of material types and disciplines. This process has been informed by faculty, department and school input. Vice Provost Martha Bedard and her team of library liaisons developed a collaborative, metrics-informed approach to examine collections use (<http://lib.uconn.edu/services/collections/uconn-libraries-collections-review/>) in consultation with faculty in each disciplinary area. For the current year, this team began by identifying a target amount of \$300K to reduce the collection that was subsequently adjusted to under \$200K, after further review. Each librarian liaison then shared a list of collections being considered for cancellation with the disciplinary faculty for their input for high priority collections. The Library Collection Steering Committee also met to review faculty input and collated and created a list of potential journals, databases, and society memberships to discontinue. After discussion with deans, the total amount of cancellations to subscribed collections was reduced to \$115K.
- 2nd - **Acquisitions will not be eliminated.** The library staff reduced the book acquisitions budget this year by \$121K as a stopgap measure while they conduct a comprehensive review and discuss priority acquisitions with disciplinary faculty.

- 3rd - Major electronic journal packages that are critical to faculty research will not be eliminated. All major electronic journal packages will be examined during the comprehensive review as described in item one above. No decisions have been made about elimination of any major package at this time.
- 4th - Reductions in staffing have not cut essential services. Given the fiscal challenges faced by the University, the Library eliminated 7.5 positions. The elimination of a three-quarter position (.75) in Inter-Library Loan (ILL) was a result of a careful analysis of the ILL staffing and changes in ILL technology resulting in greater efficiencies. Therefore, the capacity to borrow materials from other institutions will not decrease due to this change.
- 5th – We are not aware of any denial of service to faculty for ILL requests. The maximum cost (beyond normal processing) that the Library will pay to meet an ILL request remains at \$40 and has not changed during this year. The Library leadership will continue to work with faculty and staff to ensure that the Library’s ILL services meet their research and teaching needs.

We share your collective concerns about the very difficult budgetary environments that we’ve faced during the past 8 years and the continuing financial setbacks we will undoubtedly encounter in the future. I ask for your support, for it is only through working together that we will develop solutions. And although I appreciate your thoughtful letter about the library, I also urge you to meet with me the next time you have concerns such as these, for I believe an earlier conversation would have clarified misunderstandings about the process and the outcome.

Final decisions about the FY17 budget rescissions for the library have not yet been made and we will ask for your input to address increasing costs and declining state support. I look forward to meeting with the faculty and the Deans in the coming weeks to discuss future funding for the library and identify collaborative solutions. Thank you for caring about our library and our academic mission at UConn.

Sincerely,

Mun Y. Choi
Provost & Executive VP

Dear Provost Mun Choi,

We would like to present you with a letter written by some UConn faculty about the Library budget cuts. The letter includes a petition about the additional cuts planned for 2016 and 2017. We have included in the document the names and contact information of the 315 colleagues who have supported the letter. We will also be sending you a printed copy of the letter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Gustavo Nanclares
Head, Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages
Associate Professor of Spanish
University of Connecticut
Oak Hall East SSHB Room 207
365 Fairfield Way U-1057
Storrs, CT 06269
Phone: (860) 486-3313
Fax: (860) 486-4392
<http://languages.uconn.edu>

[Note: The 10/30/2015 letter submitted to Provost Choi is attached as a PDF.]