SETON HALL UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of May 2, 2014

1:00 p.m.

Beck Rooms

Walsh Library

Agenda

1. Sign in for quorum


Guests: William James Hoffer, Judith Stark, Roseanne Mirabella, Dean Andrea Bartoli

2. Call to order

*The meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m.

3. Communications from Provost Robinson

Provost Robinson extended his congratulations to the newly-elected Senate and expressed his appreciation to those who have served and continue to serve.

He reported that Middle States has given the University favorable feedback in their self-study and visit and that their initial feedback indicates that we are meeting all criteria associated with excellence. Provost Robinson expressed his gratitude to the faculty for their participation.

The Provost reported that undergraduate applications are 23 percent higher over this same time last year. Thus far, 1240 freshman deposits have been received (down 7.6 percent from where we thought we would be). The Provost stated that he is more concerned about transfers and graduate enrollments as we move forward this coming fall. Transfers are down 32 percent (more than we would like). Incomplete graduate applications are down (a good sign). Complete graduate
applications are down 3 percent compared to this same time last year. Graduate deposits are down 3.8 percent compared to this same time last year.

We remain committed to increasing our academic profile. The profile of the incoming class is exceptionally strong. The average SAT score for the incoming class is 1132, which is 10 points higher than last year and 80 points overall higher in the last two years.

The Provost then addressed the demonstrated interest in this year’s baccalaureate commencement speaker. Provost Robinson stated that he is well-advised of the issue surrounding the speaker and that he has heard numerous perspectives and respects the different points of view on this matter. He stated that a serious review of the speaker would suggest a published, very accomplished individual. He cannot help but contemplate if she is being protested against due to her research and writing. If in fact this is the case, this may be an issue of academic freedom and she should be protected against such institutional retribution.

Provost Robinson asked the body why this speaker should be censored due to her viewpoints. He stated that she has a right to voice her perspectives just as faculty do and reminded the body of a similar scenario that occurred when Governor Christie spoke at commencement a few years ago. If we cannot discuss issues of opposing viewpoints on a university campus then where can we? Would we apply the same standards to someone with a contrary perspective? Are we saying we can only speak, say or write the same things? Just because it is contrary to our views does not mean it cannot be analyzed in an intellectual way. We should expand our views of other viewpoints. The Provost stated that he has held this perspective when University faculty are found in the same situation. We have a responsibility and obligation to respect different ideas.

Provost Robinson requested no public opposition to the speaker. In the future, he stated that he will consider eliminating a commencement speaker and have the valedictorian and salutatorian give the address instead. After all, the event is about our students, their families, and their accomplishments. At the same time, it is an unreasonable expectation to have a speaker who would give some sort of commentary that would not be in alignment with our institutional values. Where does that leave us? We are a Catholic institution but subscribe to certain values. How do we navigate and deal with this? In the future we need to examine the way we look at such ceremonies because we will never reach a consensus on what is appropriate and what is not. The Provost asked for the serious consideration of the Senate to this matter, as he respects the role and right of the Senate to have different views.

Questions:

Q: A Senator asked the Provost to comment on the status of the current summer session, as there were expectations that there would be changes, particularly in pricing of credits.
A: Senior Associate Provost Guetti stated that no changes have been reviewed because if the price
per credit is reduced, enrollment will need to be increased, which has been an ongoing issue that we are struggling with. Provost Robinson stated that he will revisit this issue because he has not looked into it lately.

Q: A guest asked for more information on how the commencement speaker is selected, specifically how the Provost’s office is involved in the process and what the Senate could do to strengthen their hand in this regard.
A: The Provost replied that he is involved after the vetting process and that is part of where the challenge comes in. Anyone can nominate a speaker in regard to how that person supports the mission of the University. Afterwards, there is a list of nominations that is reviewed.

Q: A guest asked the Provost to comment further on the vetting process and his comments about academic freedom since the body understands this concept to be about faculty teaching, research, and service.
A: The Provost responded that this institution does not relinquish the rights to speakers that it offers to faculty. If he felt there was a reasonable way to go forward, he would not be considering eliminating a speaker in the future.

Q: A guest commented that the objection to the speaker is that her writing does not uphold University values, particularly those on racial and ethnic discrimination, and stated that we are not opposing her right to share her view publicly but that her views are dismissive to the views we uphold as a Catholic institution.
A: The Provost stated that he understands these issues and that he has heard pros and cons with regards to the speaker.

Q: A Senator commented that she is having a hard time understanding this as an issue of academic freedom since this is an invitation that was extended by the University and expresses the position of the University in choosing to invite her as a speaker. If the speaker were invited to give a talk, there would at least be the opportunity for a counter-talk. Putting this in the frame of academic freedom is not accurate.
A: The Provost responded that there is no consensus on this matter and that he understands and appreciates the body’s thoughtful sensitivity and feedback. He understands there is major opposition, but, at the same time, there is already an invitation that has been sent to this speaker. The Provost stated that we should have tolerance to someone’s views we may not agree with. In regards to views that we are sending a statement about the University, the Provost reiterated that he is at the point where he does not know if there will ever be a commencement speaker again. He stated that he is not here to debate the issue. He has heard a variety of positions on this issue, including many strong opinions about this individual’s suitability to speak. His concern is how we move forward and deal with this issue and handle the commencement.
Q: A guest stated that he was troubled by the Provost’s understanding of tolerance and respect for differing viewpoints. He asked the Provost if he understood the difference between someone who vets a set of writings and finds them to be deficient in logic, which is the peer review process we engage in as faculty, and someone who makes an attempt to disguise bigotry as scientific.
A: The Provost stated that he understood.

4. Welcome and Communications from the Chair: Procedures for participating in the Faculty Senate

   * The chair appointed Dr. Philip Moremen as parliamentarian for the meeting and welcomed all newly elected senators.

5. Approval of agenda

   * Gregory Glazov proposed a motion for the New Business motion to be discussed first on the agenda.

   * Vote: 7 yea, 9 nay, rest were abstentions. The motion failed.

6. Approval of the draft minutes of the April 4 meeting without objection

7. Executive Committee report

   * No questions. The report was received without objection.

8. New Executive Committee Election

   * Nominations:

   * Chair:

      Dr. Judith Lothian. She accepted the nomination.

      Dr. Lothian’s nomination was uncontested; she was re-elected as Chair unanimously.

   * Vice-chair:

      Dr. Mary Balkun. She accepted the nomination.

      Dr. Balkun’s nomination was uncontested; she was re-elected as Vice-chair unanimously.

   * Executive Secretary and Treasurer:
Dr. Philip Moremen. He accepted the nomination.

Dr. Moremen’s nomination was uncontested; he was elected as Executive Secretary and Treasurer unanimously.

*Two Members-at-Large:

Ms. Beth Bloom. She accepted the nomination.

Dr. Irene De Masi. She accepted the nomination.

Dr. Elizabeth McCrea. She was not present to accept the nomination but asked the Executive Committee to accept on her behalf.

*Vote by secret ballot: Ms. Beth Bloom and Dr. Irene De Masi were elected as the members-at-large.

*The 2014-2015 Faculty Senate commences, with a new Executive Board*

9. Reports of standing and special committees

a. Academic Facilities Committee report

*Questions/Comments:

Q: A Senator asked about how big the Marylawn property is and where it is located.
A: It is a former high school. There is a linked article about it in the report.

*A Senator commented that the Maplewood community is very excited by the prospect of SHMS taking over the Marylawn property.

*A guest commented that the current building projects on campus are not compliant with LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification.

b. Academic Policy Committee report

i. Resolved: the proposed Minor in Middle Eastern Studies is approved.

ii. Resolved: the proposed merged and new major and minors in Communication and the Arts are approved, namely:

- Art and Design Major with three tracks: Fine and Digital Arts; Graphic Design and Advertising; Interactive Multimedia.
• Minors: Fine and Digital Arts; Graphic Design and Advertising; Interactive Design and Multimedia; Web Design; Animation.

iii. Resolved: the Senate endorses the TLTR, Online Learning Committee recommendations regarding online and hybrid courses.

c. Compensation & Welfare Committee report

i. Adjunct survey results

ii. Full Professor survey results

d. Core Curriculum Committee report

e. Faculty Guide & Bylaws Committee report

*Beth Bloom presented the report on behalf of outgoing chair, Ann Marie Murphy.

f. Graduate Studies Committee report

g. Instructional Technology Committee report

h. Library Committee report

i. Nominations, Elections & Appointments Committee

i. Draft criteria & procedures for Hakim Faculty Service Award

*A.D. Amar presented the draft criteria on behalf of the chair, Richard Dool.

*Dr. Lothian stated that we will not vote on this draft until the June meeting in order to give the body enough time to review and send feedback to Dr. Amar.

j. Program Review Committee report

i. Police Graduate Studies Program Review Committee report

*Dr. Mary Balkun presented the report on behalf of outgoing chair, Ben Beitin.

10. Committees with no reports
11. Committee Motions

Whereas undergraduate commencement is a celebration of the academic achievement of our students;

Whereas the presentation of an honorary degree is the university’s highest level of academic commendation;

Whereas, there has been no significant role for faculty in the selection of commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients;

The Faculty Senate moves that the Provost’s Office create a task force charged with ensuring substantial faculty participation in the selection of future honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers.

*Dr. Amar proposed a motion to amend the language to charge the Senate with creating a task force to develop the selection process for choosing honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers, as indicated below. The motion was seconded by Irene De Masi.

Whereas undergraduate commencement is a celebration of the academic achievement of our students;

Whereas the presentation of an honorary degree is the university’s highest level of academic commendation;

Whereas, there has been no significant role for faculty in the selection of commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients;

The Faculty Senate moves that the Provost’s Office Senate create a task force charged with
developing a process ensuring substantial faculty participation in the selection of future honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers.

*After more discussion, Dr. Lothian called the question.*

*Vote on the amendment: the motion failed unanimously by voice vote.*

*Dr. Jonathan Farina proposed a motion to amend the language to charge the Board of Regents, instead of the Provost’s Office, to create the task force, as indicated below. The motion was seconded by Mary Balkun.*

Whereas undergraduate commencement is a celebration of the academic achievement of our students;

Whereas the presentation of an honorary degree is the university’s highest level of academic commendation;

Whereas, there has been no significant role for faculty in the selection of commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients;

The Faculty Senate moves that the Provost’s Office Board of Regents create a task force charged with ensuring substantial faculty participation in the selection of future honorary degree recipients and commencement speakers.

*After discussion, the question was called.*

*Vote on the amendment: the motion failed unanimously by voice vote.*

*After more discussion, the question was called.*

*Vote on the Executive Committee’s motion by secret ballot: 24 yeas, 4 nays, 0 abstentions. The motion passed.*

b. Academic Policy Committee

i. Resolved: the proposed Minor in Middle Eastern Studies is approved.

*Vote: approved unanimously by voice vote.*

ii. Resolved: the proposed merged and new major and minors in Communication and the Arts are approved, namely:

- Art and Design Major with three tracks: Fine and Digital Arts; Graphic Design and Advertising; Interactive Multimedia.
• Minors: Fine and Digital Arts; Graphic Design and Advertising; Interactive Design and Multimedia; Web Design; Animation.

*Vote: approved unanimously by voice vote.

iii. Resolved: the Senate endorses the TLTR, Online Learning Committee recommendations regarding online and hybrid courses.

*There was discussion about the motion.

*Vote: 2 abstentions, all remaining votes were yeas. The motion passed.

c. Program Review Committee

i. Police Graduate Studies Program Review Committee report

*Vote: the motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

12. Old Business

*None.

13. New Business

i. Resolution Re: Commencement Speaker Eberstadt

Whereas, the commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient, Mary T. Eberstadt, is both unqualified to receive such an honor and her writings espouse views contrary to the educational mission of Seton Hall university;

Whereas, her writings also contradict the inclusive, Catholic mission of the university as embodied in the Catholic intellectual tradition broadly understood;

Whereas, commencement speakers should have messages that inspire all of our students regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and employment status;

Whereas, there was no significant role for faculty in the selection of the commencement speaker, which could have prevented this unfortunate choice;
Whereas, this choice does not embody or reflect well on the true spirit of this university;

Be it resolved, this faculty assembly expresses its disapproval with the choice of Mary T. Eberstadt both as commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient.

*Dr. Sean Harvey proposed amending the motion by eliminating the first two paragraphs. The motion was seconded by Irene De Masi.

*Vote on the amendment by voice vote: 10 yeas, 8 nays, 4 abstentions. The amendment passed.

*The question was called on the main motion.

*Vote on the main motion by secret ballot: 8 yeas, 17 nays, 1 abstention. The motion failed.

14. Communications

*None.

15. Adjournment

*The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.