Newark Faculty Council minutes

April 24, 2023

Present: Nermin Allam, Robert Apel, Ed Bonder, Sherri-Ann Butterfield, Nancy Cantor, Galathara Kahanda, John Kettle, Haesun Kim, Barry Komisaruk, Laura Lomas, Brian Murphy, Ana Rivas, Jeffrey Robinson, Pallavi Shukla, Elizabeth Surles, Erich Toncre, Tracy Tran

1. Nancy Cantor, Chancellor’s update
   1. Working on increasing enrollment
      1. April 15 was admitted student day, an important event for enrollment, with a positive turnout and collaboration with RBS.
      2. Undergraduate “admitted comings” are up 32.4% over this time last year.
      3. Grad student enrollments are up 7.3% over this time last year.
      4. Combined enrollment is up 24.5% over this time last year.
      5. Chancellor Cantor emphasized importance of faculty involvement in student recruitment and enrollment and recognized the financial aid and admissions offices as the driving force behind the increase.
   2. Two weeks ago Governor Murphy announced that tuition assistance grants will now apply to summer courses.
      1. Chancellor Cantor asked for the Newark Faculty Council’s help in spreading the word to students who are getting Tuition Aid Grants to enroll in summer session courses and take advantage of the new assistance. This year is a pilot, and the funding will not continue if it’s not used.
      2. Along with summer federal Pell grants, the new funding will greatly help students afford summer coursework.
   3. Space in the Life Sciences II building is being fitted out fully, with ongoing capital budget to make this work happen.
   4. The *Generation Code* mural sponsored by Apple at the Paul Robeson Center plaza is complete and recently unveiled.
   5. Terrance Blanchard will be the 2023 commencement speaker on May 16th.
2. John Gunkel, Virtual Courses update
   1. Virtual courses have changed over time and are no longer separately administered with standalone budgets. They’re now fully integrated into the RCM model and are administered similarly to other courses.
   2. Last year a working group convened to look at the post-pandemic-era utility of online programs and the departments running them in terms of supports. The goal was to coordinate priorities and processes for developing online programs.
   3. The working group membership includes representatives from each of the Chancellor’s units—usually a faculty representative from a unit with a lot of online instruction and one from the chancellors. Rudi Leuschner from RBS, the faculty coordinator for online programs in RBS, is also involved.
   4. The group is working through issues and considering priorities from a Rutgers University standpoint.
      1. The group is considering what RU-N can do for online education to reach students who may not otherwise be able to pursue academic degrees at RU-N. The MPA program is online, and RBS has grad programs as well in government accountancy and supply chain management. These have rolled out undergrad programs in addition to existing grad programs.
      2. The group is also looking at ways to combine online and in-person instruction, given RU-N’s emphasis on in-person teaching. However, the goal is also to reach people who are looking at other institutions, grad or undergrad, or who may not consider pursuing higher education overall.
      3. On the faculty support side, Joy McDonald at Academic Technology Services and her staff provide the tools and instructional design support to transition courses online.; they are connected with the EVPAA’s office to support faculty across the university through a group run by Will Pagan.
      4. Online undergrad programs currently require students to come in with an associate’s degree that includes their core curriculum classes before they enroll in the classes that support their major directly. This is not the same with online grad programs.
      5. Some of the online programs offer micro-credentialing or have certificate options. There are also online SEBS courses that are not-for-credit, which work a little differently.
      6. Some discussion ensued about successful international online programs and whether this would be an area for growth at RU-N. Regulatory difficulties make it challenging, although coordinated programs are a possibility. Some hybrid options exist as a collaboration between schools in different countries. There are a few models out there, but they’re coordinated on an institutional basis, mostly with students transferring from one school to another.
3. Approval of minutes
   1. One correction was requested for the March 20 meeting: John Kettle was in attendance. The minutes would be updated accordingly.
   2. John Kettle moved to approve the minutes from the March 20th and February 20th meetings. Erich Toncre seconded the motion. The minutes were approved, with the addition of John Kettle in the attendance list for March 20th.
4. Subcommittee reports
   1. Bylaws and governance (bylaws)
      1. Brian Murphy provided an overview of the recommended changes to the NFC bylaws he shared with the group, requesting that the NFC review the revisions to prepare for further discussion and a vote at the May NFC meeting.
      2. He compared the NFC bylaws to those of the New Brunswick Faculty Council, adding a few things to make the election procedures clearer. There were also a few broader issues that he flagged. Overall he asked the group to consider the purpose of NFC and whether the group would like to change the mission, and if so what language should be used.
   2. Faculty affairs
      1. Erich Toncre provided an update on arrangements for town hall meetings and would speak with Dean Van Ryzin at SPAA to find out if he and the SPAA faculty would be interested in having a town hall with the NFC.
   3. External affairs
      1. Ana Rivas is the person who coordinates with RU-N IT on the NFC web page, with NFC being responsible for content management. Tracy Tran will work with Ana to get URLs for NFC member faculty web pages. Discussion ensued about whether all NFC members would want to have a link to their faculty page, with questions about how faculty members could update their personal pages. To get help with updating an individual faculty member’s webpage, they should contact their department, and if there are further issues, contact their dean’s office and the communications office. After the semester ends, the NFC page would be updated with links to each member’s individual faculty page.
   4. Budget and planning
      1. Contract negotiations are ongoing. No further updates.
   5. Bylaws and governance (governance discussion without administrative liaisons)
      1. Ed Bonder reported that courses in the sciences had been recently moved from one department to another in a way that didn’t follow the SASN bylaws and asked if this is the sort of issue that the NFC would address.
      2. Bonder proposed looking at the NFC bylaws and their revision as a way to consider this issue and what the bylaws should enable the NFC to do.
         1. NFC “give advice on academic personnel policies” as a proposed change
      3. Discussion ensued about when the NFC was notified of the issue in February 2022 and that the lack of an NFC response was most likely an oversight, as the group should be a watch dog for situations as in SASN.
      4. Moving forward the suggestion was to specify review and investigation of reported SASN bylaw violations in the revised NFC bylaws as one of the NFC’s stated campus roles.
      5. Discussion continued about additional problems with SASN meetings and their violations of the SASN bylaws (i.e., section 9). SASN faculty meetings held on Zoom make it impossible for attendees to know who is in attendance and voting.
      6. The question was asked about who would be responsible for bringing this up. The NFC can notify the Chancellor of the problem.
      7. The NFC discussed the issue of how departmental meetings no longer provide space for debate and that this negatively impacts the campus overall.
      8. In updating the NFC bylaws, the NFC should identify each subcommittee’s specific role so that these kinds of issues can be more easily called to light.
      9. To address the SASN issues, two things would need to happen:
         1. NFC bylaw revision
            1. NFC should look at suggested edits and consider whether to add more substance.
         2. Raise the issues that have been identified in SASN
            1. Moving courses without discussion
            2. Moving faculty without discussion
            3. Lack of communication channels
      10. The idea that NFC could mediate between different administrative bodies was raised, using the issues at hand as a test case to define further the role of the NFC on campus.
      11. We could establish an ombuds procedure: We reps bring up our ombuds role at the next of our individual faculty meetings. We are their representatives with a direct line to the Provost and the Chancellor.
5. New business
   1. The NFC congratulated Nermin Allam for being promoted with tenure.
6. Brian Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting, and Laura Lomas seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Elizabeth Surles, NFC Secretary, revised by Barry Komisaruk