

Villanova University Faculty Congress

Academic Year 2013-2014

FACULTY CONGRESS PLENARY

Meeting of September 09, 2013

**Present**: Wayne Bremser, Lillian Cassel,Jerusha Conner, Mark Doorley, David Fiorenza, Edwin Goff (Secretary), Judith Hadley, Sandra Kearney, Christopher Kilby (Vice Chair), Edward Kresch (Treasurer), Sarvesh Kulkarni, Michael Levitan, Mary Ann Lieb, Meg Luo, Wenhong Luo, Salvatore Poeta, Donna Shai, Nancy Sharts-Hopko, Gaynor Strickler, Catherine Warrick, Thomas Way, Kelly Welch (Chairperson), Joyce Willens

**Absent**: Mary Ann Cantrell *(NIA)*, Sohail Chaudhry (*NIA*), Linda Copel *(NIA)*, Joseph Dellapenna, Rick Eckstein, Paul Hanouna *(NIA)*, Eric Karson *(NIA)*, Julie Klein (COF Chair—*NIA*),),Kenneth Kroos, Chad Leahy (*NIA*), Susan Mackey-Kallis *(NIA)*, Barbara Ott *(NIA)*, Paul Pasles *(NIA)*, Paul Reagan *(NIA)*, Michael Risch *(NIA),* Louise Russo (APC Chair—*NIA*), Sridhar Santhanam, Robert Styer *(NIA)*, Mark Sullivan, Fayette Veverka, Randy Weinstein

**Welcome**

1. Minutes of the May 5. 2013 Re-Organizational were approved as previously amended electronically.

2. The Chairperson recognized new members to Faculty Congress, and reviewed the 2013-2014 transitions in Chair and Vice Chair by election at the Plenary of April 15.

**Old Business**

1. St. Thomas of Villanova Celebration Day of Service (Saturday, September 28) remains an important contribution open for Faculty Congress members to lead or serve as members in service groups scheduled to undertake projects across the greater Philadelphia area.

2. Committee Reports

* Governance committees:
1. The Chair of the Academic Policy Committee, Dr. Louise Russo, served as co-chair, with Dr. Craig Wheeland (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs) the “Task Force on the Online Undergraduate Degree for Adult Part-time Studies.” The task force met over the summer 2013, and has completed its Final Report. The document can be accessed at: <http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/vpaa/taskforce.html>
2. The report from the Committee on Faculty (COF; Julie Klein, chair) is appended to these Minutes.
3. The report from the Elections and Credentials Committee (Linda Copel, chair) is appended to these Minutes.
4. The Employee Issues Committee (Christopher Kilby, chair) will continue its initiatives to evaluate of recent decision to reduce retirement benefits; pursue consensus for a parental leave policy; and evaluate changes in health benefits announced or potentially planned by the administration.

No additional committee reports were present under Old Business.

**New Business**

1. VPAA plan for Part-Time Studies BA programs (Kelly Welch and Christopher Kilby):

* The **“Final Report of Task Force on the Online Undergraduate Degree for Adult Part-time Studies”** envisions a degree and diploma indistinguishable from what is earned by day students. The rationale given by administrative officers is the program requires students to be at least 22 years of age for enrollment. The important thing is to look at credentials coming in to ensure that on-line or e-learners leave with what Villanova University would have them accomplish; an essential criterion is to ensure consistency in review of candidates. Current procedures and resource persons within Part-Time Studies make problematic a consistency of student credentials who would be admitted to the program.
* Under the proposal contained in the Final Report, Part-Time studies will administer the delivery of academic content, but college deans and academic departments determine faculty hiring, and academic requirements for students.
* Frank and open discussion included the judgment that deliberations of the e-Learning policy committee, Chaired by Dr. Alfonso Ortega (Associate Vice President for Graduate Study and Research), should include the charge of determining what Part-Time Studies should do. Among the observations was that on-line graduation rates will be reported separately, which will prevent distortion of full-time undergraduate day school metrics in accord with which the total amount of federal loans is determined for the University. Among the recommendations: as departments use full-time faculty for Part-Time Studies e-Learning teaching assignments, resources will be returned for new full-time faculty within the affected departments.
* Among the questions was whether an invitation to the administrative principals to meet with Faculty Congress would the reasonable and procedurally appropriate next step.
* Among the conclusions: Faculty continue to have substantive professional interest as educators in having leadership authority regarding of all dimensions of new on-line programing.

2. Benefits Reduction Plan (Christopher Kilby):

* The University long has funded specific benefits for designated retired employees. The stipulated medical and burial benefits will continue for current-covered employees who retire by May 31, 2018. Employees retiring after this date may participate in University plans, but at their own expense.  The primary motivation for the reduction plan has come from financial considerations regarding the University’s Bond Rating status. Moving forward with implementing the campus strategic plans will be more financially prudent with a preferred position as the University issues Bonds to finance its building and expansion projects.

3. Initiative to require statement on University Mission in faculty applications (Kelly Welch)**:**

* An initiative has been undertaken to require a written a statement from all finalists selected by departmental faculty search committees. What role should Faculty Congress have in deliberations as they proceed?
* Included among the observations of current search protocol is that all candidates are given a copy of the Mission Statement as a document informing them of the culture and the legitimate expectations the University has regarding support of the mission by colleagues who elect to accept an offer to join the community of scholar-educators at Villanova.
* Among the critiques of the initiative is that the required written statement produces an determinant influence external to the academic and intellectual support of the University Mission statement; the requirement certainly has the potential of disaffecting a strong candidate independently of whether one would support the mission—and declare such commitment as a routine part of the interview process.
* Among the recommendations is for Faculty Congress to give strong voice to the ambiguities that inevitably accompany a practice in light of the multiple considerations typically available to candidate finalists, each of whom already has been judged as among the most interesting persons with whom to continue conversation about our mutual aspirations.

4. President’s announcement about plans to become a national research university (Kelly Welch):

* The University President included in his academic year opening remarks that we shall become a doctoral comprehensive university.
* Ensuing discussion included the following: requisite resources may have a negative impact on departments without PhD programs. An important concern is that no program or department be used as a means only, but be respected as an equally important member of the community guided the University Mission Statement, and the highest standards of excellence to which we aspire in discharging our fiduciary responsibilities to our academic disciplines and our students.

The Plenary adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

 

Edwin L. Goff, Secretary

Committee on Faculty Report (Dr. Julie Klein, Chair):

1.  FTNTTF.

COF has circulated a draft to the deans and will vote on the issue in the last week of September.  I have asked the deans for feedback by September 23 so that we may consider their concerns.  The goal is to craft a solution that is collegial, workable, and fair.  The cornerstone of the proposal is the centrality of peer review in academia, and the COF links voting privileges with the use of peer review in hiring and evaluation.  In essence, those faculty who are hired and evaluated according to principles of peer review will be voters. We believe that moving to peer review for FTNTTF positions is an institutional advance.

2.  COF General Agenda.

Continue meetings with Al Ortega re research support at VU

Look into the needs of mid-career faculty and the progression from associate to full professor

Continue, in connection with the EIC, to improve parental leave provisions and advocate for child care

Look closely at the staffing issues related to VU's online education proposals

Ongoing review of the Faculty Handbook

3.  Board Meeting Report

The last Board meeting was a wide-ranging and candid discussion by trustees, deans, vpaa and avpaa's, and faculty about VU's most pressing needs and most important goals.  In essence, this was a discussion about the university's identity and direction.

Report of Election and Credentials Committee

For Faculty Congress Meeting 09/09/2013 (Linda Copel, chair)

The Rank and Tenure ballot is created. The list of candidates is below:

Engineering

Amy Fleischer

Vito Punzi

Bijan G. Mobasseri

VSB

Michael Pagano

Stephen Stumpf

Quinetta Roberson

Undesignated

Silvia-Nagy Zekmi

Charles Folk

Shams Inati

Georgia Papaefthymiou-Davis

Peter Zaleski

The IT team is constructing the ballot. The election will occur in September (no later than 9/30/2013) with a two week time frame for voting. Elections will conclude no later than 5pm on 10/11/2013.

Linda Copel, on behalf of the Faculty Congress Elections and Credentials Committee

Craig Bailey

Allison Payne

Robert Styer

Burke Ward

Qianhong Wu