

## **Minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting January 21, 2015**

*Submitted by Senate Secretary, Catherine Seta, Professor of Psychology  
Prepared by Amalia Wagner and Catherine Seta, Ph.D.*

*Caveat: Comments recorded are not necessarily verbatim. In order to facilitate open discussion, the identity of most Senators making comments or questions are not recorded. The identity of comments from Senate Officers and Senate Ad Hoc and Standing Committee Chairs are given, as is the identity of persons commenting in their official administrative capacity (e.g., CFO, Provost and College Dean.)*

There were 27 voting Senators present, a quorum. In attendance: Umit Akinc, Martha Alexander-Miller, Sarah Bodin, Susan Borwick, Sharon Castellino, Kevin Cox, Larry Daniel, Will Fleeson, Samuel Gladding, Laura Graham, Derrik Hiatt, Tim Janke, Kevin Jung, Rogan Kersh, Nina Lucas, Emmanuel Opara, Wilson Parker, Paul Pauca, John Pickel, Peter Siavelis, Gale Sigal, Omari Simmons, Kathy Smith, Michelle Steward, John Stewart, Lynn Sutton, Rosalind Tedford, Rebecca Thomas, Julie Wayne, Jeff Weiner, Mark Welker.

President Sigal called the Senate meeting to order. She introduced the following guests: Mur Muchane, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Jim Strodel from CapTrust Financial Advisors, Angela Culler, Bethany Fay, and Carmen Canales from Human Resources. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2014 senate meeting. Approval by a show of hands was unanimous in favor of approval.

### **Faculty/Staff Retirement Plan Update**

As chair of the Investment Committee, Professor Mark Welker gave the Senate an update on faculty/staff retirement plans. He informed the Senate that there is a new Department of Labor rule requiring universities to offer advice about “good performing funds”, among other regulations.

Professor Welker informed the Senate that, as part of WFU response to these new regulations, CapTrust was hired to review our current investment plan. Specifically, they were asked to assess whether WFU is offering their employees “good vendors and good investment packages.” WFU currently has 3 providers and over 270 fund options. CapTrust recommended that we should narrow and organize the list in a form that would present “best in class” options that have been vetted by the committee. With this background, Professor Welker introduced Jim Strodel with CapTrust.

Mr. Strodel noted that his company was among two finalists selected from in-person interviews with University Administration, the Human Relations Department and University legal advisors. WFU engaged CapTrust in July 2013. This company works with several other universities, including Davidson, Rice, Cornell, Princeton, and University of Miami. Mr. Strodel presented the following retirement plan information about WFU’s current investment plans:

- Over \$400M in plan assets

- Over 4,115 Plan participants
- 75% of Faculty and Staff receive WFU contributions
- 34% of Faculty and Staff make their own contributions
- Majority of the contributions with TIAA-CREF, other contributions with Vanguard and Fidelity

Mr. Strodel provided further information about the DOL regulations. Below are highlights of the new regulations, which went into effect in 2010 for private, tax exempt institutions' retirement plans. The regulations require:

- A formal Plan document
- An annual preparation and submission of 5500 forms
- An annual audit by an external auditing firm
- An annual nondiscrimination test to ensure that the Plan is not discriminating in favor of highly compensated employees
- A plan that complies with ERISA
- Clarification of universal availability
- Additional disclosure requirements in 2012 under Employee Benefits Security Administration on Plan fees and costs
- Investment fund monitoring
- Plan Sponsor actively involved in key Plan decisions
- Clear fiduciary guidelines

President Sigal thanked the Investment Committee for their work. The committee is comprised of the following members: Mark Welker (Chair), Carmen Canales, James Cotter, Michele Gillespie, Brandon Gilliland, Jennifer Killingsworth, Hof Milam, Angela Culler, Jim Dunn, Brian McGinn and Jim Strodel. Members are fiduciaries of the Retirement Plan and have completed fiduciary training.

**CAFR report on Vision 2020:** (For complete report, refer to Addendum A)

Professor Paul Escott, Chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility presented the committee's report on the Vision 2020 document that has recently been circulated

to the faculty. The committee met on January 6, 2015 in response to the Senate's request for CAFR's input.

As presently written, the Vision 2020 document makes explicit recommendation that teaching at WFU should be technologically-oriented. CAFR's position is that WFU's goal should be good teaching per se, and should not be confined to one particular methodology. CAFR is opposed to the idea suggested in the Vis2020 document that there should be changes to the tenure and promotion processes in order to encourage or privilege the latest IT technology. CAFR suggests that before plunging ahead, research is needed on the positive and possibly negative educational impact of modern information technology.

CAFR also emphasized that any suggestions about teaching methods must recognize differences among disciplines. Professor Escott noted that this is that also arises in the context of open access publication practices, which seem desirable in theory but may be impractical for various disciplines or for persons at different stages within their careers.

Professor Escott also pointed out that the last point in the Vis2020 report concerns the Teaching and Learning Center. His observation was that TLC has been sliding away from its origin as a faculty created and run organization to become a center that is more administratively oriented and the committee felt that the Vis2020 plan would further that movement..

President Sigal commented that the Senate's executive committee unanimously endorsed this report.

Lynn Sutton, Dean of the Library, Vice Provost, and Chair of Vision 2020 Committee thanked the committee for reading and discussing the report. She asked Professor Escott if CAFR would be willing to meet with Vision 2020 committee and discuss their concerns, especially about serious challenges with academic freedom that they see in the document. She emphasized that was not the intent of the committee that formulated the Vision 2020 plan.

Provost Kersh elaborated on the intent of Vision 2020 document and observed that a large part of the goal was to inspire these types of conversations. The charge of the committee included exploring ways in which technologies are disrupting, transforming for better or worse and to look at creative innovative technologies. The committee's charge was not intended to dictate particular styles of teaching or learning. Rather, the charge was to "look around the corner, see around the wall" to help WFU advance into the future.

Provost Kersh noted that WFU has a tradition for using technology in creative ways in the service of teaching and learning. He stated that the Vision 2020 document was meant to be a first draft of a brainstorming report, and not a document that laid out policy.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were noted.

- A comment was made about the challenge and frustration that technology poses when you plan to use it in your classroom and it fails to work...
- One Senator expressed excitement about the concept that he could have professional artists and computer scientist work with him to make some materials for his class...
- Another Senator voiced his feelings that it is not about IT; it is about how students learn and improving the way they learn. More about peer learning than technology....
- One Senator noted that the report has such a positive tone regarding the changes it proposes that he/she doesn't quite trust the tone. The Senator suggest that we need to bring more of a skeptical approach to new ideas and provide more research into approaches we really want to try.
- A recommendation was made to split the bullet point in the report that mentions open access and difference among disciplines. This suggestion will be presented to the committee for revision.

### **Collegiate Senators Committee Update**

Professor Fleeson gave an update on the Collegiate Senator Committee that has met since the last University Senate Meeting. They submitted a recommendation to the Deans' search committee and compiled a report on Teaching Professionals for the Senate EXCOM to review. The Collegiate Senate plan to meet with several teaching professionals in the College to hear their perspectives on this position.

### **New Business:**

President Sigal asked if there was any new business. There was not. She adjourned the Senate at 5:15pm