

UFS Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2015

The full meeting is available at

<http://live.libraries.psu.edu/Mediasite/Play/fe5b2337606349c3829658f393f707de1d?catalog=8376d4b2-4dd1-457e-a3bf-e4cf9163feda>

Announcements by the Chair

A Schreyers Honors Student was recognized as receiving the 2014 International Peace Prize Award for exceptional work to raise money for underprivileged children around the world.

President Baron

President Barron discussed his upcoming presentation to the Board of Trustees scheduled for Friday, March 20th, which will focus on three sub-imperatives falling under diversity and demographics. They are moral, environmental richness, and business model imperatives. He indicated a predicted drop in American Caucasian percentages and Pennsylvania's continued decline in population will impact the future face of PSU. PSU needs to focus on a framework to foster diversity and share best practices to develop plans to move forward and evolve.

A question was brought forth asking about domestic terrorist Bill Ayers' speech at the University and a letter sent to President Baron by a group of law students. He indicated the University's function is "a place where we can have ideas expressed and even ideas rejected, because we've listened and thought about it. And brought our own perspective and come forward with it." He is against universities not enabling these conversations to occur. Also, it used student activity fees' money not state money.

A question was brought forth about funding issues regarding outreach programs at the campuses. He noted it was a balancing act to cut or fund programs that will have a significant impact.

A question about the increased number of fixed term faculty and the difficulty of attracting diverse faculty was brought forth. He noted there should be a mechanism of providing a longer term commitment for excellent faculty. His concern (and the Provost's) is that with all the budget cuts an unintended consequence is to move into temporary positions. This changes the composition of faculty and sends the signal that does not promote job security, because the unit is in a reactive mode. If the actions fit into the institution's excellence he does not have a problem, but he dislikes sending a signal PSU does not have the same commitment to "you"; "you" are here to fill a hole. This hurts the Institution. In a follow up question, he indicated PSU is on the move again to grow our resources.

Provost Nick Jones noted GSI is moving back to July next year from October. Therefore, raises will occur July 1st.

New Business: None

Forensic Business

Senate Committee on Student Life: The 21st Century Student Life Skills report was presented by Chair Mary Miles and Enica Castaneda. Financial, legal and healthcare issues were the focus of the report. They brought forth the question "how does PSU bring these literacies to our students." Several comments and suggestions were made from the floor. The report is located at <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-b/>

Legislative Reports

Senate Committee on Admissions, Records, Scheduling, and Student Aid (ARSSA) sought legislative changes that establish the parameters that define official enrollment status for students. The changes were accepted. <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-c/>

Senate Committee on Committees and Rules sought legislative changes to standing rules to establish a subcommittee of ARSSA on articulation agreements. The recommendations were accepted. <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-d/> The committee also sought legislative changes to the Senate bylaws focusing on the mechanism for Senate Council sharing information. The recommendations were accepted <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-e/>

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs sought legislative changes focusing on prohibition of teaching at another institution as it is listed in AD77. The recommendations were accepted. <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-f/>

Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits brought forth a presentation focusing on PPO Blue and PPO Savings. The committee showed the artificial low rates for the PPO savings are being subsidized from the PPO Blue participants. As the University pushes for employees to move from PPO Blue the costs of PPO Savings will rise to an unsustainable level. The recommendations of the committee are as follows. 1) Establishing employee contributions based on the 1998 JCIB rationale. 2) Limiting employee contribution to health care costs. 3) Resetting the index for income-based employee insurance contributions. 4) Equalizing PSU contributions to all health insurance programs for employees at the same income level. 5) Publishing an annual table of employee and employer contributions to premium support. 6) Limiting university contributions to HAS of those in the PPO Savings plan. The Senate moved to accept the committee's recommendations. <http://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/march-17-2015-agenda/appendix-g/>

The Senate accepted the nominee lists for Senate leadership and committee positions for the 2015-16 academic calendar.

University Caucus meeting March 17, 2015

President Baron was the guest speaker.

His strategy and direction for the University must focus on living up to the mission of a public university. Access and affordability are his goals. He indicated applications are up. He stated the economically disadvantaged are dropping out, and this is a tragedy especially when a student borrows to attend PSU and does not finish. He also noted the poorer the student the longer it takes for them to graduate. PSU needs to focus on the time and cost of the degree. He mentioned the tuition freezes or lowered increases at fourteen of the campuses and the need for better placement in the beginning of a student's entrance to PSU. There should also be a way to enable credit to fix credit deficiencies. PSU is piloting a need based scholarship program that permits a student to complete six to twelve credits over two summers.

There were many questions and comments from the floor. One focused on administrative bloat and concern over consolidating campuses. President Baron noted he does not want to lose connectivity

with “place” of the campuses and he has not heard any proposals to combine/close campuses. He noted the need to protect academic programs. Many of the comments focused on “where’s the money coming from”. He indicated he has access to a \$155M cushion in his operating expenses earning zero percent interest. He wants to be able to use it for his interests.

He also discussed his desire to make PSU faculty more diverse. He noted Black and Hispanic faculty numbers are relatively flat once the International and Asian figures are removed. Discussion on increased fixed term hiring ensued. He indicated his objections to this if it is occurring purely from a financial perspective.

University Caucus luncheon meeting
March 18, 2015

The candidates for the 2015-16 UFS leadership positions gave speeches. No other business was discussed.