

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Monday, May 13, 2013
6:00-8:00pm
Room 427 – 41 Cooper Square

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Mike Essl (Chair), Atina Grossmann (Vice Chair), Daniel Lepek, Thomas Micchelli, Stan Mintchev (Secretary), Sohnya Sayres, and Sean Sculley.

Student Representatives: Oliver Antoniu, Jon Cuba, Asher Mones, and Osaze Udeagbala.

Ex-Officio Members: President Jamshed Bharucha, Dean Saskia Bos, Dean William Germano, Associate Dean Elizabeth O'Donnell, and Acting Library Director Carol Salomon.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on April 1, 2013 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. Corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of April 1, 2013 as corrected.

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed)

DISCUSSION OF THE TUITION ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE 4/8/2013 MEETING OF THE SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Executive Committee expressed its concern regarding the Board's tuition announcement, particularly as juxtaposed to the previous position that undergraduate tuition is the least attractive, last resort, expressed by Board members during the meeting of 4/8/2013. Members pointed to a part of the conversation that had focused on exploring "creative ways" to adopt a tuition model, which they felt was absent in the decision of the Board communicated to the Cooper community on 4/23/2013.

FACULTY RESOLUTIONS:

The following resolutions were shared with the membership:

HSS: "We expect that the Board of Trustees now direct their full fundraising efforts to promoting academic excellence and to restoring the full-tuition scholarship."

Resolution passed unanimously by the full-time faculty of HSS.

HSS: "Given the events leading up to and since the tuition announcement, and in light of a long history of administrative irresponsibility, we do not at this point have confidence in the capacity or the will of the current leadership to guide us through this historic crisis, to both launch a comprehensive fundraising campaign in the name of preserving full tuition scholarships and to develop a plan for academic excellence that will not only preserve but also improve the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. A majority of the full-time Humanities and Social Sciences faculty offers this resolution as an urgent call to rethink the current course of action and to move forward in the most constructive ways possible."

Resolution passed by the majority of the HSS full-time faculty.

ART: "Out of deep concern about the direction of the Cooper Union under President Jamshed Bharucha, the full-time faculty of the School of Art adopts a resolution of a vote of No Confidence in President Jamshed Bharucha."

The following members of the Cooper Union community support this resolution:

Dore Ashton
Robert Bordo
Christine Osinski
Mike Essl
Dennis Adams
Walid Raad
Sharon Hayes
Day Gleeson
Margaret Morton

CONTINUED DISCUSSION:

Concerns were raised about how the institution would move forward in light of the occupation of the President's office. Additionally, a member asked the president to comment on whether the decision to charge undergraduate tuition currently tables the necessity for the alternative revenue-generating streams, including the tuition-based graduate programs.

President Bharucha remarked that a recent New York Times article discussing the finances of the institution contained some inaccuracies, and that the office of Public Affairs was in contact with the newspaper in order to correct the record. The president remarked also that the alternative revenue streams continue to be pursued, but that a large associated risk factor prevents them from being the sole solution that would avert undergraduate tuition.

Members expressed concerns regarding the accumulating deficit, and asked the President to comment on the immediate budget deficit problem.

The president shared that there is currently a short-term goal to raise \$50 million in order to address the period between the present and 2018, and that plans are underway for a capital campaign with a stated goal of \$130 million; the President also remarked that the institution would need an additional \$300 million, in order to sustainably restore the full-tuition scholarship.

Several members asked the president if his administration would commit to the goal of restoring the full-tuition scholarship.

The president emphasized the difference between “goal” and “aspiration.” He remarked that going forward, restoring the full-tuition scholarship should be an aspiration for the current and future administrations of the school, but that it cannot be formulated as a goal of a concentrated fundraising effort because of the associated uncertainty in such a campaign. The president added that the recommendations of the Revenue Task Force were followed, in that undergraduate tuition is being implemented in order to make up for whatever the alternative revenue-generating streams cannot raise, and that it is conceivable that the scholarship level could rise to a higher average of 60% or even 70% in years when the other programs perform well.

Concerns were raised that moving forward, an expressed commitment to restoring the full-tuition scholarship goes hand-in-hand with academic planning at the institution. Several members felt that such a commitment is crucial.

The president explained that unrealistic fundraising expectations over the last few decades account for much of the present financial crisis. He pointed to a history dating back to the 1960s, when the question of sustainability of the full-tuition scholarship was raised but tabled due to the institution’s numerous assets, most of which were subsequently sold off and used through the years in order to bridge any gaps between revenues and expenses. The president mentioned that the Board is currently working on a detailed document that would go through and explain the logic behind the decision to charge undergraduate tuition.

Several members felt that it would be important for the Cooper Community to see the various models that were considered by the Board. The president agreed that this would be a good idea.

MOTION:

The following motion was brought to the floor and seconded:

“The Faculty-Student Senate hereby requests that all of the financial models/plans that the Trustees have considered in making the decision to charge undergraduate tuition be released to the Cooper Union community.”

Motion passed (2 in favor, 1 against, 8 abstentions).

REPORTS FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEES

This agenda item was tabled and will be revisited during the first meeting of Fall 2013.

OLD BUSINESS

EMENDATION OF ARTICLE IV. 5. OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Senate took from the table the motion from the meeting of April 1, 2013, proposing to modify the language titled “Liaison to the Board of Trustees” so as to include the text:

“In the event that a student is not serving as officer of the Faculty-Student Senate, a student representative shall be elected from among the sitting student senators in order to participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee with Board members.”

A motion was made and seconded to accept the change.

Motion passed. (8 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention)

MIRRORING LANGUAGE / MODIFICATION TO THE EMENDATION

It was noted that in the event that the Executive Committee of the Senate consists solely of students, there is no provision currently in place that would guarantee faculty representation for the meetings with Board members. Accordingly, a member proposed that the following revision/extension to the emendation of Article IV. 5. of the Bylaws be included in the language:

“In the event that a faculty member is not serving as officer of the Faculty-Student Senate, a faculty representative shall be elected from among the sitting faculty senators in order to participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee with Board members.”

A motion was made and seconded to accept the revision.

Motion passed. (9 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions).

NEW BUSINESS

SAFETY ISSUES RELATED TO THE OCCUPATION OF THE PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Several members expressed concerns regarding the events that transpired within the first 36 hours of the occupation. It was noted that a few students and staff were hurt in the first few stages of the confrontation, and that the bathroom doors and water fountains were boarded up for a short period of time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm