

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 17, 2013
12:00-1:50pm
Room LL 101 – 41 Cooper Square

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Julie Castelluzzo, Mike Essl (Chair), Anne Griffin, Atina Grossmann (Vice Chair), Daniel Lepek, Stan Mintchev (Secretary), Christine Osinski, and Sean Sculley.

Student Representatives: Emily George, Daniel Hall, Jay Perez (stand-in for William Hood), Yuta Makita, Hunter Mayton.

Ex-Officio Members: President Jamshed Bharucha, Dean Saskia Bos, and Dean William Germano.

The meeting was called to order at 12:07pm.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mike Essl was nominated for Chair, elected unanimously.

Atina Grossmann was nominated for Vice Chair, elected unanimously.

Stan Mintchev was nominated for Secretary, elected unanimously.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on May 13, 2013 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. Corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of May 13, 2013 as corrected.

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed)

COOPER UNION'S OMBUDSPERSON/EEO

The President reminded Senate members that the Cooper Union does not have (and is not required to have) an ombudsperson, and that the topic at hand concerns the institution's Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO) as per legal requirements.

The Senate Executive Committee reported that Yvonne Moray has been appointed to this position. The membership expressed concerns regarding the workload for the position, given Ms. Moray's other responsibilities, adding also that there may be

potential conflicts of interest between these and the requirements of the EOO position.

President Bharucha emphasized that Ms. Moray is very well qualified for the EOO position, noting that in the past she has handled much of the reporting work; he stressed that this appointment does not constitute a significant change to her job description at the institution.

WORKING GROUP

TASKING AND OBJECTIVES

The membership was informed of the Working Group's charge to "explore ways by which the institution can avert the charging of undergraduate tuition while establishing a sustainable financial model." It was noted that the definition of "sustainable financial model" is to be furnished by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the trustee members of the Working Group had apparently limited the scope of the study solely to cost-reduction rather than fundraising. Members expressed concern that the institution has already committed to the charging of tuition through hires in administration and infrastructural investments.

The President emphasized that the Cooper Union's potential revenue streams that could serve as an alternative to tuition are well known. He noted that any proposals put forth by the Working Group should mind that the rent revenues from the Chrysler Building remain flat despite inflation, aside from the two guaranteed up-steps. The President also noted that an analysis of the financial risks to the institution is imperative, noting that one such risk is the so-called post-retirement health care liability.

A discussion ensued regarding the newly hired staff in admissions; several members insisted that the hires are indicative of the institution's commitment to charging undergraduate tuition.

President Bharucha emphasized that the Board's April 2013 decision to reduce the full-tuition scholarship is in effect unless the efforts of the Working Group produce an alternative, and that the institution must move forward with this decision. The President noted that the additional staffing in Admissions was deemed necessary due to overwhelming concerns regarding the institution's ability to continue to recruit top undergraduate students once it reduces the full-tuition scholarship.

The membership noted that recruiting is done differently among the three schools. The President shared that he would be open to discussing this with the Deans and modifying the cost sharing among the schools accordingly.

Several members noted that the *Community Commons* space in the Foundation Building originally granted as part of the agreement to end the Occupation of the President's Office had since been withdrawn by the administration. However, it was noted that there is currently a space in the Library dedicated for this purpose.

President Bharucha emphasized that the language within that clause of the agreement between the occupiers and the administration specifically states that this room/space is available if and only if it is practical for the institution.

ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

Senate members inquired as to whether the Cooper Union's mission statement will be revised.

President Bharucha noted that the Planning and Assessment Council had inquired with and received feedback from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; the commission's recommendation was that the statement be revised. Consequently, the administration envisions that there should be an institution-wide process to do so in the near future.

NEED-BLIND ADMISSIONS

Several members inquired regarding the Cooper Union's ability to implement a truly need-blind admissions process moving forward. Specifically, should the institution commit to recruiting top students without taking into consideration their ability to pay for their education, would the granting of financial aid thereafter not offset the targeted revenue? These inquiries included notable concerns regarding the institution's ability to reduce the structural deficit by means of implementing the undergraduate tuition model.

The President noted that it is important to understand the order of operations in the admissions process: the need-blind admissions decision is to be followed by a need-based financial aid program. While the institution will have to be careful so as to not over-commit in the awarding of financial aid, the presence of the tuition revenue stream will actually afford a better opportunity for providing adequate financial aid packages and retaining students who are otherwise unable to pay. The President cited data indicating that while 40% of incoming first-year students apply for financial aid, this figure drops to 30% for the subsequent years; such data indicates that the institution does not currently provide adequate financial aid to retain its most financially strained students, despite the full-tuition scholarship policy.

The President reiterated that the structural deficit cannot be eliminated solely on the basis of revenue from undergraduate tuition, and that this is the reason for creating and implementing new programs going forward.

The discussion turned momentarily to fundraising: members inquired regarding the administration's plans to formulate a new capital campaign.

President Bharucha noted that the plans for a new campaign are well underway. He shared some strategy in this regard, noting that a central component to fundraising plans is what is known as *prospect analysis*, which involves studying the donor pool through *giving capacity vs. connectedness to the institution* scores. Fundraising efforts subsequently concentrate on potential donors that have either high capacity

or high connectedness to the institution, with strategies that vary depending on the category and case specifics; the President noted that going forward, there should be a special effort to attract high-capacity-and-connectedness donors.

The membership inquired as to how exactly the institution assesses the success of its fundraising office; specifically, how does the administration go about identifying appropriate peer institutions for an adequate comparison.

President Bharucha noted that the CASE database could be very helpful in identifying appropriate institutions for such comparisons.

The membership inquired regarding the target dollar amount that would be necessary from the annual fund in order to avert entirely the charging of undergraduate tuition.

In response, President Bharucha noted that the Annual Fund would have to bring in a total of \$11.3 million of unrestricted funds.

HURON CONSULTING AND THE DEPARTURE OF VICE PRESIDENT WESTCOTT

The discussion turned to questions regarding the redistribution of former Vice President Westcott's responsibilities following her departure. Senate members inquired as to the role of the Huron Consulting Group in overseeing some of these responsibilities.

President Bharucha informed the membership of the appointment of John Curry and Robert Spencer as consultants to the institution. Mr. Curry was formerly a vice president at MIT, and prior to that he was at the California Institute of Technology. Mr. Spencer was formerly Assistant Vice Chancellor at Vanderbilt University. It was noted that Mr. Curry currently serves in an advisory capacity while Mr. Spencer oversees the school's operations on a day-to-day basis, including, for instance, the Clery safety reporting required by law. The President noted also that Mr. Spencer has prepared an elegant and insightful presentation on the current finances of the institution. It was suggested to the membership that Mr. Spencer be invited to give a presentation at one of the subsequent meetings of the Faculty-Student Senate.

MOTION TO INVITE ROBERT SPENCER

A motion was made to invite Mr. Robert Spencer to the Senate's next meeting so that he may give his presentation on the Cooper Union's current finances.

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed)

President Bharucha noted that not all of the former Vice President's responsibilities have been delegated to Huron Consulting, citing Academic IT as one notable example: that department has reverted to the Engineering School and is overseen by Dean Dahlberg. On the other hand, Enterprise IT is distinguished from Academic IT and will be overseen by Robert Spencer.

REPORT FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

This agenda item was tabled until the next Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The membership inquired regarding Mr. Milton Glaser's attendance at the most recent meeting of the Alumni Association, citing concerns that Mr. Glaser's other affiliations may be a potential conflict of interest.

President Bharucha stated that Mr. Glaser's recent attendance at events / involvement with Cooper Union affairs has been solely in the capacity of an alumnus of the institution, and that such attendance/involvement is an explicit right of any alumnus.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm