

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Tuesday, February 17, 2015
12:00-1:50pm
Room 506, 41 Cooper Square

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Julie Castelluzzo (Vice Chair), Day Gleeson, Daniel Lepek (Chair), Margaret Morton, and Sohnya Sayres.

Student Representatives: Harrison Cullen (Secretary), Hunter Mayton, Andy Overton.

Ex-Officio Members: President Jamshed Bharucha, Dean Saskia Bos, Chief Academic Officer/Dean Teresa Dahlberg, Dean William Germano, Vice President William Mea, Acting Library Director Carol Salomon.

The meeting was called to order at 12:18pm.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on November 25, 2014 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. Minor corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of November 25, 2014.

Motion passed. (8 in favor, 0 opposed)

Minutes from the special meeting held on December 2, 2014 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. Minor corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of December 2, 2014.

Motion passed. (8 in favor, 0 opposed)

PRESIDENTIAL UPDATE

The President provided three main updates to the Faculty-Student Senate:

- Cooper Union's recent mention by The Princeton Review
- Administrative savings
- Preliminary admissions report

Bharucha noted that The Cooper Union recently topped The Princeton Review's 2015 list of "Colleges That Pay You Back." These rankings were calculated according to "earning capacity as a function of cost," according to Bharucha. He also mentioned that the current freshman class has seen an increase in Pell eligibility as compared

to last year's incoming class, from 19% to 22.5%. Bharucha stated that this percentage was "on the high end for private, highly selective colleges."

On the topic of administrative savings, Bharucha noted that the current administration has saved approximately \$18.6 million over the last 3 years, as compared to the financial plans of the previous administration. These savings are greater than what was expected under the new financial model, and Bharucha attributed these savings to the awareness of 3 "guard rails:"

- Stay on course with a very clearly defined notion of financial sustainability
- Never invade the corpus of the endowment
- Stay on course with net new revenues that are essential to the new financial model

Bharucha also noted that the \$18.6 million in savings could be attributed to a recent hiring freeze, a recent two-year salary freeze for administrators and non-union employees (FY '12 & '13), the recovery of financial markets, and the delaying of investments that are part of the new financial model. When questioned on the recent hire of faculty within the School of Engineering despite this hiring freeze, Bharucha stated that "there would be exceptions as needed."

The preliminary admissions report highlighted annual increases in both Engineering and Art applications (67% and 5%, respectively). There was an unspecified decrease in Architecture applications, which Bharucha attributed to the "continued erosion" of the field. Members noted that, this year, The Cooper Union had implemented the Common App for the first time in the school's history.

Bharucha also mentioned that the search for a new Dean of Architecture was in its final stages, and stated that there were two candidates left for the senior administration, academic deans, and search committee to choose from.¹

When asked about the recent \$50 million bridge loan taken out by the administration, Bharucha stated that it would be used to "get going on new revenues and new programs." He went on to attribute the securing of the loan to the new, sustainable, tuition-based financial plan.

REPORT ON EXEC. COMM. MEETING WITH TRUSTEES

Chair Daniel Lepek provided members with notes from the Executive Committee Meeting with Trustees Richard Lincer and Lee Skolnick that took place on December 3rd, 2014. Members discussed the contents of these notes, which can be found on the Faculty-Student Senate Website.

¹ Let it be noted that members later corrected this statement, as the final choice of Dean of Architecture is to be made by the President alone.

FACULTY AWARDS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Senate's discussion on faculty awards follows acknowledgement of the administration's neglect of faculty awards in past years. Dean Dahlberg began by stating her support for faculty awards, and mentioning that she had previously offered to make a personal donation in order to fund such awards. Dean Dahlberg stated that her donation was turned down. President Bharucha also emphasized his support for faculty awards, and argued that it is possible to raise money for the cause.

Members noted that the Art Faculty has recently been reduced by a third, and that this conflicts with the school's responsibility to sustain curriculum and foster long-term faculty development. Members also mentioned that there are a total of 4 full time faculty members in Humanities and Social Sciences for nearly 1,000 students.

Bharucha stated that he has agreed to recruit a tenured faculty member for the School of Art, and that he wishes to hire full-time faculty in each of the other schools as well. He mentioned that it is difficult to make a life-long commitment like tenure in parallel with the current lawsuit filed against The Cooper Union by The Committee to Save Cooper Union.

Members noted that the task of organizing faculty awards usually falls to the Chief Academic Officer, and that while there may be an aspect of peer review to the process, the decision to award a faculty member usually comes from the administration. Bharucha subsequently tasked CAO Teresa Dahlberg with the development of faculty awards at Cooper Union in the near future.

Members also discussed the current standing of awards that have existed at Cooper Union in the past, including the Dale Harris Award, the Menschel Faculty Award for Curricular Development, and the Burdell Award for Arts and Sciences. It was noted that funds for the Dale Harris award have been distributed to administrators in recent years, despite a lack of applications for said award being distributed to Cooper Union faculty through the appropriate channels.

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

Vice President Bill Mea began the discussion by reporting the recent installation of an ID card scanner at the entrance of the Foundation Building. Members mentioned that it would be helpful to receive a Campus Notice email concerning these changes, to be sure that all members of the community are aware.

Members also stressed the need for a Privacy Policy statement concerning ID card data and security camera footage recorded and stored over time. It was also pointed out that a number of security cameras in the Foundation Building are non-functional. When asked whether or not there were plans to hire a new Director of Public Safety, Vice President Mea stated that there were no plans yet. SOS Security

(Cooper Union's recently hired security firm) uses a single staff member to manage employees. Bill Mea also helps to perform some managerial tasks regarding security matters. They are currently weighing the need for a full-time Director.

It was brought to the Senate's attention that Ann Marie Gong, Former Human Resources Manager and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, has left The Cooper Union. Vice President Mea stated that a new Deputy Coordinator needs to be hired, specifically prioritizing that the role be filled by a woman.

ACADEMIC PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

Members discussed the recent conflict surrounding the Academic Standards process in the Engineering School, where an official dismissal issued by the Academic Standards Committee was never fully carried out by Dean of Engineering Teresa Dahlberg. It was noted that the focus of the discussion was not the particular student that was up for dismissal, or the fact that they are still attending classes. The Senate concerns centered upon the failure to abide by the decision made on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee, and how this reflects upon larger issues of shared governance at The Cooper Union.

Dean Dahlberg stated that she based her decision to not dismiss the student on a number of circumstances. The student received news of their dismissal one business day before the start of the semester. The student's dismissal by the Academic Standards Committee was partially based on the inability to offer failed classes (Calculus I and Introduction to Linear Algebra) during the Spring semester. Dean Dahlberg mentioned that measures have been taken to provide the student in question with the classes needed to stay on track. It was urged that precautions should be taken in the future to better warn students about possible academic issues and to give opportunities for evaluation earlier in the semester in order to fit into Add/Drop periods.

MISSION AND VISION

This agenda item was put off until next meeting due to time constraints.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought to the floor.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought to the floor.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm