

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 29, 2016
12:00-1:50pm
Room 101, 41 Cooper Square

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Diana Agrest, Julie Castelluzzo, Mike Essl (Chair), Day Gleeson, Atina Grossmann (Vice Chair), Sam Keene, Stan Mintchev (Secretary), Sohnya Sayres, Sean Sculley.

Student Representatives: Emily Eberhart, Claire Kleinman, Sam Koopman, Owen Law, Justin Richter, Romaniya Voloshchuk.

Ex-Officio Members: Dean William Germano, Acting President Bill Mea, Library Director Carol Salomon.

Guests from CUOP Leadership: Yuri Masnyj, Martha Schulman, Maren Stange, Alexander Tochilovsky.

The meeting was called to order at 12pm.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on November 24, 2015 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. No corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of November 24, 2015.

Motion passed. (15 in favor, 0 opposed)

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH UPDATE / BOARD'S RESPONSE TO RESOLUTIONS FROM NOVEMBER 24, 2015

--The Secretary entered this meeting after this Agenda item had been discussed--

UPDATE ON ADMINISTRATION PLANS IN RELATION TO CONSENT DECREE

--The Secretary entered this meeting after this Agenda item had been discussed--

CONCERN FROM CUOP / REPRESENTATION TO FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

The leadership of CUOP addressed their letter of concern, dated 11/19/2015 and written to the membership of the Faculty-Student Senate. FSS transparency and communication were therein noted as major concerns; the CUOP leadership also expressed an interest in initiating a discussion on modifications to the voting

membership of the FSS, so that it may include representation from part-time and proportional faculty. On the latter issue, it was noted that discussions concerning voting composition can neither be initiated from, nor proceed solely among FSS membership, since this portion of FSS bylaws are an explicit point of agreement between The Cooper Union and the CUFCT. More to this point, it was noted that members of the CUFCT must comprise a simple majority of any campus-wide committee, such as the FSS; this requirement is explicit in the CUFCT contract, and it is necessary so that contract is in compliance with labor law.

It was suggested that the Senate could add a single ex-officio member as a courtesy to CUOP constituents. There was some discussion that adding too many voices might dilute the Senate. The membership agreed that CUFCT would be consulted prior to the next regular meeting, and that this Agenda item would be reissued at that time.

With regards to concerns related to transparency and efficiency of communication, it was agreed that meeting announcements will henceforth be sent out to the entire Cooper community (via campus-notice), and that approved minutes would be posted to the FSS website without delay. Lastly, it was agreed that CUOP leadership would be invited to sit as non-voting guests for future FSS meetings.

GENDER-NEUTRAL BATHROOMS

An FSS member expressed support for President Mea's decision to remove gender-specific signage from all Cooper Union bathrooms, and noted that the institution should further move to provide support for nursing/breastfeeding, and more-generally, additional space for infant care within the bathrooms.

A motion was brought to the floor and seconded:

Motion: "The Faculty-Student Senate supports the Administration's decision to remove gender-specific restroom designations and replace all such with facility-specific ones."

Motion passed. (14 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention)

SEXISM AND HARASSMENT AT THE COOPER UNION

An FSS member noted being approached by students concerned by a high level of sexual harassment at the institution. The member noted that such a problem may be due to the gender disparities within the student body, particularly obvious in the School of Engineering; one of the observable issues has been the problem of attracting an appropriate level of attention to training and information sessions that are meant to alleviate such problems.

President Mea noted that the 2015-16 school year has seen a concerted focus on the federal government's new Title IX regulations, and that the issues of harassment and hostile environment would be another institutional focus going forward. The president noted an abundance of online training resources that, while not an all-in-one solution to such problems, provide an opportunity to initiate discussion.

A Senate member expressed concerns about the mandatory reporting, noting that this issue deserves a more careful discussion (aside from the legal definitions that currently frame it).

The discussion moved briefly to the topic of student diversity, where it was noted that women are underrepresented in engineering. For the record, it was noted that the School of Engineering's student body features only 24% women, while other schools nationwide have closer to 50%. As a related point, it was noted that only 28% of the Faculty are women.

The following motions were proposed and seconded:

Motion: The Senate agrees to address the issue of gender disparity within the School of Engineering at its next regular meeting.

Motion passed. (15 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

Motion: The Senate agrees to address the issue of diversity within the faculty and the student body at its next regular meeting.

Motion passed. (15 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

OLD BUSINESS

No items were brought to the floor.

NEW BUSINESS

No items were brought to the floor.

Meeting adjourned at 1:48pm