

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Tuesday, February 18, 2014
12:00-1:50pm
Room LL 101 – 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: Daniel Hall, Yuta Makita, Hunter Mayton, and Andy Overton.

Ex-Officio Members: President Jamshed Bharucha, Dean Saskia Bos, and Acting Director Carol Salomon.

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meetings held on November 5, 2013 and December 3, 2013 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 5, 2013.

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed)

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of December 3, 2013.

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed)

SCHEDULING SENATE MEETINGS

The Senate entered a brief discussion of the various challenges associated with the efficient scheduling of regular meetings. Several members noted that it is not feasible to hold regular meetings outside of the club hours time period; one of the concerns raised was that student representatives are busy during almost all other time slots. Nevertheless, the membership reached the consensus that Fall 2014 meeting times should be determined as soon as possible. To this end, it was suggested that the Senate convene on the first Tuesdays of October 2014 and December 2014, with other meetings to be scheduled as necessary.

INSTITUTIONAL CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

The membership inquired regarding the status of the CAO position at Cooper Union; it was noted that despite the absence of a formal announcement, various sources have indicated that Dean Dahlberg is currently holding the post. The Senate requested clarification on this issue as well as the formal description of the responsibilities associated with the position.

President Bharucha explained that he intends to appoint Dean Dahlberg to the position (and that, in fact, Dean Dahlberg has been performing some of the duties associated with the CAO position since early Fall 2013). The President drew attention to the distinction between the traditional “Provost” position as present at many universities, and the CAO position at Cooper Union. He emphasized the necessity for a CAO, particularly during the accreditation process with Middle States and other agencies. Nevertheless, the President noted that he had decided against running an external search for the position at this time because of the institution’s financial constraints.

The President noted that Dean Dahlberg would occupy the post on a permanent (rather than acting or interim) basis. He added that Dean Dahlberg would be the point person with the Middle States Commission on matters of accreditation; in this capacity, she will be responsible for institutional periodic review reports (PRR) for accreditation – specifically – the self-study that will lead to the report due in 2018, and more broadly, institution-wide assessment of teaching and learning as well as institutional goals. Her responsibilities will also include assuring compliance in reporting requirements (state and federal), overseeing the proposals for new academic programs (particularly, ensuring compliance with procedural requirements of the State in connection with proposal and approval), the institutional intellectual property (IP) policy, oversight of the institutional review board (IRB), oversight of ongoing government grants and contracts, oversight of IT infrastructure for teaching and research, and guiding the process of intramurally funded research.

The President emphasized that the other academic deans would continue to report directly to him.

The membership expressed concern that the aforementioned job description is largely technical and does not address whether the CAO would be responsible for the academic vision of the institution (as is common at many other universities). Moreover, if the position would entail this component, what is the philosophy behind appointing the Dean of Engineering to this particular post? A member noted that there are issues both with inherent conflicts of interest as well as expertise when it comes to the assessment of academic units other than the ones in the School of Engineering (e.g., the definition and assessment of learning outcomes in Art is different from Engineering).

President Bharucha confirmed that the appointment of Dean Dahlberg would be precisely for Chief Academic Officer, not Provost: to this end, the goal is to oversee the technical tasks associated with the position, rather than to bear the responsibilities for defining broad academic vision and direction. The president emphasized that he will continue to be responsible for the latter, and that he will also be responsible for stepping in whenever there are potential conflicts of interest (or conflicting interests) among the three schools.

The President noted that he would like to engage the constituencies of the institution in a separate discussion, namely:

Should the Cooper Union appoint a Provost?

The discussion of this topic was brief.

TIMELINE FOR APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT CFO

The membership inquired as to the status of the search for a new Chief Financial Officer of the Cooper Union.

President Bharucha noted that the school is looking for someone to fill the position as soon as possible, ideally starting by July 1, 2014. The President remarked that it would be OK (but not optimal) if the position were filled by the beginning of the Fall 2014 semester. He added that the administration is reviewing an excellent slate of candidates despite the institution's recent financial hardship.

EARLY DECISION ADMISSION STATISTICS

It was noted that all 37 of the early decision admits to the School of Engineering had signed on. Dean Bos added that despite a significant drop in the pool of applicants, students admitted to the School of Art are strong. The President added the remark that less than half of the early decision admits had indicated intent to apply for financial aid, confirming that the institution would not have to support too many from this group.

DEPARTURE OF YVONNE MORAY / INSTITUTIONAL EOO POSITION

The membership inquired as to the status of the Cooper Union's Equal Opportunity Officer position given the departure of Yvonne Moray from the institution.

President Bharucha noted that Board of Trustees Secretary Lawrence Cacciatore had been appointed interim EOO, but that this position would eventually be delegated by the new CFO. Specifically, the President noted that he envisions that the new CFO would search for a replacement for the director of Human Resources, who may in turn be given the responsibility of naming an EOO for the Cooper Union.

RECENT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION

This item was tabled until the next meeting. (It was agreed that the membership should receive the precise language of this resolution prior to this discussion.)

OLD BUSINESS

The membership discussed the possibility of disbanding the standing committees and suggesting that they be reconstituted upon the beginning of the next Senate term. One pressing issue was noted as an obstacle to this proposal: Middle States had raised a concern with the institution's lack of an explicit academic integrity policy. The membership noted that the subcommittee on that issue had initially made progress that should be documented and passed along for future reference. Altogether, this issue was set aside.

It was noted that the Code of Conduct discussion should be revisited at the next Senate meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A member raised a concern regarding the oversight of internal faculty grant awards. It was noted that the application review process for Menschel grants is not explicitly clear. The Senate received a complaint regarding the handling of one such application, where it was noted that certain faculty members were turned down, and the grant was instead awarded to another group of faculty for a course that was never offered.

A similar concern was raised with the Dale Harris award, where it was noted that the award had been given to a standing member of the Administration instead of a member of the Faculty.

President Bharucha noted that he would look into these issues and resolve them going forward.

A Senate member raised concern regarding freedom of expression, specifically, administrative monitoring of faculty Facebook activities. The President noted that the institution does not have a person in place to monitor Facebook posts.

A Senate member inquired as to the agreement between the Cooper Union and St. John's University regarding access to the Great Hall. The concern was that this agreement gives St. John's privileged access to the space, which may be at odds with the tradition of granting free access to the public on a first come first served basis. President Bharucha noted that the agreement between St. John's and Cooper Union is no different from any other standard agreement for partnership and space sharing.

Meeting adjourned at 1:48pm