

Arts and Sciences Senate

Minutes of the 9/24/01 Meeting

The Arts and Sciences Senate met on Monday 24 September 2001 at 3:30 PM in the Javits Room.

I. One item, a report by the Dean, was added to the agenda. The agenda was then approved by voice vote.

II. The minutes of the 4/16/01 meeting were approved.

III. R. Cerrato presented the annual report of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

There was some discussion of exactly what is meant by "units" in the context of "Inter-Unit Cooperation". It was pointed out that the term is defined in the report. The senate agreed that Inter-Unit Cooperation works fairly well on West Campus, but that there is room for improvement between East and West campuses.

The Senate voted without objection to accept the report.

IV. R. Cerrato presented the Experimental (Temporary) Course Proposal form. This Experimental (Temporary) Courses were recommended by the Council of Distinguished Teaching Professors. These experimental courses will be limited to specified terms, and can be approved quickly. These courses will not be listed in the published catalog, but will be listed on-line. Experimental courses can be made permanent by going through the standard new course approval process.

The Senate voted without objection to approve the idea and the form.

V. The annual report of the AJC was tabled, as there was nobody from the AJC present to present it. Nevertheless, this generated a heated discussion. The Dean asked about the membership on the AJC, and specifically about how the student members of Hearing Boards were selected. The AJC guidelines state that volunteers may apply. A. Tyree will contact J. Shea and N. Franklin for clarification of how this happens in practice.

VI. A. Tyree reported on the deliberations of a committee chartered to investigate changes in the Teaching Evaluations. As recorded in the 3/26/01 minutes, the aim of this committee was to "work out an appropriate methodology for predicting scores". At present the only frame of reference is the university mean. Analysis shows that the numerical scores strongly correlate with class size, whether the class is in the sciences or humanities, and the age of the professor. Comparison of a numerical score with a predicted mean, taking these biases into account, could lead to a more useful estimate of teaching ability.

The discussion shifted away from the narrow focus of this committee to an overall discussion of the efficacy of teaching evaluations. The Senate directed the President of the Senate to suggest to the University Senate that the Undergraduate Council reassess how teaching evaluations are done on this campus.

VII. Report of the Dean.

Dean Liebermann reported that 28 new faculty have been hired this year. 60% of those are women, and 4 represent other underrepresented groups. Three of the latter are paid for by the President's Diversity program.

This year, departments have requested searches for 51 faculty. 27 of those have been authorized, with few in

the sciences because of the high startup costs often required in the sciences. Among the ongoing searches are those for the Chairs of the Departments of Africana Studies and of Asian and Asian-American Studies.

The Dean cautioned that all searches are subject to availability of funding. The economy has taken a hit, and there is no permanent state budget. The Dean urged departments to act quickly. N. Goodman reported that a mid-year recision is a possibility.

No written report was submitted.

VIII. There was no other Old Business.

IX. There was no other New Business.

The Arts and Sciences Senate adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Submitted 25 September 2001

F.M. Walter