

Minutes for CNU Faculty Senate Meeting  
Friday, December 6, 2013  
Board Room of the David Student Union

Senators present: Redick, Martin, Keeling, Connell, Selim; Barnello, Grau, Hasbrouck, Holland, Hunter, Puaca, Thompson, Winder.

Guests: Mary Ragan, Arrenvy Bilinski, Laura Deiulio, Rebecca Wheeler, Dawn Hutchinson, Shannon Phillips

**1. Call to Order at 3:05.**

Senator Depretis arrived at 3:06

**2. Report from University Fellows**

President Redick introduced University Fellows Mary Ragan and Arrenvy Bilinski, both of whom he knew from his Appalachian Trail course. Ms. Ragan explained that the University Fellows are recent CNU alumni, and that the program is intended to be a bridge between students and faculty, based on their own experiences as students. Ms. Bilinski noted that the Fellows were all highly involved with CNU as undergraduates and enjoy the chance to give back to the institution. Ms. Ragan and Ms. Bilinski explained that there were thirteen fellows in all, and that they work in Admissions, interviewing prospective students and going on college tours to communicated the vision of CNU; in Student Success, with the Captains Care system, helping students who have difficulty with academic expectations to improve their study habits; in Student Engagement, on student programming, with athletics, and with CHECS; in the President's Leadership Program, meeting individually with all PLP freshmen, working at the Passport programs, on the coffeehouse series, and with the Study Abroad office.

Old Business

**3. Blackboard vs. Canvas**

President Redick had invited Dr. Dawn Hutchinson, as the chair of ATAC, and Ms. Shannon Phillips, as Director of Instructional Technology, to speak to the Senate about the proposed move from Blackboard to Canvas as the university's digital pedagogical platform. Dr. Hutchinson began by reminding the Senate that CNU has used Blackboard for five years in 2012 and it was time to evaluate how satisfactory it was and to review other possibilities to see if there was anything that might better suit our needs. ATAC and IT Services had done such a review and Canvas came out as comparable option. It has been successfully adopted by other universities, including Virginia schools such as the University of Mary Washington, James Madison University, Longwood University, but also elsewhere, such as Bowling Green State University and Auburn University. Dr. Danielle Stern, as the chair of ATAC, was asked to run small pilot in fall 2012 as spring 2013. She thought the two systems were very comparable and sought permission for a bigger test. ATAC surveyed the faculty on what they thought of Blackboard. Provost Padilla agreed to have a task force further examine the potential of Canvas and consider a possible transition to it, consisting of Dr. Stern, Ms. Phillips, and other faculty willing to pilot the program in their classes. The task force surveyed the faculty and students in the classes using Canvas three-quarters of the way through the semester: 8 faculty preferred Canvas, 4 preferred

Blackboard. 119 students responded to the survey, of whom 80 preferred Canvas, and 39 preferred Blackboard. Faculty reservations on Canvas included dislikes for how Canvas handles modules, the online gradebook, and student control over means of communication. Students can choose which media they are contacted by (email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and frequency with which they are contacted (daily, weekly, not at all). Faculty who preferred Canvas liked its assignment creation and grading features, quiz administration, calendar, notification (including mobile apps). Based on all these assessments, ATAC recommended Canvas, believing that the pros outweighed the cons in transitioning to the new system.

### 3:24 Senator Manning arrives

After Dr. Hutchinson's presentation, the Senate further discussed the issues with her and Ms. Phillips. The Senate examined the documents that Ms. Phillips had brought that contained data on the technical aspects and costs of Blackboard. (\*Included below.) Ms. Phillips noted that CNU would host either Canvas or Blackboard, whichever one we chose to go with. CNU has leased one of three major pieces of Blackboard. It could be upgraded to include mobile apps, as Canvas has. She also noted that Canvas comes with Turnitin as a plagiarism checker, that it is well known and popular, and would be a part of the cost for Canvas, vs. Blackboard's Safe Assign, which costs us considerably extra to include in our packet. In terms of yearly increases of cost, she informed the Senate that most companies have .03% increase, and that Canvas has offered that. She observed that to understand costs it's necessary to look three years in the future to fully understand them. There will be costs to improve CNU's connection to data system, but that we need to update that regardless, and she noted that year one in a new system is always more expensive—thus the need to look at year three to fully understand any costs and savings. Ms. Phillips also reported that Blackboard's support has been good at times, but less so at other times on problems. She has been impressed with the good community in Canvas and has found them very responsive in troubleshooting any problems. Ms. Phillips then discussed the problem of data storage, noting that CNU quickly exceeded capacity in Blackboard. 70% of the faculty use it now, a big increase in last five years. Blackboard offers capacity in gigabytes, whereas Canvas offers capacity in much more sizeable terabytes. Canvas would offer longer storage for courses, vs. Blackboard, in which we can only store courses for two years before needing to delete them. She directed the Senate's attention to the p. 6 summary, and how much less expensive extra storage capacity was in Canvas: \$2500 for 2500 gig more, vs. \$30,000 for 500 gigabytes more in Blackboard. She noted that both were comparable on service, backups, etc., and that the tech features compare. Blackboard only updates and patches two times a year, and we can decide to stay on an old version if it has features faculty like. Canvas has rolling production and patches, which is good for fixing problems, and if enough faculty don't like it and vote no they will change back. She said that Canvas can reflect our institutional hierarchy: they can break the university into three subdomains, one for each college, and each with its own administrator. The administrator role is much the same. She noted that we would need time to code locally the integration and NIS environment.

When asked, Ms. Phillips said that their recommendation was to support the faculty task force recommendation to switch to Canvas, for security and financial reasons, and mentioned how other Virginia schools, such as Longwood, Mary Washington, and JMU have successfully migrated their systems. Dr. Hutchinson said that the task force had presented its recommendation to Provost Doughty.

Ms. Phillips and Dr. Hutchinson left at 3:40.

#### **4. Center for Effective Teaching**

President Redick then asked Vice Provost Laura Deiulio to speak on the development of a Center for Effective Teaching. She noted that she was following up on her previous visit to discuss the matter. Provost Doughty has suggested that we locate the Center in one of the Tribble Library classrooms, and choose a faculty member to run it, offering him or her a course release to do so. She would like to get input from the general faculty in roundtable discussions, as a way of encouraging faculty to come with ideas. She asked the Faculty Senate what it envisioned for the Center. Suggestions included training individual faculty to do reliable, developmental classroom observations for faculty seeking help or whose department chairs identified them as likely to benefit from work on particular aspects of teaching. Dr. Deiulio proposed videotaping faculty who wished it as a way of helping them see themselves in the classroom, an idea that brought general agreement from the Senators, one of whom noted that universities often ask for such videos in job applications. Another senator suggested that the Center could model midterm evaluations, which could ask more pointed questions than the IDEA and allow faculty to make changes before the IDEA evaluation. “Flipping” classrooms was also discussed: students watch an online lecture before coming to class, so that class is more usefully focused on discussion and working through problem sets or texts. Other suggestions included one person from each department become an advisor for the center, to provide disciplinary expertise, getting credit through Digital Measures for taking advantage of the center, a teaching blog, workshops with certifications that could be included on ARs and vitas. Senators felt that such a center might be helpful in hiring young faculty because they would have support as inexperienced teachers. University of Maryland, University of Illinois, and University of North Carolina were mentioned as schools that had teaching centers that might be good models, and one senator reminded the Senate that last summer several CNU faculty attended a Virginia consortium on teaching, who could also serve as a resource. Dr. Deiulio said that she would welcome suggestions on resources such as books, and inquired if there might be interest in a course on teaching techniques. A few senators said that they’d had such a course in graduate school, but a number of others said they had not. The Senate discussed the issue of how to staff the center; Dr. Deiulio supported the suggestion of nominations, noting that setting the center up will be a complex process. She promised that one of the sessions in the January teaching conference would include discussion of establishing a Center for Effective Teaching.

#### **5. President’s Report**

President Redick announced Provost Doughty’s decision on Faculty Development Grants: out of 21 applications, the Senate had recommended funding 20. Of those 20, 8 were fully funded, 6 were partially, 6 were not funded. One senator inquired if the Senate’s rankings had been followed; President Redick suggested that the Faculty Development Grant subcommittee check the results to see. President Redick also summed up the Provost’s announcement on curricular changes, noting that he had chosen to make economic modeling a foundation, had split his decision between the Senate’s and the UCC’s recommendations on the name change for the new Area of Inquiry, had chosen the UCC’s description for the new Area of Inquiry rather than the Senate’s suggestion, and had eliminated the Ideas, Institutions, and Societies Area of Inquiry. President Redick suggested the Senate examine the Provost’s decisions in the memo the Provost had sent to the faculty at large.

## **6. Approval of November minutes**

**Motion 12/6/13.1 Motion to table and electronically vote on the minutes of the November meeting of the Senate. Moved Harry Grau. Seconded Linda Manning. Passed unanimously.**

Senator Depretis announced that she had resigned from CNU effective January, to leave for a new position at Temple University. The Senate thanked her for her service and wished her well in her new position.

## **7. Sabbatical applications**

The Senate went into closed session at 4:06 to consider faculty applications for sabbaticals.

The Senate came out of closed session at 4:14 and took a break. Senator Depretis left the meeting during the break. President Redick temporarily left the Senate meeting for another meeting during the break; during his absence Vice President Martin chaired the Senate meeting. At 4:33 the Senate returned to session.

## **8. Library Advisory Committee**

Senator Barnello introduced an email from the committee, reporting that Tom Berry, chair of the Library Advisory Committee, had asked that she introduce it to the Senate. The email informed the Senate that the LAC will be undertaking a survey of each department on campus to identify resources that faculty need for their scholarship research: "The goal is to ensure that the Library houses the appropriate research resources consistent with an eminent library, and that the library provides important resources for faculty pursuing professional development." Senators agreed to mention this to their departments, and to ensure each department has a liaison to the LAC and knows who it is.

## **9. Adjunct Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award**

Senator Barnello reported that the subcommittee had examined what other universities in Virginia are doing for awards for adjunct faculty. The subcommittee proposed an award of \$500 and outlined a process for application: a nomination from the department chair accompanied by a letter of recommendation; a letter from the applicant explaining the excellence of his or her teaching at CNU; IDEAs for the past four semesters, a preponderance of which must demonstrate scores above the gray band and have "Excellent Teacher" ratings or 4.5 or higher (Raw or Adjusted Score); and eligibility requirements of having taught at least six classes at CNU over the past four semesters to establish a minimum track record. Senator Barnellos noted that other schools have applicants supply letters of rec from students, and syllabi, but that the subcommittee had chosen not to do so in the interest of streamlining the process. The Senate thanked Senator Barnello for her subcommittee's work, and planned to vote on the award at the January meeting.

President Redick returned at 4:45. Senator Holland left at 4:49.

## **10. 30/20 Faculty Distribution**

President Redick noted that the issue of equity of annual evaluations fits with this issue and gave background to remind senators of the issues involved. Last year Provost Padilla said that the number of full-time lecturers and instructors would comprise approximately 25% of the faculty, though it was above or below that in some departments. At this point, some depts. have more than 30%, and some have under 20%. Because we're at 267 faculty positions, with relatively few more slots to add, departments have been requested to consider the future and send a list of positions they hope to have to Provost Doughty. Future positions will be allocated with the 30/20 figure in mind, so not every department will get a tenure track line for new positions. We're in the general ballpark overall now, and he wants to bring all departments in line. The Provost says that we have to have a percentage of restricted at 4/4 to maintain 3/3 for tenure-stream faculty. The Senate discussed how the 25% figure will be the university average, with some departments above or below it; departments with under 20% restricted who have a faculty member retire won't retain that particular the tenure line. Senators questioned the reasons behind the policy, asking if it hadn't been for a budget emergency of a few years back. President Redick said that was only a part of it, that mostly the policy has served as a means from moving the tenure-stream faculty from a 4/4 to a 4/3 to a 3/3 teaching load. Provost Doughty has indicated that there's value in restricted positions because some restricted faculty don't want to be tenured, don't want the pressures of scholarship and prefer to focus on teaching. One senator differentiated between the scholarly expertise expected of restricted faculty and the scholarly production expected from tenure-stream faculty. The Senate then began to discuss the evaluation of restricted faculty and thus moved on to the next agenda item.

## **11. Equity of annual evaluations**

President Redick told the Senate that two restricted faculty came to see him separately, both of whom feel their evaluations were not fair. Senator Connell mentioned that the system has two tiers, and noted the difference in ARs and retention/promotion criteria. President Redick said that the weighting is being applied but not doing its job. He gave an anecdotal example from a restricted faculty member, who had three scholarly publications in one year but got only a 3 out of 4 points on the evaluation. The faculty member thought that such an evaluation put him or her in an impossible situation: doing an immense amount of scholarship gets little proportional reward, yet not doing scholarship would drop the score down to a one and make it impossible to find a job at another university. President Redick noted that although the EVAL 4 is not part of ARs, since the two kinds of evaluation happen at about the same time it may loom in the deans' minds when doing the evaluation. He argued the need to base the evaluation of restricted faculty on the expectations for restricted faculty, not on the basis of the expectations for tenure track faculty. His point was supported by another department chair, who had observed that the dean had ranked restricted faculty lower to make average of 3 across the two kinds of faculty. One senator asked if chairs were being asked to do the same, and the department chairs in the Senate said no, but noted that the deans had been giving lower numbers to restricted faculty to make space to give higher numbers to tenure-stream faculty. They also noted the terribly demoralizing effect it was having on restricted faculty. Senators noted there were two basic issues: the pressure to norm to 3 on evaluations (including the question of why evaluations are compressed to 0.5 increments), and the comparison of publications between restricted and tenure-stream faculty. Restricted faculty have reported being told by chairs and deans that they are compared with tenure-stream faculty in publications, and will get a lower rating for less scholarly

production, but that it doesn't matter because it's weighted less. But that's not true, particularly if it is impossible for a restricted faculty member to achieve a 4 in that area—as some report having been told. One senator argued that there was a third problem, in that criteria for annual reviews are unclear, because ARs supposedly have different criteria from the EVAL 4 used for promotion and tenure. But the criteria for ARs aren't written in any parallel document. Senators noted that as teachers we are expected to provide grading criteria in syllabi, and that parallel criteria should be available for our evaluation. President Redick said he thought that the deans probably are using the EVAL 4. He then asked the Senate to further consider this issue for next time, with an eye to inviting the Deans to discuss it either with the SEC or at a future meeting of the Senate.

## **New Business:**

### **12. Supersections**

Senator Connell noted that the original purpose for putting supersections into the curriculum was to cut down on adjuncts, and that at the time CNU had 235 faculty. But now the number of fulltime faculty is up to 265, while the number of students has not gone up. So he wonders if the number of supersections should be adjusted. He noted that supersections fill faster than sections of the same course offered at regular size because students realize that they won't have to write papers for the large section. Some faculty may like teaching supersections for same reason: they won't have to grade large numbers of papers. Some senators noted that supersections get taught because of the timing of the availability of particular classrooms. Others that the use of supersections may be driven by architecture: each of the new classroom building has a large classroom to be used, rather than several small ones occupying the same space. The sciences in particular were noted as having many supersections at the lower level, so that students don't experience small classes until they reach the upper level—though the lower level classes are often where they need the most individual help for mastering concepts. Several senators noted that supersections enable the small sections in the overall class count. Also some departments don't have enough faculty resources to make their schedule work without supersections. While senators were sympathetic to that argument, they also agreed that it would make sense to examine where supersections are needed and pedagogically useful and where they aren't. President Redick promised to take up the matter with the deans and provost.

The Senate briefly discussed the requirement that the faculty confirm graduates, one senator asking for its rationale. Several senators pointed out that it's an important part of faculty governance over the curriculum, and that it provides a time each semester for the faculty as a whole to come together, when other issues can be discussed as well. If we never come together, then both faculty and administrators would likely perceive that faculty as a whole don't care about governance.

### **13. Move to Adjourn. Moved Brian Puaca. Seconded Bill Connell. Passed unanimously. The Senate adjourned at 5:33 p.m.**