

Minutes of the Faculty Assembly meeting January 21, 2021

The following schools were represented at the meeting: Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Nursing, Philosophy, TRS, and Music, Drama and Arts.

The meeting convened at 9:05. New President Janet Selway, Associate Professor of Nursing, introduced herself and outlined the order of the meeting: updates and information; and the FA agenda for the future.

Because the FA now has a budget, Binh Tran, Associate Professor of Engineering, has become Treasurer of the FA. The rest of the Executive Board was introduced.

Updates:

Clarification of the legal status of the organization. It is a non-stock corporation, incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This means that it can apply for status as a non-profit and, in the future, donors can make tax-deductible contributions. The reason for this incorporation was to create the possibility of opening a bank account and hiring a law firm.

Explanation of expenditures can be given by Prof. Tran.

Reminder: the bylaws of the FA are on its website. The Executive Board will review the bylaws, which possibly need updating.

Prof. Tran gave a financial report, noting that as of late November the total contributions amounted to around 17K. The first invoice of Bredhoff Kaiser (ca. 7K), the law firm hired to represent the FA, has been paid. The firm is not yet asking for a retainer.

Potential restructuring of graduate programs. At the December meeting a committee was appointed to investigate and respond. So far, members have met with Deans. The committee's work is ongoing.

University budget difficulties were discussed, with the aim of learning more about restructuring/rightsizing. Some members of the Executive Board have met with a financial analyst and the EB is in the process of finding professional assistance in analyzing the CUA budget.

It was determined as a point of information that CUA would not be a site of coronavirus immunization.

Possible future agendas: Prevention, Protection, Promotion

Prevention

The School of Nursing budget has been cut to the bone, and faculty is down by 3.5 positions. One clinical faculty position may be replaced.

There is a general erosion of resources, and departing faculty can't be replaced. There was no discussion of cutting doctoral stipends and suspending graduate admissions in the Humanities for the coming academic year; there is no transparency. What faculty are being involved in these discussions? We need a Town Hall for the purposes of discussion and communication. Associate Provost Steve Brown has been invited to talk to the Academic Senate Budget and Planning Committee. There is a possibility of a meeting with the Provost after Steve Brown.

Protection

How can faculty be protected? Need to raise awareness when reappointment letters come out. It was pointed out that the President has so far prided himself on having made no faculty layoffs so far as a result of the coronavirus-related budget cuts.

A committee was assigned to discuss these matters with staff for information-gathering purposes.

A discussion of missing resources followed. The library budget is being increased. Advancement should seek more endowed fellowships/scholarships, to honor potential donors. It was noted that in the current situation, TRS has slipped behind its two main competitors in the United States, Notre Dame and Boston College.

This year is the end of the ten-year University strategic planning period. It is a question as to whether the university has adhered to the strategic plan.

Discussion of promotion strategies ensued; they are under development. The need for a FA newsletter was discussed, and consideration of that possibility is underway.

The meeting concluded at 10:30.