MINUTES OF THE T-FACULTY SENATORS COUNCIL MEETING OF DECEMBER 12, 2019

The New York University Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty Senators Council (T-FSC) met at noon on Thursday, December 12, 2019 in the Global Center for Academic & Spiritual Life at 238 Thompson Street, 5th Floor Colloquium Room.

In attendance were Senators Battista, Cappell, De Leon, Economides, Fenton, Frankl, Friedman, Garabedian, Hoffman, Irving, Kamer, Klein, Lapiner, Ling, Makarov, Merritt, Mincer, Ompad, Quinn, Schlick, Smoke, Sternhell, Taylor, Upham; Active Alternates Alter, Gillers, and Reiss; and Alternate Senators Dasanayake, Gunsalus, Hartman, Jassen (for Pursley), Romig (for Duncombe), and Siegel.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the November 21, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: PROVOST FLEMING

See attached Document A.

Chairperson Economides presented the Council’s questions and discussion points to Provost Fleming.

The Council inquired on the changes to mental health-related benefits and on the state of negotiation with Langone providers about becoming in-network care. In particular, the NYU Child Study Center is out of network and therefore remains a major cost driver for mental health for children.

Provost Fleming stated the enhanced out-of-network mental healthcare coverage is going into effect in January 1. The University is also in conversations with the NYU Child Study Center regarding their out-of-network status.

The Council asked Fleming to comment on NYU’s tenure rate, which has been above 90% for the last seven years and is significantly higher than that of institutions we think of as peers.

A Senator asked for clarification on the 90% figure. Fleming stated that this is 90% of those who formally stand for tenure. She noted her focus on examining the mentorship of junior faculty in schools and departments. She noted this is in response to one of the findings of the Being@NYU survey was that people felt that there was not sufficient mentorship, particularly for under-represented, minority faculty members. As a result, the Provost’s office is looking to launch a comprehensive mentorship program.

In response to a question from a Senator, Fleming clarified the tenure review process and the Provost’s role in the process. She stated a typical process at a larger school is that a subcommittee of the department evaluates the dossier and brings forward a recommendation. The department will then review, vote and forward to the School’s Promotion and Tenure Committee. That committee will review and evaluate and it then goes to the Dean of that unit for assessment and proposal before it is sent to the
Provost’s Office. Senators noted it would be helpful to have a formalized document to detail the grievance procedure.

The Council asked Fleming if she had an opinion of how the University Senate should be balanced. Fleming noted this is under the purview of the Senate Committee on Organization and Governance (SCOG).

The Council asked for Fleming to respond on reports that the Being@NYU climate survey results will only be disseminated to the deans. Fleming responded she communicated with Lisa Coleman and Tracey Gardner, and her understanding is that the inhibiting factor in releasing all granular data is the guarantee that anonymity would be maintained. Deans, at their request, can view their school-level data, and can convey that data in a way that maintains the anonymity of the respondents. She noted reports on the results are posted on Being@NYU website.

The Council asked in the strategic plan that as each department prepares to plan and evaluate performance in terms of hiring and student recruitment etc. that they be required to formulate a diversity, equity, inclusion climate plan. Resources could then be used to encourage and support meeting and exceeding those plans. Fleming expressed her support of this recommendation.

Economides stated a concern of NYU GNU faculty regarding connectivity across the portal sites and the GNU as a whole, and the implications of the loss of the ‘connectivity fund’. Fleming noted Abu Dhabi is looking at different models for interaction between New York and Abu Dhabi faculty. She noted at Abu Dhabi’s inception a decade ago these incentives were necessary to involve faculty from New York. AD is now examining what structure is most appropriate ten years later.

A Senator inquired if full-time administrators were able to serve as adjunct faculty as well. Fleming will follow-up with an answer.

**ELECTION OF T-FSC CHAIRPERSON**

Statements from the candidates were circulated in the agenda binder. See attached Document B. The election of T-FSC Chairperson for 2020-2021 took place by secret ballot from the following slate of candidates presented by the Nominating Committee: David Irving of the Tisch School of the Arts and Darcey Merritt of the Silver School of Social Work.

Chair of the Nominating Committee Mincer supervised the counting of the ballots, including absentee ballots, and reported the results of the election: Darcey Merritt of the Silver School of Social Work will serve as T-FSC Chair for academic year 2020-2021.

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIRPERSON: NICK ECONOMIDES**

*Executive Committee (EC) with Provost*

Chairperson Economides reported the EC met with the Provost Office on December 3. They discussed three main topics: 1) how the T-FSC can be most helpful in steering the University towards growth and success; 2) recent cutbacks in social interactions with faculty candidates, and the importance of recruitment and retention of tenure/tenure-track faculty and the primacy of academic research at NYU; and 3) changes in the Provost’s tenure review procedures, including greater consistency across schools.

*EC Meeting with the President*
The EC also met with the President on December 3. They also discussed how the T-FSC can be most helpful in steering the University towards growth and success and agreed promoting academic quality is crucial. They discussed how the University handles issues of conflicts in countries involved in the global network. They also discussed the direct relationship between the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the T-FSC. They noted this relationship has improved significantly over the last few years and raised again the idea of T-FSC Senator(s) serving as non-voting (observer) member(s) of the Trustees. The President raised the issue of confidentiality in having observers on the Board from the various Councils, including students. The EC has raised again the issue of joint committee meetings between BOT committees and Senate committees. Economides reported there was a recent meeting between the Senate Executive Committee and Executive Committee of the BOT. He noted their openness to engage. He also reported the Dean’s Council hosted an event with the BOT. Economides suggested the Council could organize a similar reception with the BOT. A Senator recommended inviting the BOT to the Year End Dinner, as has been done in the past.

T-FSC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Policy Planning

Committee Co-Chair Economides reported at the Senate Financial Affairs Committee meeting the Fiscal 2020 Operating Budget and Capital Plan was presented. It is posted on the T-FSC website.

At the meeting, there was also a presentation by the Office of Sponsored Programs. It was noted the University as a whole is doing well in raising research, but most comes from the School of Medicine and not Washington Square. The Committee asked for information on grants per department, to receive data based on the size of school or department.

Governance

Co-Chair Merritt reported the Committee reviewed the T-FSC Rules of Procedure to clarify eligibility to run for Executive Committee positions.

The Committee determined the rules imply only Senators are able to run for Executive Committee positions and a slight modification in the language will clarify. They suggested the following amendment to section II.2.e of the T-FSC Rules of Procedure:

T-FSC members (Senators) in any year of their term are eligible for election to the position of Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary. If the Chair-elect or Vice Chair-elect or Secretary-elect is in final year of his/her Senatorial term, then his/her term will automatically be extended by one year and the school election normally scheduled for that Senator’s seat will be postponed for one year. In no event, however, may a Senator’s term be extended by more than two years under this provision. (section II.2.e)

The Council approved the amendment to the rules.

Merritt stated at the meeting of the Senate Committee on Organization and Governance (SCOG) it was reported that other Councils are inviting representatives from the Long Island School of Medicine (LISOM) to serve as observers on the Council. SCOG will have a formal discussion on official University Senate representation for the LISOM. Senators discussed the size, composition, and change to percentage of faculty representation and voting power on the Senate as more schools are added to the University. It was noted this will be under review by SCOG.

Inclusion, Equity and Diversity
Merritt announced the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) will present at the February 6 Council meeting.

Personnel Policies and Tenure Modifications

Committee Co-Chair Frankl noted the Committee will review the University’s Policy on Continuing Contract (C) faculty serving as Principal Investigators (PI’s) of Sponsored Projects and Programs, which was amended to increase access for C faculty to serve in these roles.

UNIVERSITY SENATE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs

The Committee is reviewing 1) candidates for honorary degrees, 2) the university calendar, and 3) academic initiatives emerging across the university. It was noted the review of the calendar takes into consideration contact hours, concerns on providing opportunities for reading days and breaks, and questions of affordability. It was also reported the Committee met with the BOT Academic Affairs Committee. The students made a presentation on invisible disabilities at the meeting.

Public Affairs

The Committee announced Commencement will again take place at Yankee Stadium.

Senate Committee on Organization and Governance (SCOG)

As discussed, SCOG will be examining the issue of Senate composition. Another item under review is improved orientation for senators. The Committee will also be reviewing communication procedures.

Graduate Program Committee

It was noted, in addition to the Committee’s usual agenda of reviewing and approving graduate degree programs, they are also discussing the large divergences across schools and departments in terms of doctoral stipends and transfer credits.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.
MEMO TO: Katie Fleming, Provost NYU
MEMO FROM: T-FSC
RE: Questions
DATE: 12.12.19

Please consider the following questions as a starting point for our discussion on December 12th.

1. As a follow up to our benefits presentation: what is the state of negotiation with Langone providers about them becoming in-network care? In particular, the NYU Child Study Center is out of network and therefore remains a major cost driver for mental health for children. Even with the significant improvements to the out of network coverage for mental health, the Child Study Center remains very expensive for NYU employees with NYU insurance. When Katy visited the T-FSC last fall, she indicated that her office was making a major push to support pediatric mental health. This would seem to be a key place to make a significant intervention and build on the really meaningful changes that have already been made to the mental health coverage. I still find it deeply problematic that a world class pediatric mental health facility within NYU is out of reach for so many NYU employees' families.

2. Tenure is intended to mark scholarly excellence and work that is at a discipline’s leading edge. In the abstract, should it be a concern that NYU’s tenure rate has been above 90% for the last seven years, significantly higher than that of institutions we think of as peers?

3. One wonders if the provost has any insight into how she thinks the senate should be balanced? Knowing might help us propose something that is more likely to be considered acceptable.

4. I have heard unofficially that the Being@NYU climate survey results will only be disseminated to the deans so as to provide results and data at the level of their school but not at the level of their departments. Is this true? If it is true, then a) why was that decision made when the survey design and the reporting of the results to the university already took precautions to protect anonymity by not releasing results if a group had only 5 or fewer respondents. I believe that threshold of 5 is a national best practice. b) Regardless, how will the deans with diverse departments in terms of climate, such as one can guess FAS, be able to use the survey results to target their attention and resources to where it is most needed? Faculty took
the survey expecting to contribute and get information and responses at the level of their local experienced environment, which is the department.

5. I believe that each department prepares a strategic plan for at least the next year if not longer, say 5 years, so that deans and chairs can plan and evaluate performance against that plan in terms of hiring and student recruitment etc. It seems each department could be required to formulate a diversity, equity, inclusion climate plan and adjust it annually according to an evaluation against that plan. Resources could then be used to encourage and support meeting and exceeding those plans. I believe this is a standard practice for non-climate departmental matters. Has something along these lines been considered for departmental climate issues and why has such a planning requirement not been implemented?

6. A current faculty concern which has just now been brought to the attention of the co-chairs of the FSC GNU Committee by NYU GNU faculty is that of: connectivity across the portal sites and the GNU as a whole, and the implications of the loss of the so called 'connectivity fund'.
T-FSC Nomination for Chair
David K Irving

I would be honored to serve as Chair of our Council. Shared governance is key for sustaining the University’s mission. Partnering with the administration and embracing the diverse expertise of the faculty should be advocated.

As senator from the Tisch School of the Arts I currently serve on the Executive Committee as Council Secretary, a position that has afforded me insight into the purpose, potential and procedures of the T-FSC and exposure to the workings of the University at large.

Having chaired three departments here at NYU, including a two-year stint in Singapore, working with the entire spectrum of participants – administrators, faculty, and students – I am familiar and comfortable with a chairmanship role.

Upon my return from Tisch Asia, I wrote three novels titled *Sleep 101, Sleep 201 and Sleep 301*, about how an American University partners with a school in China. I reference this experience in part because the interconnectedness of the GNU is one of many challenges we face at NYU.

My primary research centers on teaching effectiveness. Based on my book *Elements of College Teaching* I have lectured on teaching at many of our study away sites including Shanghai, Prague, Johannesburg, Havana and Florence. Most recently I have been working with the chair and teaching staff at the NYU Department of Pediatric Dentistry.

As a feature film director, working with multiple stakeholders has become second nature.

These experiences have informed the collegial temperament that I would bring in service to the work of our Council and our members with your support.
December 10, 2019

Fellow Colleagues and Senators:

I am delighted to have been nominated to serve as T-FSC Chair. I am an Associate Professor at NYU Silver School of Social Work and a Faculty Fellow at the school’s McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research. I have extensive experience as a practitioner in the private and public child welfare systems, and as a researcher with interests including child maltreatment prevention; maltreatment type definitional issues; neighborhood structural impact on parenting; and lived experiences of those served by public child welfare systems as they shape the decision-making processes of parents. I have served on the Tenure/Tenure-Track Faculty Senate Council for the past four years. I currently serve as Vice-Chair of the Council, Co-Chair of the Inclusion, Equity and Diversity and Governance committees, and as a member of SCOG with previous participation as a member of the Housing and Benefits committee.

In light of an ever-changing and volatile political and economic environment, our university is vulnerable to a host of consequences threatening our flexibility in providing rigorous academic programs within our national and global reach. I believe the Senate Executive Committee in concert with our more focused committees is uniquely positioned to represent our faculty at large in the spirit of shared governance in ways that honor our collective commitment to innovative and rigorous research, excellence in education and pedagogy, and leadership in mitigating inequities and inequality in higher educational settings. There are many moving pieces that complicate our best intentions and I believe faculty senate representatives are best suited to advocate for balance and transparency while maintaining our overall mission for academic and humanistic excellence as first priorities. Given, NYU’s commendable national and global reach, as a prospective Chair, I propose four points of proactive focus: capitalizing on goal commonalities and strengthening the relationships between faculty and the administration, including the Board of Trustees; advocacy regarding immigration issues and our DACA students; social justice initiatives in higher education spaces; and the protection of portable academic freedom.

I would welcome the opportunity to represent my colleagues in the leadership capacity of Chair of the T-FSC. I very much appreciate your consideration of my candidacy.

Respectfully,

Darcey H. Merritt, MSW, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
New York University, Silver School of Social Work