



*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

**Faculty Council Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 9 2020 3 – 5 pm**

Members present: T. Artemchik; L. Baber; T. Blackmond Larnell; J. Brown; P. Caughie; I. Cornelius; H. Dahari; t. davis; M. Dentato; Q. Dong; J. Elsky; N. Gryzwacz (*ex officio*); B. Johnson; T. Jules, N. Lash; C. Martin; K. Mirza; K. Moore; G. Moran; J Nicholas; B Ohsowski; B. Ohsowski; L. Pope; P. Rosenblatt; S. Rushin; A. Shoenberger; A. Silva; S. Sullivan-Dunbar; W. Tangarife; G. Thiruvathukal; S. Todd; S. Uprichard (*ex officio*),

1. Call to Order and Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

During the roll call, the fact of conflicting meetings, as in the School of Nursing, is noted. Secretary Johnson thanks the FC member who pointed out typos and a factual inaccuracy in the draft of the minutes for November's meeting. The need to both accurately capture what is said in FC meetings but also to note consequential errors in presentations is discussed. November minutes are approved with need for clarification of timing of transition to Aetna health insurance noted.

2. Discussion Item: Chair's report

Jules indicates that there is no update from the Shared Governance Task Force and is unsure when we will have one. The questions of Aetna health insurance and Human Resources (HR) have been discussed in a meeting with the Provost and also the President. The Provost has requested something tangible so he can light a fire under the right people. Jules believes that administrators were also taken by surprise by brevity of this year's enrollment period. He understands that HR will be restructured. Jules did inform them that Benefits Advisory Committee had not met despite the urgency of this question for faculty. Jules is told that LUC is saving \$1 million a year by the switch from BCBS, and that was for a two year period. Head of HR Winifred Williams had said that Blue Cross Blue Shield, the previous provider, had not provided a competitive bid the last time. Jules did relay concerns about how much money is being left in flexible spending accounts, which is happening because of the

pandemic and consequent suspension of many medical procedures. He is told that the Benefits Advisory Committee should be meeting soon.

Jules then turns to discuss the Institute for Pastoral Studies, which is being disbanded as a stand-alone unit and placed into School of Social Work. Notes that conversations were held with Social Work and Theology; Social Work was receptive. No faculty member will lose their current job because of this. However, Jules wants the Council to understand that there is both promise and peril for larger scale restructuring that is coming down the pipeline. There are larger measures coming soon, the details of which are not yet able to be publicize. Much of this is tailored toward better integration of the One Loyola model and to the effort to build greater interdisciplinarity. We are going to have lots of questions and lots of angry people before us. We can learn from IPS about what battles we want to have and which we don't. Council members make numerous observations in the zoom chat box about the length of service of IPS's Interim Dean and the fact that IPS faculty have met with the Dean of Social Work but not the Faculty. One member suggests the importance of the Council surveying faculty members in such situations, to make sure that their true views are being ascertained, rather than assuming that their Dean speaks for them. Another member wonders about why financial savings result from such reorganizations when all faculty (whose salaries are the largest expense) are being retained.

The Provost responds to the questions about finances. Currently there is a very big deficit in IPS. Historically IPS has had lots of administrators per student. It is a small unit, smaller than most College of Arts and Sciences departments. They have multiple programs that are running with a handful of students, and hire part-time faculty for those tiny programs. The hope is to use disciplinary knowledge of IPS faculty to take advantage of strengths of other units. He approached IPS Interim Dean Peter Jones, asked him to discuss with faculty where they saw the most opportunities. Had chair of Theology and Dean of Social Work meet with IPS faculty. He argues that we need to look at this in several parts – the first is efficiencies, the other is a vision of a university that is more interdisciplinary, where disciplines that have strong affiliations with one another, can collaborate in tackling important problems in the world. Savings come from reorganization of IPS curriculum. He notes that IPS and SSW already have three joint programs. The Provost adds that the unit won't be dissolved, will have accreditation as an institute of pastoral studies.

Another member asks about what the university values are that are orienting the restructuring of programs, schools, and centers. The Provost says that this is a great question. He discusses his hopes to transform the university into a place where pressing problems are tackled and points to the new School of Environmental Sustainability and the Institute for Racial Justice as examples. This requires changing some of the structures of the university so that collaborations across schools are incentivized.

The Provost then transitions to discussion of strategic planning process; it was initiated by Margaret Callahan, who has gone on sabbatical; timeline is now June of 2021, had been on target to be completed this year, but delayed because of the COVID pandemic and fallout from the murder of George Floyd. The Council member who asked the question about values suggests in response that actively collaborating with faculty in these decisions would enable them to be made better. The urge a reconsideration of the top-down method. The Provost responds that he thinks this is important, and wants contributions from the faculty ranks. Dean Malik Henfield will be reaching out to faculty with new Institute for Racial Justice; he does need heavy participation from faculty. The Council member urges that thinking about inclusion be placed at front and center, especially in terms of how decisions impact faculty of color.

Another member elaborates on this point. We all understand that change is inevitable. But faculty should be involved in meaningful decisions – benefits for example. They talk about management side issues in IPS, lots of staff members. The wonder if restructuring allows us to avoid the real issue. A unit like IPS is mission-centric. Top-down decisions have been crushing the faculty. This member reiterates complaints about brevity of benefits enrollment. How we communicate in times of crisis has to be improved. The provost agrees that needs faculty input, that's why he is here at this meeting. Agrees on benefits question, which is new to him. IPS is mission-centric; he re-emphasizes that it is not being dissolved, but rather put under another unit. Let us think about our values: IPS involves ministry, clearly SES is mission-drive, so is racial justice. At the end, each of those entities costs money. We want to do those things, but want the most impact, that is where he needs feedback from Council. Another Council member points out that these kind of decisions about academic organization fall under the domain of the Council. They state that the Provost does consult, but generally by informing the Council after these kinds of decisions are made. They wonder if the administration has looked at the rainbow chart, spoken with the Council of Graduate Programs. This member emphasizes that faculty are not reactionary, understand changes have to be made and things have to be closed. They appreciate the Provost's presence, but suggest that these councils should be consulted earlier. The Provost says that he would like to talk about this. He went to IPS faculty first, since they will be impacted the most.

Jules then redirects the conversation to the question of re-opening in the spring semester. He commends the Provost for including the Council in deliberations on this and indicates that the Executive Committee has tried very hard to respond quickly. The EC was asked about students coming back, and expressed reservations. There is a lot of faculty sentiment that we should be nearly 100% remote.

### 3. Discussion and Action Item: Faculty Affairs Report and Resolution

Jules turns the floor over for discussion of an update from the Faculty Affairs Committee. He indicates that he thinks we need a resolution to go to the Provost to aid in his efforts on the benefits question. The Faculty Affairs chair takes the floor. They indicate that there is a process question about the inclusion of faculty members in decisions about benefits. The committee is also working on a survey effort about experiences and views of Aetna. A motion to adopt the resolution below is made and seconded. One Council member says since there are already two faculty representatives on the Benefits Advisory Committee, that part is irrelevant; they also think from past service, that major decisions were made over the summer. They observe that the university is a self-insurer, and wonders if the Council has the capacity to meet over the summer. Jules acknowledges these points, but observes that the Benefits Advisory Committee has not met despite repeated requests that it do so. The Faculty Council and University Senate FC and Senate appointed representatives back in the summer, assuming would meet over the summer. Susan Uprichard says that the Council should respect the fact that we have the Benefits Advisory Committee and work through that structure. Jules expresses concerns about that. A Council member expresses great dissatisfaction with HR and questions their integrity and competence. They point to the lack of replies to Jules' request for meetings, the poor quality of their surveys, and the removal of information about the Benefits Advisory Committee after the Council issued a statement last academic year. They doubt whether we have a good-faith partner.

The following resolution is then passed unanimously:

Whereas the decision in 2019 to switch health insurance plans for university staff and faculty from Blue Cross Blue Shield to Aetna was made without faculty input; whereas the Benefits Advisory Committee that was reconstituted following the switch to Aetna did not meet prior to open enrollment in 2020, and so had no input on health insurance options for 2021; whereas decisions that affect health insurance have significant medical and financial implications for Loyola faculty, staff, and their families; therefore, be it resolved that Faculty Council Representatives who serve as members of the Benefits Committee meet regularly with that committee, and that negotiations concerning health insurance provided to faculty and staff be reviewed and commented upon by Faculty Council prior to any decision or action taken by the university.

The Chair of Faculty Affairs indicates that the committee is working on a survey about experiences with Aetna health insurance, and will ask about out of pocket costs.

Discussion changes to the proposal from the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Ahad for an Ombuds program. This program is intended to mediate conflicts

and reduce the burden of adjudicating disputes on the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. The Faculty Affairs committee agreed that this is a good idea, but had some questions and concerns looking for more clarification about the program's details. The committee offered suggestions about the process, wondered about the virtues of having one person or several people serve in this role, and whether there could be a course buy-out for some service. The committee also wondered if the Council should have a role in suggesting names. Jules observes that the current faculty handbook has no mechanisms for faculty-faculty grievance resolutions. He refers to the current handbook revisions underway, which should incorporate this ombuds program. One Council member observes that the Provost's office has had some frustration about dealing with two Council committees; they suggest that we need to be systematic and organized.

#### 4. Discussion Items: Other Committee Reports

The Chair of Communications and Faculty Service reports that the committee is administering faculty evaluations of Deans at Quinlan and SES. ITS has been emailed and the evaluations should have closed. The committee will thus have raw data, which they will assign to committee members not in those schools, then compile and convey to the Provost. The most recent newsletter is done and ready to be sent.

The chair of Academic Affairs reports that the committee is discussing the question of how to handle student evaluations in faculty performance reviews, especially of Assistant Professors coming up for tenure. They are still at the stage of gathering information, and are contemplating bringing a resolution to have the Council take a stance.

#### 5. New Business

Jules mentions the subject of online trainings. Numerous faculty members have complained about the logistics, quality, quantity, and necessity of these trainings. He has spoken to the Provost about this. One question is the timing, and having the deadlines come at inopportune times of the year. Council members discuss the penalties for not completing them on time and the question of which Council committee should be taking this up. One member observes that some of the trainings may be required for the school to have certain insurance policies. Another criticizes the use of locking faculty out of their email as a penalty, since that directly harms students. They would like to see a move to every few years for most of these trainings, rather than every semester. Another Council member argues that if there are trainings required for legal reasons, that that should be conveyed to faculty, and that in any event the trainings should be better adapted to academic rather than corporate environments. Comments in the Zoom chat box suggest if the administration is serious about the content of these trainings, that they should also use other ways of conveying their message, such as putting up posters

that reinforce the content and convey information about where to go with certain problems. Other members criticize the tone of the trainings and punishments for noncompliance, characterizing them as punitive and demeaning toward faculty. One observes that they have worked in the corporate world and have an appointment with the Argon Lab and that other employers do not take this approach. Reasonable leaders like the current Provost interact with faculty in a more respectful and professional manner, and this should be the approach adopted by HR. Several members observe how irritated and alienated many of their colleagues are by the training and the messages about noncompliance.

Jules describes a Council retreat being planned for early January. Planning is underway. The rough outline is to begin by discussing shared governance, and then shift to more applied committee work.

A Council member returns to the question of the Spring term. They wonder what is the Provost's response to faculty concerns about this is. It seems to them to not be a safe time for many people at all to return to campus and are not confident that the administration's plans will work. The Provost responds that this was a difficult decision. The administration conducted a survey that demonstrated. They took a close look at other universities, to find examples of places where more people were in residence but safely. There will be strict guidelines for testing and adherence to protocols. He does see the point of not having students back on campus, but there were other perspectives.

Jules thanks the Council members, praising them for their hard work. He says that shared governance never sleeps.

The meeting adjourns.