July 30th 2021 Faculty council meeting

In attendance: Tamar Avnet, Abraham Ravid, Sharon Verity, Edward Zelinsky, Jonathan Dauber, Anna-Lisa Cohen, Gabriel Cwilch, Susan Mason, Charles Swencionis

Decision to vote on last meeting’s minutes will be deferred to the next meeting.

**Open meeting**

Two commentator’s journalists attended.

Report of the Provost:

Pandemic situation:

1. Vaccine is required from students in undergrad and graduate programs.
2. Strongly recommend faculty and staff to be vaccinated. faculty can apply for exemptions due to medical reasons. That person will have to wear a face mask and test weekly.
3. Undergrad will be F2F. A few faculty members, for reasons of health will teach remotely. The graduate students will follow the recommendations of the deans. Many will be remote, but students want opportunity to be together and socialize.

Social interactions among students: We are in an unusual situation – 2 cohorts on campus – brand new students from high school and Israel and those who are not new but were remote so first year on campus. Need to pay attention to both cohorts. The college experience is vitally important to social and behavioral health.

1. Deans will have the names of those who are not vaccinated. But you cannot ask others about it.
2. Professors can ask students to wear a mask.
3. Awaiting regulation and instruction from NYC and the State.

Salaries:

President letter – raise pool for faculty and staff, there will be further instructions from Julie Auster from HR. Hence the distribution has not been communicated yet. Deans and directors will be given pool of money and will be able to distribute the pool as they think is appropriate, up to 2% of salary.

Strategic planning:

Many people are currently engaged in a strategic planning process, deans, chairs of committees, have all been thinking what it means to be the flagship Jewish University and how we will articulate this in a 3-5 years process. Position us for the future. What do we want people to know about us that is different than what they know now.

Faculty council reps will be brought to this process too. YU is in the stage of collecting information. It is also important because next year, the r ten years middle state accreditation process is starting. It is a Herculean task; every school and college will be involved. 7 different standards the MS requires to be involved in.

In the upcoming Fall YU is thinking how to begin this process now to be ready for self-evaluations and answer the questions that Middle State asks.

There will be a Dedicated room on campus, Middle State external reviewers room, piles of papers they will go through. Reviewers from other universities will look at what we do. It is a serious process.

Middle States is interested in outcomes, how are we doing. The provost stated that we are doing very well, getting to a balanced budget, students outcome and employment are good, and YU is creating new programs that students want and the market needs.

Questions:

Avri – we have thanked and communicated with the president. This has been a year with high inflation (5%) and raises are welcome. How do you view our role in the strategic process?

Selma: different deans and directors have engaged in it. There will be an external strategic planning expert to help us craft the final document. Members of the council should meet with him so he can get faculty perspective on things. Also working with Deans and directors on material that they are crafting. No one wants a top down process. We will engage the council as the work is coming together.

Avri – Should we be waiting to hear about our involvement?

Selma: yes. Coincidently I have a meeting with the Deans and will reinforce faculty involvement.

Avri – opening – NYC is an area where CDC recommends masks indoors to everyone.

Selma – nothing about higher education. Waiting to hear. Members of our community at YU are in touch with the city and the state and when we get a directive we will put this out. She anticipates it.

Avri – We had good experience using OWL for seminars in the summer. Can we use them in classes?

Selma – there is a supply chain problem due to chip deficiency. Jim Vasquez left and went to the CT system. Suzette is now an interim head of IT. She knows the IT operation.

Tamar: How was the increase calculated?

Selma: Based on the balanced budget. It affects MOODY’s rating. We don’t take money away from any employees, new programs are self sustaining but there is no prioritization between compensation and programs.

Tamar: Are salaries are part of the strategic programs?

Avri – helpful for the accreditation process too.

Tamar – asking about administrative raises.

Selma – competitive raises. Based on market. Based on offer from other institutions, some taken multiple jobs given the pandemic and given our staff have shrunk maybe whole new jobs. Doing multiple positions.

Anna lisa- classrooms compatibility with the pandemic?

Selma – students will not be remote, have to be F2F. if faculty due to health reasons or other reasons may need to be remote – registrar will assign those faculty tech classrooms first. Deans talk to registrar. No discussion about social distancing.

Council meetings in the near future:

A discussion of whether council meetings should continue on zoom? Susan – are you suggesting staying virtually for next 6 months?

Council agreed staying in zoom for now.

**Set a date with a new faculty council – 10/8.**

Joshua – was there an invitation for the observer to attend? Commentator asked to join.

Avri- Tamar- we responded to a request and will welcome

**Executive session**

**Topics:**

1. Setting up a Review committee for a Katz faculty member who was denied renewal.
2. Canceling programs without notifying the council
3. Strategic committee recommended to consider faculty compensation, medical benefits, and Retirement matching

Decision – write a letter to the president discussing benefits and matching retirement funds.

Reaching out to Julie Auster to understand next year benefits.

Meeting adjourned at 120.