

THE COOPER UNION
MEETING OF THE FACULTY-STUDENT SENATE

MINUTES

Tuesday, November 24, 2015
12:00-1:50pm
Room 101, 41 Cooper Square

Present:

Faculty and Library Representatives: Diana Agrest, Julie Castelluzzo, Mike Essl (Chair), Day Gleeson, Atina Grossmann (Vice Chair), James Lowder, Stan Mintchev (Secretary), Sohnya Sayres.

Student Representatives: Monica Abdallah, Emily Eberhart, Romaniya Voloshchuk, Sam Koopman, Owen Law, Kate Moger.

Ex-Officio Members: Dean Saskia Bos, Dean William Germano, Acting Library Director Carol Salomon, Acting Dean Richard Stock.

The meeting was called to order at 12:06pm.

MINUTES

Minutes from the meeting held on October 1, 2015 were presented for reading and discussion.

Revisions were solicited. Minor corrections were proposed.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of October 1, 2015 as amended.

Motion passed. (14 in favor, 0 opposed)

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH UPDATE

The Chair informed the membership that the FSS Executive Committee had met with the consultants for the Presidential Search. The Committee had inquired about the apparent rush to hire the next President of The Cooper Union; in response, the consultants had noted a strong desire on the part of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to move forward in the spirit of the Consent Decree and commence the search for the next leader of the institution.

A member of the Senate noted that no member of the Faculty of Architecture had been included in the Presidential Search Committee (PSC). It was noted that the composition of the PSC was determined prior to the Consent Decree, and so was not subject to its language. The procedure for determining the composition of the PSC was formulated by the BoT, and required members of the various constituencies to self-nominate. The membership remarked that this was problematic.

It was further explained that the faculty members of the PSC are not in the category of observers, but rather enjoy full membership – including voting privileges.

The following motions was proposed and seconded:

Motion: “The Faculty-Student Senate moves that the Board of Trustees review their procedures for forming the presidential search committee and select a faculty member from the School of Architecture with the same status as the three other faculty members so named.”

Motion passed. (11 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions)

Motion: “We request that the presidential search process be delayed in order to assure that candidates are not selected before the Board of Trustees is fully restructured in accordance with the Consent Decree.”

Motion passed. (13 in favor, 0 opposed)

UPDATE ON ADMINISTRATION PLANS IN RELATION TO CONSENT DECREE

It was noted that the BoT had already undertaken the restructuring required by the Consent Decree, and that the Administration was proceeding – cautiously – but with the expectation that the agreement would be approved by the Court. The Chair noted that lawyers for the Committee to Save Cooper Union had indicated that the Court is likely to issue its decision during the first week of December 2015.

TITLE IX / MANDATORY REPORTING

The membership was informed that Mitchell Lipton (Title IX Officer of the Cooper Union) would be arranging training and information sessions for members of the four Faculties.

A member expressed concern regarding the “Mandatory Reporting” clause, and the apparent lack of clarity as to the proper definition of this term. Specifically, members noted that this sort of legal requirement could have the negative effect of discouraging students from seeking out faculty that they may otherwise trust. It was remarked that the law requires this reporting protocol from all persons deemed to be “Responsible Employees” [of the School].

A member noted that the CUFCT contract is at odds with the definition of “responsible employee,” effectively stipulating that no member of the full-time faculty bargaining unit can be classified in this manner.

These remarks accentuated the necessity for in-depth discussion of Title IX issues in various forums/venues, and it was noted that the aforementioned training sessions would be a positive step toward clarifying the new federal regulations.

GENDER-NEUTRAL BATHROOMS

The Senate entered a brief discussion of the recent developments concerning the introduction of gender-neutral bathrooms, as well as various proposals for removing gender classifications from all bathroom spaces on campus.

It was noted that while this issue is not directly under the purview of the Senate's responsibilities toward academic affairs, it would be beneficial to have discussions within this forum, particularly since it is a rare institutional venue bringing together faculty, students, and administration. (However, it was noted that the Staff at Cooper Union have no representation on FSS, and so the latter is not complete with respect to all constituencies.)

--- (see NEW BUSINESS below) ---

CONCERN FROM CUOP

The membership was reintroduced to the Letter of Concern forwarded from the Executive Committee of the Cooper Union Organization of Part-time Faculty (CUOP). The membership concurred that it would be prudent to invite CUOP leadership to the next regular Senate meeting for a discussion of their concerns as well as strategies for moving forward.

The following motion was proposed and seconded:

Motion: "The Senate shall invite the Executive Committee of CUOP and the President of the CUFCT in order to discuss the concerns raised by CUOP leadership."

Motion passed. (13 in favor, 0 opposed)

OLD BUSINESS

No items were brought to the floor.

NEW BUSINESS

(Discussion moved from GENDER-NEUTRAL BATHROOMS)

A member of the Senate expressed concern that the Cooper Union has not done enough to address the need for a common/communal space where all members of the community would be welcome to come together and exchange knowledge and ideas. It was noted that such a space was promised by the Administration in 2013, as a part of the negotiations that ended the student occupation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:52pm