

Minutes of the Emory Faculty Council
18 January 2005
400 Administration Building

In attendance: Allison Adams, Joann Dalton, Dwight Duffus, Tom Frank, Maggie Gilead, Carol Hogue, David Holtgrave, James Hughes, Harriet King, Earl Lewis, Richard Metters, Judy Raggi Moore, James Morey, Michael Rogers, Judith Rohrer, John Snarey, David Stephens, Sharon Strocchia, Mike Terrazas, Jim Wagner, Richard Ward, Nanette Wenger.

Excused: Connie Kertz, David Pacini, Robin Mills Schreiber.

Absent: Raymond Dingledine, Richard Doner, Arri Eisen, Richard Freer, William Kelly, Michael Mandl, Albert Padwa, Tom Pearson, Daniel Teodorescu.

1. Call to order and welcome

Faculty Council Chair Sharon Strocchia called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m. and welcomed members back from the holiday break.

2. Approval of Nov. 2004 minutes [minutes distributed in advance]

The minutes were approved as distributed.

3. Update on DFL 2006: Mike Rogers

Chair-Elect Michael Rogers stated that the DFL Committee has received approximately 20 nominations for the 2006 DFL from across the university. The committee is working through these applications and will be meeting with President Wagner to discuss them.

Chair Strocchia reminded members of the upcoming Distinguished Faculty Lecture 2005 on February 7, to be delivered by Prof. Frank Alexander.

4. Update on strategic planning process: Provost Earl Lewis [document distributed at meeting]

Provost Lewis updated the Faculty Council on the university-wide strategic planning process, which is currently in Phase II, "University-Wide Initiatives." Prior to this phase, individual schools/colleges turned in strategic plans to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which then provided critical feedback to each school based on the plans put forward. The schools should now be going "back to the drawing board," said Provost Lewis, "re-working their individual plans based on the steering committee's feedback as well as their own internal assessments." At the end of May, a final university-wide strategic plan (that incorporates and builds from individual school/unit plans) will be presented to the board of trustees.

Provost Lewis emphasized that when complete, the strategic plan will still be "a living document: we will reexamine it each year as we set goals and objectives, and we will change things if they need to be changed."

The immediate task facing the university in the larger strategic planning process is narrowing down Emory's "signature themes," the Provost said. Currently there are ten proposed cross-cutting initiatives under consideration, which emerged from the school/unit plans. Over the next few months, groups consisting of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and various other constituencies will convene to further develop each theme. Their results will be conveyed to the Steering Committee, which will narrow the signature themes to 3-5 final selections. While a viable argument could be made for keeping each of the ten themes currently on the table, the task of the Steering Committee will be to decide those themes that can help make Emory truly distinctive in the years to come – or make it a university that leads, not simply follows, President Wagner added.

“A lot has to happen in the next few months to make this [process] work,” said Provost Lewis.

Questions and suggestions from Council members followed. Among other suggestions, Prof. Nanette Wenger encouraged the Provost to avoid falling into the trap of having “a very few schools” take on “the bulk of the leadership” on Emory’s signature themes. Other faculty raised concern about entrenched division / isolation among schools. Can university-wide “signature themes” really bridge cultural and structural gaps across the various divisions and departments? President Wagner responded to this question by offering a visual model of Emory as a series of silos that grow taller and stronger precisely because they have “bridges and buttresses” constructed between and among them. “Have you ever heard of a really great medical school that wasn’t attached to a really great university?” he asked. “The point is that we’re in this together,” added Past-Chair John Snarey.

Prof. Richard Metters asked the Provost if hiring and promotion/evaluation will become conditional or somehow dependent on faculty’s participation (or lack thereof) in the signature themes. Provost Lewis said that while such participation would be taken into account, he did not have a pre-set plan for measuring progress. “That would be premature to where we are in the process,” he said.

The Provost concluded his remarks by noting an upcoming “Futurist Forum” on 8 April, which will bring experts from various fields to Emory to discuss with faculty and administrators where the cutting-edge research and work lies in the coming years in their disciplines.

5. Discussion of university-wide teaching center: Jim Morey [documents distributed at meeting]

Prof. Jim Morey provided an update on the University Advisory Council on Teaching’s (UACT) exploration of the potential benefits (and drawbacks) of a university-wide teaching center at Emory. While UACT has acted as a support for teachers across the university, its mission has been to serve as the “oversight committee” for the planning of a larger center that will serve the entire university as a practical and academic resource for teaching and learning.

“The UACT staff has been working very hard,” said Dr. Morey. “They have visited other teaching centers to learn best practices.” Among other UACT events, this year the council has been sponsoring lunches “to gauge faculty responses to the idea of a university-wide teaching center.”

Dr. Morey invited the Faculty Council’s input on the same idea. “Should we have a university-wide center, and if so, what would it look like?” he asked.

Questions and discussion followed. Because of time constraints, a full discussion was postponed until the February 2005 Faculty Council meeting. Chair Strocchia requested that members review the materials distributed by Dr. Morey in preparation for the next meeting.

6. Remarks from President Wagner

After noting that his office is offering twelve different times/opportunities to meet with Emory constituents across the university to discuss the strategic plan, President Wagner told Faculty Council members what these various discussions will include. “I’m not going to talk a lot about content [of the strategic plan] in these meetings,” he began. “I’m going to try to convey two things: 1) The plan is real. 2) We need a constructive vocabulary for discussing the strategic plan.”

President Wagner went on to explain these two points in more detail:

1) The Plan is Real.

- a. Opportunistic versus strategic modes of being in the world. The strategic plan is not an opportunistic “add-on” to business as usual. It is a deliberate process of reflection on how to grow and improve ourselves. When we proceed strategically, the plan will need to “burrow in” to our habits and culture.

- b. We need a concrete plan of funding. Emory especially needs some “seed money” to help the strategic plan get off the ground while the capital campaign is still getting underway. Three possibilities have presented themselves: 1) Endowment revenue 2) Income from Emory’s intellectual property rights, which has increased markedly. 3) Floating revenue.
- c. We need measures for accountability. While not all things can be measured in numbers, various “indicators” do exist that can show us whether or not we as a university are getting somewhere with our strategic plan. We need to take these measures seriously.

2) Need for a constructive vocabulary

The level of dialogue (concerning the strategic plan) cannot be *only* negative or deconstructive. It must be *constructive* as well. If someone wants to criticize something, they should also take the creative time to offer a replacement or alternative. For Emory to become a true leader, we must all take the time to think constructively – to look for the gaps in research/contributions that are not currently being well met.

President Wagner closed by noting that the reason for the strategic plan is, at bottom, rather simple: Many schools conduct high-profile capital campaigns and raise a great deal of money, but in the process neglect to develop a distinctive vision for how they can contribute or make a difference. “We don’t want to end our capital campaign no different than we are now,” he said. “We want to emerge from all this with a distinctive identity, with a movement forward.” But Emory will not achieve this goal if faculty and administrators continue to remain estranged. President Wagner invited Faculty Council members to converse with him about how best “to understand differences *and* commonalities” between faculty and administrative cultures at Emory.

7. New business

There was no new business.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacia M. Brown
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