

Report to the Faculty Senate on the Academic Committee Meetings of the Board of Trustees, Fall 2015-spring 2016

The Board of Trustees met on campus three times. The faculty representatives on the Academic Committee, Simone Caron and myself, met with Provost Kersh a few days before each meeting, during which he previewed the content of the meetings and encouraged us to ask questions at the meetings and to converse freely with Board members. The Academic Committee was very welcoming and friendly to us; the members expressed gratitude that we had given up our time to join them.

There are 15 regular members of the Academic Committee, a student trustee, an additional six Board members are Life Trustees who may or may not attend the meetings. Provost Kersh is the Senior Administrator on the Committee (and there are the two faculty reps). The Board Chairwoman sat in on all the Academic Committee meetings this year. Many members of this committee are alumni/ae (including a considerable number of women); some live in North Carolina, but many do not. All the faculty representatives were invited to one evening event during each of the Board's sessions.

Summary of the Topics

- **Meeting One** (October) concentrated on two important initiatives:
 - Update on the Innovation Quarter's Biomedical Sciences/Engineering Programs (led by Prof. Rebecca Alexander)
 - "The Engaged Humanities" (led by incoming Dean of the College Gillespie).

- **Meeting 2** (January) focused primarily on a new Master of Science Program in Business Analytics (presented by Dean of the Business School Iacovou and Prof. Camm)
 - Other business: Overview and update on Financial Aid (Bill Wells, Director of Financial Aid) – Challenges and Opportunities

- **Meeting 3** (April) was focused primarily on the Academic Outlook of the Law School (led by Law School Dean Reynolds)
 - Other business: Approval of the Biomedical Sciences/Engineering Programs in coordination with the Chemistry and Microbiology Departments (to be housed at Innovation Quarter)
 - Update on Undergraduate Admission (Dean of Admissions Martha Allman)

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Sigal

Professor of English
President Emerita of the Faculty Senate

Detailed Description of Each Meeting

The first Board meeting was in October 2015. The new chairperson of the Academic Committee, Ms. Libba Evans, started off the meeting by asking for approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. Provost Kersh then gave an update on the Innovation Quarter and introduced Professor Rebecca Alexander, who then proceeded to present the proposed engineering program to be housed in the Innovation Quarter. The report entailed a concise but comprehensive overview of the ongoing plans. I believe the presentation she gave contained the same information that faculty have also been given. There were questions from the Board primarily about financing and general costs, and about whether – and how many -- new faculty hires would be needed. There were also queries about the number of students the Quarter is looking forward to enrolling, and how Wake Forest will accommodate the new students for this program. The members of the committee seemed quite satisfied and enthusiastic about the plans presented.

The next presentation was given by the incoming Dean of the College, Michele Gillespie, who spoke impressively about “The Engaged Liberal Arts,” noting the importance of the liberal arts to the centrality of the College’s mission.

The evening event to which the faculty reps were invited comprised tickets to the Friday evening football game and a “tail-gate” event under a tent before the game. The members of the Academic Committee were again very welcoming and friendly. The reps were given tickets to watch the game from a large box. The members of the Board who were at the game had seats elsewhere.

The second Board meeting occurred in January 2016. The Academic Committee met on Jan. 28th. The meeting focused primarily on introducing a

new Master of Science Program in Business Analytics at the Business School. We therefore convened in the 3rd floor Farrell Hall Colloquium in Farrell Hall. A detailed fifteen page report was distributed, followed by a presentation about this new 10-month long program by Dean Iacovou and Professor Camm, both of the Business School. The Masters Program is designed to be an intensive, full-time program, spanning summer to the following spring. The first class is slated to have 25-30 students. It is hoped that the program will ultimately build to 180 students.

Primarily directed toward students with statistics backgrounds, the program will especially target math majors, business minors and computer science students. To develop this program, the Business School will inaugurate a Center for Retail Innovation, which will emphasize 1) student competition, 2) faculty/student engagement, 3) innovative research, and 4) data visualization (how to communicate and understand charts and graphs). The Business School has generated industry partnerships so that industry leaders will participate on the Board of Advisors, contribute to classroom work, and offer data on and access to market-place research.

A lively discussion ensued, with many questions from members of the committee. The answers the Board received impressed the members and found the program exciting and innovative. A vote was taken to approve this program.

After the presentation, Provost Kersh delivered a report on the first-year class (class of 2019), noting that we had a high increase in applications over the previous year (19.6%), totaling over 13,200. This resulted in an “acceptance

rate” of 29%; we accepted 1320 freshmen and transfers for our freshman class. The report highlighted other statistics and metrics, noting for example, that we are drawing from a wide range of places across the US and internationally (from 42 states and Puerto Rico, and from 20 countries). North Carolinian students fell to 19.4% of the entering class. The report concludes that “undergraduate admissions at Wake Forest is thriving – and at a time when our peer schools are seeing at most modest increases in applications.”

Another report followed by Bill Wells and concerned the challenges and opportunities regarding financial aid. Director Wells gave an update of recent issues and outlined various kinds of aid and grants we award. He presented a statistical analysis of where Wake Forest stands as compared to peer schools and noted some of the potential problems that lie ahead. Among other statistics, Director Wells reported that 53% of our students receive some form of aid and commented on the good news that no private bank loans to students were distributed this year.

The Academic Committee was invited to a dinner-reception at the Winston-Salem home of John Dingledine, a member of the Academic Committee.

As the third Academic Committee meeting (April 14) was focused primarily on new initiatives at the Law School, the committee met in Worrell Hall. A presentation on the challenges at the Law School and proposed new activities directed at addressing these challenges was given by Dean Suzanne Reynolds. The dean reported that Wake Forest has been newly selected as one

of four locations in North Carolina for a North Carolina Business Court. In fact, the room the committee was meeting in will be redesigned as a court room where hearings will be conducted.

To address recent developments in the practice of law that has led to a decline in applications, Dean Reynolds outlined a number of new “niche” programs being developed, including one on business law. For the working professional, a Masters in Studies in Law has been designed as a part-time online program. New courses include an introduction to equity law and one on essential business concepts; other ones are on “real world” corporate lawyering, privacy law, and more. In addition to new courses at the Law School, the Dean outlined ideas for locating some efforts at Innovation Quarter: a Patent Law firm may be in the works, as well as a law clinic for students; in collaboration with School of the Arts, there may be a track on Performing Arts and Entrepreneurship. Dean Reynolds noted that flexibility in the specific tracks to be offered is necessary in order to be up to date with changes in the practice of the law. The list above is only a partial example of the variety of offerings Dean Reynolds described.

Provost Kersh followed Dean Reynolds’ report by an update on Innovation Quarter itself. The Board was presented with a resolution to establish the Department of Engineering as a new program in the Chemistry and Microbiology Departments (not a school). There will be a biomedical concentration and minor) and a biomaterials engineering track.

The final presentation was an update first bout admissions to each of the Reynolda Campus schools. This was followed by a summary of the latest statistics for the incoming undergraduate class by Dean of Admissions, Martha Allman. There were 3,903 acceptances; next year's class is slated to have 1,310 students. Dean Allman noted a 20% increase in applications (over 14,000), which led to the lowest rate of admissions the university has had. 80% of the incoming class is from out of state; 9% are first generation college students. The percentage of our North Carolinian students has fallen to 13%. The increase in international students rests heavily on those from China; alumni children are up 14%. It was noted that minority applications were also up.

The committee then went into executive session for the review and approval of tenure and promotion cases; the faculty reps were excused. A reception and dinner was held in the evening at the Old Town Country Club.

In sum, the opportunity for faculty to see how the university operates at its highest level is instructive as well as fascinating. At both the level of our own administration, particularly Provost Kersh and Dean Gillespie, and at the level of the members of the Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees, the atmosphere could not have been more open and inviting. While our views were not specifically sought during the meetings, we were free to reflect faculty views at the meeting as well as in conversation at social events with various members of the Board. Both Simone and I took the opportunity, warmly encouraged by Provost Kersh, to seek out and discuss issues with members of the Board. The Chairwoman of the Board was particularly welcoming and Simone and I had

numerous chances to talk with her. I hope, as I am sure Simone does, that the faculty will continue to have this vital representational role in university affairs. It has been an honor to serve the Faculty Senate in this capacity.