

7-6-2011

## Minutes, Arts and Sciences Executive Committee Meeting, Wednesday, July 6, 2011

Arts and Sciences Executive Committee

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**Executive Committee**  
**July 6, 2011**

Members Present: Dexter Boniface; Joe Siry; Gloria Cook; Jill Jones; Joan D. Davison; Jennifer Queen; Debra Wellman; Carol M. Bresnahan

I. Call to order—the meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM.

II. New Business – Informal discussion of faculty governance and bylaws with Provost Carol Bresnahan.

Jill Jones opens the discussion by noting that the process of amending the college bylaws is critical and asks Carol Bresnahan what her role will be in this process. Carol confirms that she will chair the committee that will revise the all-college bylaws. She suggests that it would be useful to discuss the more general issues of faculty governance first before discussing the bylaws. Jill summarizes what happened at the last faculty meeting of the year when President Duncan addressed the faculty and announced the new college and VP position. She notes that the A&S faculty felt that there was a lack of consultation for these major changes. She adds that the school itself was an additional concern for many faculty. Joe Siry notes that the current EC was elected but not operative at this point. Jill continues that the faculty are nearly unanimous in being upset about the entire process. Carol states that she had read the bylaws and indicates that revising the bylaws may be better than re-writing them and that they may not need substantial changes. She states that there should be an automatic process where bylaws are periodically revised. Jenny Queen notes that PSC has the purview of revising the A&S bylaws. Joan Davison and Gloria Cook concur and note that the bylaws were revised multiple times within the past several years. Joan adds that any faculty member can propose revisions to the bylaws. Jill notes that as a result of recent administrative decisions, many faculty are suspicious and paranoid. Joan agrees noting that many past rumors have turned out to be true and thus faculty remain concerned about any new rumors they hear, including rumors about abolishing tenure. Carol states that any rumors about ending tenure are false and that she would not have come here if that were the case. Joan notes that there is an incredible fear among the faculty. Dexter Boniface summarizes the concerns of the faculty as being related to both process and structural changes. With respect to process, he notes that many faculty dispute President Duncan's conception and practice of "shared governance." With respect to structural changes, he notes that many faculty are concerned about how recent changes will impact A&S and the institution as a whole. He characterizes the current faculty climate as one of crisis. Jill continues by expressing the faculty's concern that the President does not effectively listen to their concerns and that

this has created alienation and distrust among the faculty. She adds that there is also a lack of communication. Carol explains that the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority with respect to the bylaws but delegates crucial responsibilities to the faculty and that the Board has little interest in micro-managing faculty governance. She reaffirms “there is no way on this green earth that tenure is going away” at Rollins. Gloria notes that she is worried about junior faculty and that they need to be reassured during this process of change. Carol asks what kinds of fora would work best for communicating with the faculty and for dispelling rumors. Joe notes that an additional concern exists as to whether or not faculty can be a part of both or only one school. Gloria adds that there are also concerns about proposals for a new divisional structure at the college. She notes that with so many things changing and so many questioned left unanswered, this distracts faculty from their work. Joan adds that an additional concern is whether particular programs will be eliminated. Jill asks whether or not there will be an all-college Executive Committee. Joan notes that it is also unclear how the emerging all-college structure will incorporate the three schools and what their representation will be. Jenny notes that the timing of the recent changes, coming at the very end of the year, was inappropriate and the timeframe for implementation is abrupt. She notes that we are now in July and that the opportunity for faculty to work over the summer on revising the bylaws is rapidly dwindling. Joan adds that the lack of deliberative discussion for a change of this magnitude is not the norm at Rollins and that A&S faculty are going to have a hard time buying into any changes that do not serve A&S interests. Jill discusses the Board of Trustees education meeting that she and Rick Foglesong attended as an example of current A&S frustrations. She notes that the A&S faculty as a whole were very poorly represented at this meeting compared to individuals with an expressed interest in the new school. She notes that it will be a challenge for the administration to regain the trust of the faculty. Carol asks if the faculty are more upset about the process or the changes themselves. Jenny responds that faculty opinion is unanimously unfavorable with respect to the process but mixed with respect to the changes themselves. Joe recalls how the debate first emerged within AAC. Gloria replies that the decisions taken by AAC were, in her experience on the committee, legitimate and reasonable and that the committee took pains to find a compromise to guarantee INB accreditation. However, nobody from INB showed up their last meeting. Joan notes that many faculty do not agree with the administration’s version of events. She notes that even within INB the decision to create a new school was narrowly approved and that the full ramifications of such a decision were not necessarily well understood at the time. She notes that many faculty were willing to discuss changes to help Rollins achieve financial sustainability, including creating career-oriented programs at the masters level, but that the more recent changes were enacted with minimal consultation and forethought. She adds that a case could be made for locating the INB department within Crummer. Carol responds that she does not believe it would be productive to combine undergraduate and graduate programs

at Rollins. Gloria notes that in addition to any philosophical debates, there is a real concern about the practical consequences of recent changes and whether or not they have been well thought out. For example, what will happen to the existing faculty governance committees and how will all-college committees be structured? Joan concurs noting that the process appears to be anything but seamless. For example, what about student government? Will each college have its own student government? Also, how will AAC and general education courses function? Jill notes that the current AAC review process is rigorous and thorough and that faculty are concerned that these standards be maintained. She continues that the faculty do not feel respected and trusted by the president. Rather the faculty feel that “anything can happen” under the current president and this is frightening. Carol replies that these issues “can be solved.” Furthermore, although she was not a part of the decision-making process, she believes that the new structure is probably a sensible step for the future of the college. She notes that there is a single mission statement for the college that defines Rollins as a whole and this is the liberal learning core. Deb Wellman notes that the general education requirements are intended to be seamless. Jenny asks Carol if she can provide insight into how other schools that have multiple and professional schools function? Carol replies that the College of New Jersey does this very well. Each school, she notes, follows the same liberal learning core and first year service learning experience. Although the College of New Jersey is “not a model for Rollins,” we can learn from their experience. Joan states that President Duncan perceives A&S governance as ineffective and inefficient; of course, to an extent there is inefficiency but the incremental process of decision-making is a way to build consensus for major policies. Jenny adds that there is fear among the faculty and a perception that the administration favors faculty deemed to be more cooperative. Carol replies that while faculty and administrators have different roles, we should not forget our shared values and mission. Jill suggests that this is what is presently lacking and that she hopes we can get back to that point. Deb points out that more effective communication is needed between administrators and faculty. Joan states that the problem is not entirely one of communication. The faculty communicated their views; for example, their objections to the creation and staffing of the new VP office. However faculty viewpoints are frequently ignored or misrepresented. Joe notes that the faculty retreat is another forum for communication and that we should perhaps seek the participation of Board members. Joan adds that Carol should also consider having conversations with different faculty cohorts such as endowed chairs or untenured faculty etc. Carol agrees that this is a good idea. She asks what message we would like her to take back to the president. Gloria responds that we would like to know what administrative structure will be in place and what the president envisions for the all-faculty committee structures. Carol suggests that the current EC should continue to operate under the assumption that A&S committee structures will not change drastically. Joe notes that there has been a lot of turnover of administrative positions and this has contributed to the current confusion. Dexter states

that the message to the president is that the A&S faculty must have a powerful voice in any discussions about changes at the all-college level and that we are ready to act. Joan notes that department chairs have not officially been re-approved and notes that this is a concern, especially for tenure letters and advising. Joe states that Rollins has always had a financial challenge and that there is an all-college budget and planning committee already in operation. Carol notes that the enrollment issue is not as bleak this year as last. Jill notes that it is important that the bylaw committee be broadly representative of faculty not simply those the administration views as cooperative. Carol notes that an important consideration for the committee is its diversity and true representation of the faculty. Jill queries whether it is realistic to amend the various bylaws on the timetable the President has proposed. Gloria asks for clarification about how to move forward. Joan notes that if there are to be new all-college committees, there will need to be new elections. She wonders how the shift toward an all-college governance structure will impact staff and student constituencies. Deb suggests that we could maintain the same type of structure we have in A&S at the all-college level. Jenny queries how Crummer would fit into this? Joan suggests that under a new structure, we would have to think carefully about whether old A&S structures still make sense at the all-college level. Jill suggests that we could begin the revision process with common-sense changes just to fit in CPS. Dexter agrees to forward a copy of the new CPS bylaws to all committee members. Carol affirms that the faculty, not administrators, should be the ones revising the bylaws. Jill repeats that we do not want a bylaw committee hand-picked by the administration and that it is important to have critical voices on the committee. Joan notes that it will be a challenge to achieve consensus to pass any changes to the bylaws. Jill adds that the committee must enjoy the trust of the faculty. Joan queries what the selection process should be and how many people will be involved. She states that 15-20 people are too many to be productive. Deb suggests that committees of 5-7 people, like EC, tend to be the most effective. Carol states that she looks forward to working with us.

III. Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm