Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

Regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate of Rochester Institute of Technology

Thursday, March 30, 2023

12:15 - 1:50 PM

1720/30 Global Cybersecurity Institute

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; A. Newman (12:16)

Meeting called to order.

Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; A. Newman (12:16)

Motion (A. Newman): Seconded (H. Ghazle)

- A. Newman: The DEIC presentation has been removed from the announced agenda. I move the modified agenda be approved.
 - Seconded: H. Ghazal
 - Approved by acclamation.

Agenda Item No. 3: Communication Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; S. Aldersley (12:17)

- S. Aldersley: The minutes of the 3/23 meeting went out on Tuesday, I received no suggestions for edits, and so I move that they be approved as written.
 - o Seconded: H. Ghazal
 - Approved by acclamation.

March 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; A. Newman (12:18)

- A. Newman: RIT's \$1 billion fundraising goal has been met. Very big congratulations to everyone Involved.
- Yesterday I gave a report at University Council on the global summit that Senate co-organized with Jim Meyers' office. We managed to learn a lot about what we do very well and what we could do better. In particular, I learned how complicated we've made our governance system. The summit required us to present on how we govern on the main campus and we learned about how other groups and other campuses are managing their information. So I have been thinking about how we might want to do better. The first order of the day is really to redefine how the global education committee works, what their actual duties are, and how we may want to help them, but besides that is the idea of how we can make sure to protect our faculty time, while accomplishing all of the things that we need to get done. It's not something that we're going to discuss right here in this report, but it is something that I wanted you to know about. A really good thing that came out of the summit, though, is that we have three global campuses that will be present at Imagine RIT on April 29. If you're attending, please look out for them.

Agenda Item No. 5: Staff Council Update; J. Prescott (12:21)

• No updates since last week.

Agenda Item No. 6: Student Government Update; L. Dibble (12:21)

Yes. So we actually haven't had much recently because it's been election season which for student
government takes over a couple of weeks. So this past weekend, we actually had Town hall which is when
the presidential candidates as well as the RSO share their platform and get asked questions. Voting just
ended and that's been our week.

Agenda Item No. 7: FSEC Nominations; C. Hull (12:22)

• So for my sins, I am in charge of nominations for next year's executive committee. Atia, Hamad, Stephen and Sam have all been nominated to run again. Liz is stepping down from Senate. Sam is planning to run for vice chair, not treasurer. We do not currently have anybody running to be treasurer. It's a role that is a good first position to have on executive committee. It's a pretty straightforward process. We spend money like we did last year, etc. You don't need a degree in finance. You get a chance to be part of the executive committee and help shape the agenda, etc. If somebody here is interested and would like to nominate yourself, please do. If you'd like to nominate your friend, please make sure your friend is actually going to be on Senate next year. On the other hand, if you want to nominate somebody you can just let me know and I will ask them. If you do that, please don't nominate someone against their. I will say that I thought it was a great experience being on executive committee. Does anybody want to nominate themselves on the floor right now? If not, please send nominations to me and we'll take it from there. Thank you.

Agenda Item No. 8: Changes to the RIT Academic Calendar; C. Hull (12:25)

- Okay, so you saw the calendar last time. We got feedback from the governance groups, and the feedback varied. The faculty were split on the options you remember, what are we going to do about Labor Day? The majority of feedback that I got, though not a super majority, was 'let's have Labor Day off.' The other governance groups were pretty close to unanimous: 'let's take the Labor Day off option.' So from my point of view, Labor Day Off is now the only version of what you saw before that is still on the table.
- We had the idea of being able to move spring break to make it more likely that spring break lands on local school holiday. For various reasons, including that high school students come to campus during their break to see what campus looks like. And if they come to campus in a week when nobody is here, they're going to think that RIT has no students. There's a lot of opposition to that one. SG was fairly opposed to some of the major changes that we were talking about with the longer breaks and so forth. We've discussed them and they are now more willing to support, depending on how things go. So you have heard about the calendar committee survey, please, please, please ask your constituents to complete it. And also make sure that everybody you're asking understands what we talked about before, that it's a matter of academic freedom. If you want to have a final project, etc., you do not need to use that time slot. My impression based on conversations I've had with my colleagues is that particularly people who don't have tenure are unwilling to admit that they do these other things, but that more of them do so then admit to it publicly. This is not a survey where the results are going to any department chairs or deans. It's going to be used in the aggregate to be able to see what's going on at RIT. There is language in the invitation that says, you are allowed to do these other things, all of these things are considered valid approaches. But some of us have been told many, many times that these other approaches are not valid. So please reinforce the message. This is because we had a few people here expressing concern about a five day exam period for the students. The students also expressed some concern about a five day exam period. However, if a lot of faculty are doing this other flexible approach, then the students become much more comfortable with the idea of a five day exam period where various projects may be due at that time. If they support that, then the longer break becomes much more of a possibility than if they oppose it.
- Now Scott talked about a proposal to have more classes, not all classes, but more classes become MW

instead of MWF classes This is very popular with some faculty, rather unpopular with other faculty until we clarify that the faculty who want to keep their classes MWF would get to do so. I think that's pretty solid support from anybody I've talked to. You may not be surprised to hear the students like this plan, too. So the question is: can we do this? Joe Loffredo has agreed to take a look and let us know what it would look like. He has not yet done that because this is not a small undertaking. It's complicated and hard to do. Assuming that it can be done, this might be something in the proposal that goes forward.

- One of the concerns that the students had about eliminating partial weeks is that means also eliminating three-day weekends and they felt a need to have three-day weekends during the semester. But if we do the predominantly MW class thing instead of MWF, enough students would have three-day weekends every weekend and those of us who were here during quarters, you know what I mean. They would be much more comfortable with us getting rid of some of the partial weeks.
- Those being two of the big things that the faculty seem to want when we started this, get rid of partial weeks and have a longer winter break. That's kind of where things stand right now. So again, the biggest thing that could be helpful from senators right now would be to make sure that as many of your constituents as possible fill out that survey and do so with the understanding that it's up to them how they want to structure their final experience even if they've been told otherwise. Any questions?
 - S. Aldersley: Do you know when the survey is going to come out?
 - S. Johnston: So it's rolling out today in batches. They didn't want to do it all at once. So there'll be
 a subgroup who probably already have it. And then there'll be another set that will have it later
 this afternoon. And another set that will have it this evening. I didn't want to just do 1800 all at the
 same time.
 - A. Newman: Are the links the same?
 - S. Johnston: They are individual links because what you're going to do when you see these is, I mentioned before that you get one per class. It's actually one survey now, but you'll answer questions for each class. So you go into the survey, you see class so and so how do you handle your final? You click it and then you go to the next page and says are you planning on changing this? And if you say no, it goes to the next class. If you say yes, when you go to the next page, it asks what you plan on changing it to, and it does that for each class. Not multiple sections, just each class. So if you teach five sections of one class you'll answer it one time.
 - C. Hull: I want to point out that if you had previously been under the impression you're not allowed to do these other things, and now you understand that you can do some of these other things, you should not say no. Unless you're sure you're going to carry on doing what you've already been doing. If you think you would like to try a final project next semester, you should probably consider saying yes. And there is also another box if you want to clarify something like you're still deciding whether I might do this. So as you take the survey, it's not like you have to commit to what your final exam will look like. Go with what seems most likely to you at this time.
 - S. Johnston: Yeah, you're not set in stone when you answer these questions. This is just an informational thing for us to get some data to see if a five-day finals week is possible.
 - L. Dibble: One concern that I have been asked to ask about after last week was brought up in SG. We do co-ops and are concerned about making the winter break longer, because we already tried to maximize the use of our summer to try to make longer co-ops and a little bit of concern that there seems to be other schools where people can utilize their summers a little bit more effectively. And if that would push back our ability to make a co-op.
 - C. Hull: Christopher brought that up on the committee. But I will respond here as well. Assuming that we make this change, the summer of the change would actually be a week longer. So if you're co-oping that summer, you'd have an extra week for co-op. After that summer would be the same length. Christopher seems pretty satisfied with that answer.
 - J. Faber: I can attest I got the survey this morning and it worked fine. For a shortened finals week
 has the DSO been brought in because they're going to be pretty important for operationalizing the
 shorter finals week?
 - C. Hull: Again, this data is going to be relevant to that. I think I mentioned this before. I open a final exam at the moment class closes and I stay there and answer questions and then it goes for a week. It's a four-hour exam. I just say do it whichever four hours makes sense to you. So the DSO accommodation there is is built-in. Depending on how many people are doing that, we'll be looking at the DSO stuff to see if this works. I've also been told that there are some issues with DSO. As it stands, apparently there might be something moving through Deans' Council about addressing these concerns. And I'm not privy to those conversations. But the DSO would be something we would need to make sure works out. We don't quite have enough data to know for sure exactly what kind of a problem we'd be looking at with that. But yes, before a final proposal comes forward, we'll definitely make sure we've got the DSO covered.
 - I. Puchades: So I was here as a student during quarters and that time, you're taking three to four courses per quarter. Now per semester, the students are taking five, six courses. So some of those students are going to be taking an exam every day and sometimes two exams per day. Has that

- been taken into account because as it is now, some students already have two or three exams in one day during the seven days.
- C. Hull: We're looking at this. One of the reasons why that happens now as much as it does, is because everybody gets an exam slot. I get one every semester for a class but I don't use it. And I tell my scheduling officer, I'm not using that you can give it to somebody else. And then from there, I don't know what they do. Maybe there's something in the policy that says if you really don't like your exam schedule, you can ask for another one. But the thing is that, again, based on my informal conversations with people, many people have those slots and don't use them, which means that it becomes difficult to schedule exams in a way that would be best from a student's point of view. So if it turns out that we can find a way that say a random 25% of us don't use those slots and Joe Loffredo finds out who we are and stops giving us slots. Then his job of giving reasonable exam schedule slots to students becomes a lot easier and he can make it happen in a way that's much more accommodating for the student. Regardless of what happens to the calendar, this could make things better for our final exams in general. Depending on how the survey works out, I'm hoping it addresses that issue, and also, hopefully maybe the proposed calendar change becomes more acceptable to the governance groups.
- I. Puchades: Some engineering students have exams when their other classes have a scheduled exam. So the option that you're describing of doing an activity outside of the exam date is not for some of those students.
- C. Hull: I agree, except that I will also say that some Engineering people who I don't think want to be named have told me that they are told that they're required to do it like that, and they might not do so if they weren't required to. So the data may suggest that that's not necessarily a permanent thing. I would say if you want to use that time slot in place, you should absolutely do it. It's a matter of academic freedom. But the flip side also right? If my final project is to make a hammer, and if you can deliver me the hammer, without coming to a specific exam time or a place, we're good. It should depend on the instructor, not the college.
- O I. Puchades: One more frustration. I've been one of the ones told, you have to have the exam in the scheduled time slot. So why is that not valid anymore? And who was misinforming the faculty of that policy? Because that has been a direct direction.
- A. Newman: I think the provost has an answer.
- E. Granberg: A faculty member who is giving an in-class exam can only administer that exam in the timeframe to which the faculty member has been assigned. That is an absolute because otherwise you'll have some students with faculty members choosing to conduct their exams at the same time, that kind of stuff. So I'm not sure what your department chair told you. But that's the part that really is quite rigid. There is also in the policy a stipulation that says that if you are moving to a time outside of the regular exam period, you have to inform your department chair. But there's nothing in the current policy that says that you cannot choose to turn your exam into a special project that does not require administering anything during the assigned time and I've been told that some chairs are saying no, even if you're doing nothing you and your students must sit in the classroom during the assigned exam time. That is not correct. But it is true that if you're giving an in-person exam, you have to do it at your assigned time. Does that help?
- I. Puchades: From what you're saying, I could not have my final exam the last day of classes. Right? That's what's not allowed.
- E. Granberg: That's a good question. You can't give your final exam on reading day. Do we have
 a stipulation in our policy that says you can't give any exams the last few days of classes? Some
 universities do that.
- C. Lutzer: As a point of information, I want to remind the Senate that last year we approved a policy that effectively says that in a coordinated class, a coordinated multi-section class, the faculty as a whole may decide on the assessment procedures. So if I'm teaching a calculus class and the calculus instructors say we are having a final exam, I don't get to choose not to do that. So it's not full freedom at an individual level.
- C. Hull: In my emailing people, I've been saying 'instructors'. I was thinking of that when I said that but it should be the people teaching the class. If it's one person teaching one class that one person. If it's a group of five, however many sections, those five should decide. It shouldn't be someone who's not involved in teaching the class deciding how that class is going to do its final exam work. That is the core principle that I'm trying to speak to here. I would also say that I've seen this policy also with language that says if you don't like the time you have, you should talk to your department chair. 'I'm not using my time slot.' You go to the chair, and say I want a different time slot. The chair can say 'would you like Clyde's slot that he's not going to use?' And then that's an easy way to solve the problem. I think that that's probably what was going into that policy, but I'm just speculating.
- E. Granberg: So the issue with the final exam schedule is that students are taking final exams from multiple departments. And so final exam slots are scheduled across the entire university. So two individual faculty in a department can't agree they're going to swap their final exam times because they have no idea if they're then impinging on students that have classes during that period of time. So the reason why it's rigid is because you've got to coordinate Spanish with Biochemistry

- with Statics and nobody knows what the student's individual schedules are. So it is actually quite rigid in that way.
- C. Hull: So I still don't understand why the chair of your department is the one that reschedules it.
 I feel like maybe that policy should get reviewed some time.
- A. Newman: It sounds like there's a lot of confusion there.
- C. Hull: Yes, that policy is not very clear on multiple points that I think could easily be clarified pretty quickly.
- R. Zanibbi: I was under the same impression. I've been here 17 years. At both the dean and the department level I have been told multiple times 'you have to be in person.' Now firstly, it's because of my pedagogical approach, actually I kind of like that. And so I have this tension that I want to give my colleagues the freedom to be flexible. I also wonder if we really make that an easy default going forward. Given that I think many of us have been told it was not an option, whatever policy said. I worry a little bit about the character of this. And the thing about the five days is it's very very short, I was shocked by how short it is when I arrived here. Again, if I can get more research time, I'm good with that, but not at the expense of my students really being put through the wringer. So I just want to express that I'm torn even though I'm sympathetic to the other responsibilities a faculty member has. I'm also just not sure to what extent we can really just get people out of the classroom for some of the learning objectives we want.
- C. Hull: There's a couple of points in there I'd like to respond to. When I first started teaching, I did a blue book and I used to tell my students that during the final exam, they're going to fill the blue book and everybody's got to fill one blue book, that you're going to have to fit your answer into the one blue book. Then I tried the online format. And I like it better. I can definitely see that next time I teach a new class, I may not go online, depending on what the class is and what works. But it was actually one of these situations Carl was talking about as a group of faculty teaching a core class that all of our students in my college take. We decided to do an online exam so I played along like a good boy and it turned out that 'wow was actually really good. So we're having a fairly quick conversation. Christopher and Scott and I talked about this for a really long time. And, you know, from the student point of view, saying, 'Okay, I could have an exam that opens on the last Wednesday of class, and then I have a week to work on it. I can work on it over the weekend.'
- R. Zanibbi: I've used and done these myself. My concern wasn't that that would be an option. My concern was to what extent everyone can do that. We are a cooperative school. And so some of us are teaching classes that are analysis and good analysis, as you know, is interactive. And so to move that offline, would actually harm some learning objectives.
- C. Hull: For some classes. Yes. And I totally agree that any class where this would be less than
 optimal, do not do it.
- A. Newman: I'm going to let this conversation taper off. We have two more comments.
- o S. Johnston: I just wanted to comment on the exam period. So we do have a six-day exam period right now, but Joe only uses two of the slots on that last Wednesday. So we don't use a full six days of exams. We use five and less than a half. He really only uses that Wednesday for common exams. So if you email him saying all these sections have to have a common exam, he tries to use those for overflow. It's five and like a quarter. And another thing, you must do some sort of activity during finals week. Whether it's an in-person exam, or a project or something of that nature. Certification for our degrees require that we have so many contact hours with students, and those contact hours could be 'do this project, and I'm available to answer questions,' but you must do some sort of activity equivalent to a final exam period during final exam week. It can start before the week, but it must be due during the week.
- C. Hull: So last time I checked for this about half of my students finished my online exam before finals week started and one or two of them finished it the last hour before it was due. And you know, everybody gets graded, according to what they turned in and that's fine. But I have never had a student complain about having this level of flexibility. I've had students take the final exam in India and places like that, and it's not a problem.
- J. Venkataraman: I was going to say exactly what Scott said. That when we did calendar conversion, it started with 15 weeks, then we changed it to 14, which was exactly where it was said that we should have some activity in order to certify that we are doing what is required. The reason why departments have the mandate to do their final exam in exam week is because students are taking multiple classes. Students know they cannot finish projects and exams with any other thing in the other classes. It's all on hold. Then these students are also TAs for other classes, and then they stop their grading and they don't submit things on time to the faculty member. So this one professor who has an exam outside the exam, he disrupts all the other classes. That's why we have a policy that you do your final exam in the 15th week and that's required for certification.
- C. Hull: Absolutely that makes sense. We should not be trying to finish in the 14th week. But what we're talking about here is it would have to be due in finals week. For example, if I finish my class on a Wednesday night, I give them seven days not counting reading day, so it would be due the Thursday. But letting them start in the last week and depending on how far they want to go and how much time they have to work on it over the weekend before finals week, as long as it

- is due in finals week that just gives them the flexibility. But it absolutely must be due during the finals week and not before.
- A. Newman: Thank you so much Clyde. This definitely gives us a lot to think about but please make sure to send this information forward and to encourage your constituents to take the survey as well.
- S. Aldersley: Just going back to last week when the same issue was discussed. Am I wrong in thinking that Chris Licata said that New York State had flexibility here to allow what you're describing?
- C. Hull: Chris Licata confirmed that New York State law allows us to do what we're talking about.
 This is 100% legal. So yes, she confirmed it. And again, this is academic freedom. We're talking at Faculty Senate about academic freedom, let's support academic freedom.
- A. Newman: And now we have an Academic Freedom ad hoc committee. Thank you so much.

Agenda Item No. 9: DEIC Motion regarding terminal degree for non-tenure-track faculty; D. Newman

Removed from agenda and will be rescheduled for a later date.

Agenda Item No. 10: SRATE Task Force; N. Hair (12:53) Presentation linked below

- Good afternoon Senators, for those of you that don't know me, I'm Neil Hair. I run the Center for Teaching & Learning and I was asked to come and update you on the S-Rate report. If you recall, in April 2019, Senate released a detailed research task force report on S-Rate evaluations, which described the culture of teaching effectiveness and made 11 recommendations across two primary areas. The first primary area was to create a comprehensive instructional evaluation system that would include multiple sources of information, including qualitative information. Second, to provide confidence in the numerical data that we're actually putting out. Faculty should utilize and administrators should review data and information from multiple sources to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach. We put together a team representing all of the colleges. There are two co-chairs, Dr. Aquila Williams, and Joe Loffredo. We're seeing this in a three year timeframe. Short term, ending this academic year, medium term, next academic year and longer term, the year after that. So in terms of the short term, what I'd like to do is walk you through each of the 11 recommendations, and what we've accomplished so far. We're looking to finish this work at the end of this semester, though some of these points will probably stretch out into the fall.
- We've profiled what colleges are doing across the university in terms of the availability of midterm tools. Smart Evals was suggested in the report as something we might use. We can certainly look at that. Joe Loffredo has given me permission to say that yes, we can create that as a point for faculty to elect to receive if they wanted to. But there are other things that we can do inside MyCourses as well. So we'll present you the range of options that are available to you when this study wraps up. And to use multiple data sources like classroom observations, we also profile what those observations look like across the colleges. We have a set of recommendations that we will release to the wider community and you'll be able to explore additional options for observation protocols that we have in place. I'd like to give a quick shout out to our eight faculty fellows who are experts in the field. This group includes Eisenhardt Award winners, and tenured and non-tenure track faculty award winners.
- Design and implement S-Rate training for faculty to basically show how faculty can use the data effectively to chart their effectiveness in the classroom. We've convened a round table for departments to document and share best practices so that we can see what others are doing. There are some really good examples of departments that are doing this well. We are reviewing what current training exists within the Smart Evals platform itself and developing training faculty modules. Professor Raj Murthy from Saunders College of Business has recently compiled contemporary data that shows effective practices for interpreting that data and he'll be presenting more on that.
- When we design and implement S-Rate training for faculty including techniques for interpreting those results we'll convene chair-led training sessions for chairs so they are more equipped to be able to train their faculty to interpret the data more effectively. There are some chairs that are doing really interesting things that go beyond the S-Rate data and we want to get that message across. We will ensure existing policy is followed that S-Rate data is not the sole measure of a teacher's effectiveness. We've got multiple points that we can use, and we want to bring that evidence back to the chairs so that they can start thinking about those processes. Still in the midterm, we've been asked to define a numeric benchmark for Institute-

- wide S-Rate. It's currently 4.0. We're going to look at our peer institutions and see whether or not that's appropriate. And also implement effective practices around controlling for bias and evaluations. We know bias is a hot topic. We know it's an important issue, and it's an emotive issue. So we're looking for partnerships with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as Advance.
- Long term, 2024/25, we will establish an office that will look at that data in more detail. Thankfully, we've got partners in IR who have offered to dig deeper in terms of how we can report back on trends in response rates. Another recommendation from the 2019 report was to conduct student exit surveys. So we'll be making some recommendations to you as well as to what that might look like, and potentially how the registrar could implement that process. Longer term, thinking about how to encourage confidence in the numeric data that we get from S-Rate. We will conduct a review of the core questions and make recommendations as to what other institutions are doing. And also look at the additional college questions that are being asked to try and help identify any distinctions that we might find between course evaluations, and instructor evaluations. And any of you who have taught gateway courses or elementary courses will know that there is a difference between those two and sometimes it's very helpful to separate the difference between them. And finally possibly limit the number of S-Rate questions to twelve. Again we'll look at our benchmark institutions before making recommendations.
 - S. Aldersley: You talked about benchmark institutions. Do our peer institutions use something like S-Rate evaluations?
 - N. Hair: It's very popular. What's less popular is the use of other forms of material that we can use to demonstrate teaching effectiveness and that's what we're going to dig into a little deeper.
 - Who?: Yes, I do like this model, which I think can help to capture the faculty's teaching situation in a more comprehensive way. When this is implemented will we continue to use S-Rate evaluations?
 - N. Hair: I've not heard of any rumors that we will be moving away from that particular system. It's
 my job to try and help educate faculty to get the most out of it and raise response rates.
 - O S. Malachowsky: A lot of the evaluation numbers that come out of it treat what are ordinal scales as ratio scales, meaning they assume that a 'strongly agree' is a five and 'agree' is a four and it does the math and you end up with a four point something almost all the time. Have we thought about switching to things that are more statistically honest, rather than using a Likert scale, like a ratio scale?
 - N. Hair: I believe ten pages of the report that Senate produced in 2019 looked at that which is one of the reasons for seeking to ensure some confidence in the numerical data. Raj has started looking at data in those areas and will be making some recommendations. We also have Ron Yang from the College of Business, and Bill Williamson who's really interested in that.
 - O. Babbit: As a follow up to that, I think one of the biggest problems with the system is it's not often clear on the level of uncertainty about the information it provides. Something akin to an error bar would be helpful, especially when you're essentially sampling the tails of the distribution because students who reply tend to either love you or hate you. So you're really not sampling the whole student population. To quote Carl Sagan, you can't say anything with certainty until you've quantified your uncertainty. I think there's a big need for that.
 - O N. Hair: It's certainly on our radar.
 - O B. Lapizco-Encinas: I would like to see training on how to increase the response rate for the students. It is very challenging at the end of the semester to get all the students to submit their evaluations. We all have seen how many emails we need to send for reminders, so maybe tools that can be provided to the faculty or how we can increase that response.
 - N. Hair: We had a positive heated debate about moving away from Smart Evals for a midterm evaluation and going down the qualitative route to ensure that students can provide more qualitative feedback on what they like about the course, what's not clear, etc., so the faculty can respond in that setting before the end of the semester and there's all sorts of evidence that shows that faculty evaluations tend to go up statistically as a result of that kind of engagement. And with regard to providing faculty with tools, we're looking to provide a toolkit.
 - B. Thomas: I have had students who have graduated, have gone on to graduate school, Med. School, a Ph.D. program and three years later they email you to tell you they were glad they took your class because it prepared them for what they are doing in graduate school. At the time they were taking your course, they had no clue what they were doing. And you're asking them to grade that professional and if they don't do well in your class your chair will take the comments of your students to determine what raise you get or whether you get tenure. And so I do not know whether when students are taking the class is the right time to ask them to evaluate it. And then the issue of how does this affect minority faculty, women? These are major issues that we have to think about. When I first got here, a professor told me he used to do his own evaluation survey for students. Students respond better to that. But that's a challenge. We have a class of 45 students and eight students respond. So that's something I think you need to take into consideration.
 - Oline it's very difficult. Students can just ignore your email no matter how many times you send it. Do we have that option like we can just print it out?

N. Hair: I would need to ask the registrar that question. I'm not sure if there are any policy issues that would prohibit you from doing that. I know that the S-Rate organization is constantly coming out with additional ideas on how we might increase that response rate. We have seen it go down from 62% when it was implemented to just over 50% today. So something definitely needs to be done. And we were promised when we were sold the system that the response rate would go up.

SRATE Task Force Presentation

Agenda Item No. 11: Activity Based Budget (ABB); Provost E. Granberg (1:11) *Presentation linked below*

- For folks new to the Senate, ABB stands for Activity Based Budgeting, a system in which costs associated with major activities are budgeted at the activity level and things like student credit hours and enrollment start to drive budget allocations as opposed to what we do now, which is to rely primarily on history. The year before I came to RIT, a charge was given to the RABC to investigate different budgeting models. They interviewed faculty, department chairs, deans, and members of the administration and looked at the pros and cons of the existing model against a variety of other models, primarily RCM (Responsibility-Centered Management) and ABB and they determined that ABB is a model that could work for RIT.
- So, why is this a good idea? The RABC, having done the original work, argued that RIT really needs a more transparent, objective and equitable way to distribute the operating revenue across the colleges. And I agree with that. Right now, we use an historical, incremental model where colleges get what they got the year before. And then the President and I decide how to divvy up whatever is available after that. If there's a lot of money available, we do budget hearings, but most of the time, there's not a lot of money available. And so the current method is not particularly transparent. We make it as equitable as we can. But it's hard to manage all the different elements of it to create a system that is manifestly fair. ABB is an opportunity to correct that. We also need a way to systematically and efficiently handle the movement of enrollment across colleges. Our enrollments have been pretty stable over the last 10 years, but there's been huge movement in programs that students major in and we don't have a predictable way to move revenue around to where the students are and consequently where the faculty are needed. ABB allows you to do that.
- It also provides some incentive to colleges to focus on critical strategic initiatives like student success, and to focus on opportunities to develop other revenue sources, which are not subject to ABB. So there's a variety of reasons why we're looking at this. I want to thank the RABC for their work on this both back in 2017 as well as the current committee. If we were going to move to ABB, where we use a formula to allocate some portion of the academic affairs operating budget, we need a model that is consistent, transparent and easy to explain, so that if somebody wants to understand why their college got X amount of money, they can trace that back and anybody can understand it.
- We want to allocate resources where they're most needed. We want to provide adequate funding for central operations like global engagement and faculty affairs and those kinds of things. And then we also need to provide a risk and strategy pool to be able to help with the transition to ABB and to fund things that are not connected to an ABB model. So, what happens if you move to an ABB model? What would change is the way we allocate operating revenue. Our operating budget every year within Academic Affairs is about \$230 million. There's another 100 million dollars that's not part of the operating budget, things like research overhead revenue that's generated at the college level, discretionary funds, lab fee allocations, and strategic allocations from Central. None of that would be affected by ABB. It's the 230 million in operating revenue that we get from Central that would be impacted. So last year, the RABC did some nice work on the principles that they thought were important in developing an ABB model and that's what I just showed you. I also put together a Technical Working Group (TWG) to really crunch the numbers and to think about what a model might look like. We started by looking at a lot of different models from around the country. Some of you attended a retreat where we had people from University of Washington and Virginia Tech come in and explain their models and how they work. As we moved through all that, we ended up really landing on the University of Washington model. What I'm going to show you today is the results of the TWG's work drawing on the University of Washington model. I asked them to take a look at the data and start to look at how it might work. What might the formula look like? What might the transition plan look like and so on?
- So these are the members of the TWG. A lot of these are folks from the budget office in the Provost's Office. We have some folks from the College of Business who have some expertise in this area and Stephen Aldersley is the RABC representative.
- The data they've been working with include credit hours generated, student FTE, student headcount, college budget information, APR data, and degrees awarded. We would need to establish three budget categories: operating budget, strategic budget, and risk budget. The operating budget would be the vast

majority of the allocations that we make. And what we would have to do is to split that budget between undergraduate and graduate based on the percentage of student credit hours delivered on each side. Right now 80% of our credit hours are delivered on the undergraduate side, and 20% are graduate. And then what our risk pool would do is to provide resources that smooth any kind of transition to an ABB model because what happens when you do that, is some colleges will see some increase in their budget over time and other colleges can see some decrease in their budget. And you have to smooth that out. You have to give people plenty of time to plan for that and adjust and that's what the risk pool does. What the strategic pool does is it funds things that do not correspond to activity in the colleges. Things that don't generate student credit hours and that don't generate enrollment. The Performing Arts Scholars Program is an example. We have thousands of students involved in the performing arts and that doesn't generate any student credit hours. And so if the university wants a college to provide a program like that, it has to fund it because it's not something that the college would be able to fund under a formula like this. Another example is PhD student support. We fund almost 100 new PhD students every year. Central provides funding for those students. That's the kind of thing that would be in the strategy pool. For the operating budget, you divide it between undergrad and grad. And you take the part of the budget that is for undergraduates and you distribute that to the colleges, 50% based on the number of student credit hours that the college generates, and 50% based on the number of degrees it confers and for graduate programs, you allocate 50% of that based on student credit hours delivered and 50% based on enrollment. In other words, the system allocates the budget based on where most of the instruction is happening. When you do this, you have to allocate based on trends, not based on year over year changes. So most colleges that do this use a three year rolling average. And then you fund central academic affairs, so my office Laverne's office, Jim Myers office, Joe Lofrredo, Lyn Mazdoorian, all that you fund by a tax. Right now, those central academic affairs areas account for 10.3% of the total operating budget so we modeled a tax of 10.3%.

- So, what does all this mean? Suppose we were going to do this and we were going to start to move the operating budget based on activity as opposed to what we do now. What this shows you and this is a complicated page, is how much change we would have in our budget. Over time, it would mean reallocating about 8% of the operating budget. So a relatively modest amount, but it would start to move resources to some of the colleges that have had a lot of growth. And there would be some modest reduction in other colleges. And this shows you how would that happen. If you look at the slide, you've got an initial period where nobody's budget is reduced. But colleges that the model shows are under-resourced start to get an initial amount of money from Central and you do that for three or four years. And then starting in FY27, some colleges would start to see some reduction in their operating budget, and that money would be reallocated to the colleges that have the higher levels of activity. So there's a long runway. But it's important that people understand that reductions in some college budgets can happen. But because you use a three-year rolling average there's a lot of warning, so colleges have a lot of time to get ready for it.
- We're going to make a decision about whether or not we want to start moving toward an activity based budget by June 30, and Dave is the one who will make this decision. Suppose Dave decides that this is something that we need, we'd have at least a year of preparing. There's a lot of detailed planning that would need to go into this. You have to do a lot of training, a lot of changes in the way we handle finances. And then there would be at least a couple of years of what we call the hold harmless period and this is a period where nobody loses any money, although some colleges receive some extra resources.
- The earliest we would do a full ABB implementation would be 26/27. There are lots of known questions about AAB. The first question is, you know, are the distributions set in stone? And the answer to that is no, this is a a provisional model that we're working with. We're continuing to assess whether an ABB model will help or hurt interdisciplinary work? This is a common question. Well, from what we know from other institutions, ABB models tend to help with interdisciplinary work, because department chairs and faculty know that if they engage in offering courses to support an interdisciplinary program, the budget follows and so you don't have to worry about an unfunded mandate. Will base budgets be changed over time to address growth or will the process be applied only to incremental resources? That's a decision that still needs to be made. What most universities do is they have a long period where there's only the incremental addition to resources, and then it's only after several years that there is any kind of budget adjustment.
- Under this model, what steps are taken if a college appears to be over-resourced? If we were going to do this, we would follow the process that the University of Washington uses, and in that process the Provost's Budget Office does five-year forecasts for each college. Deans get five year forecasts that let them know where they're trending in terms of the operating budget. And so if a college is in a position where they might lose some resources, they get notice before that happens so there's plenty of time to either improve the enrollment or prepare for a reduction. Another big question is how do differences in salary affect the model? We have a pretty big range of salaries across colleges, some college starting salaries are in the low hundred thousands and other colleges starting salaries are in the low 70s. So how do you account for differences in salaries? They actually balance out within the context of the model. And there is not a plan right now to manage differences in salaries within the formula. If we really had a serious situation, then we would use the risk pool to handle that. Another question is whether ABB will result in layoffs. The answer is no. There's nothing about ABB that changes our current policies around the closing of programs or the handling of the loss of a faculty line or any of that sort of thing. Another question is how can ABB support research if the allocation is focused on credit hours and enrollment? This is a really important question. So

the way the model supports research is through release time that is embedded in faculty workloads. What we're seeing in the modeling is nothing about release time is going to be affected if we move to an ABB model. Faculty will still get their standard release time just like they do today. F&A return, which funds research activity, isn't a part of the ABB model. And so research activity continues as normal under ABB. Another piece that's related to research is PhD programs. Unless almost every single department has a PhD program. such programs don't fit neatly into an ABB model. And so one of the things we'll have to do, if we move to an ABB model, is put the funding for PhD programs in either the risk or the strategy pool.

- Now what are the potential problems with moving to an ABB model? First of all, no ABB model will perfectly capture everything that goes on at a university and that's why you have to have a risk pool and a strategy pool to smooth things out, and make sure that it's not too disruptive. What you also do is every five years or so, you look at your model again, and make sure that it's still working for you. Another potential issue with ABB is while it does a good job of reflecting movement of enrollment over the long haul, if you have a sudden surge of enrollment it does not address that. And so you have to make sure that the risk pool is big enough to be able to handle that. ABB can also cause a problem with curricular duplication, where because the operating budget is based on credit hours and enrollment instead of history, colleges can start to open up their own classes. For example, the College of Engineering might decide that they are going to teach writing themselves, so we'll get those student credit hours and we'll get that budget. So this is something that we will have to deal with and the ICC has already been talking about it. It looks like the best way to handle it is people proposing new courses would have to go through an assessment process to make sure they're not duplicating a class that's already offered. And that's what other institutions do.
- There are also advantages to ABB. It provides transparency. For example, at the University of Washington, there is a website with all the data about how the budget is put together, so if you want to run it yourself, and see how we got the budget we did you can do that. And that level of transparency and predictability in the budget process is something that I think most of us would like to see more of at RIT. ABB also systematically moves institutional resources around to where the activity is the largest. It creates incentives to manage resources efficiently. And part of what it does is each college owns its own resources in a more direct way than it does today. And has a sense for where those resources are going to be two, and three and four years from, and consequently has the ability to manage those things much more actively and thoughtfully then you can today.
- So what's happening next is I'm doing a series of these talks, just bringing people up to date on what the TWG has done. We're working on calculating the optimal size of the risk pool. We're looking at parameters for the strategic pool. We're doing this initial analysis on the PhD programs. We've tried to figure out how to fit the PhD programs into the model, but it just doesn't work, so we are going to have to pull them out. What that's going to do is it's actually going to reduce the amount of change in the operating budget. I said earlier it was 8% shift. Once we pull the PhD programs out, I think that'll be closer to 5 or 6%.
- The TWG is also developing a list of university procedures that would need to change if we were going to move toward this model. Dave wants to make this decision by the end of this fiscal year. There are three ways he could go: he could decide that ABB is really not right for RIT, and we'll have to try to find another way to more equitably handle our budget. Or, he could go for full ABB implementation, which would mean we would start the process, we'd enter the hold harmless period and then three or four years later, we do a full implementation. Or, he could go for something in the middle, like he might say, 'Okay, I want to start to allocate new money based on activity. But I'm going to wait several years before I decide whether or not I think it's necessary to adjust anybody's budget downwards. That's another option and kind of an ABB-light. What it would mean is that there would be some colleges who would know that their budget was going to be held constant, whereas other colleges would know that their budgets would be increasing, kind of a middle road approach. And that might be a good way to get started.
- Now, I'm sure that everybody's wondering, Ellen's leaving us. Isn't this just all gonna go away when Ellen moves to GW. The thing is that this is something that Dave has wanted us to look at for a long time, because he is concerned about the fact that the budgets aren't transparent, that the budgets aren't predictable, that there's sort of constant scramble at the end of the year. We have to wait till the May deposit deadline before we know if we can get new faculty and all these sorts of things, which is not a healthy way for the academic operating budget to run. And so he really does want to look at this seriously and if he makes the decision that we're going to start moving toward ABB, then he'll have the new provost just pick this up after I'm gone. So that's why I wanted to go ahead and do this presentation and get your questions. This is as much his initiative as it is mine and so the fact that I'm heading to GW is not going to affect the decision. Now what questions can I answer?
 - R. Ulin:I have a question that has to do with what I see as sort of a tension in higher education today. On the one hand, you have programs which are developing which are market driven, this is what the students want. On the other hand, you have programs that I think are integral to the history of comprehensive universities. And some of those have not fared so well. For example, disappearing programs in classics, some languages and so on. So I'm wondering how this budget model plays out in a scenario where you have programs, which are not unconventional necessarily, but are going to be pulled in different directions.
 - E. Granberg: This is a wonderful question and I think what an ABB model does is it makes those decisions a little more transparent. So right now we just move along and what you got last year,

you get next year, which means that you might have programs that maybe need to be rethought. Maybe in some cases, the programs need to close but in most instances, they need to be reimagined. So what ABB forces a college to do is be more thoughtful and explicit about its portfolio. It's not that you don't continue to have some programs that have very low enrollment. And you have other programs that are market driven, but it does sort of push you to be a little more thoughtful and intentional about how you're balancing those two things. There's definitely plenty of room in an ABB model at RIT for historically strategic programs. The other thing I should have mentioned earlier, is that in every ABB model, you allow for adjustments due to sanity and adjustments due to strategy, so Duke University, for example, has a model kind of like this, but the Divinity School couldn't work in this model. It did not generate enough enrollment or enough student credit hours, but the Divinity School was critical to Duke's strategy. And so the provost would allocate a little bit of extra money to make sure the School continued to operate even though the pure budget model wouldn't have allowed for that. And that's what those risks and strategy pools are for.

- M. Anselm: You said you were going to be showing these presentations to other groups. My
 constituents would like to have the opportunity to see this presentation beyond me just retelling it
 to them
- E. Granberg: So we've done it for RABC, and for the Deans. We're doing it here for you. I'll do a
 town hall on it in April. I'm not personally going to be able to go to every college but the new
 provost next year if Dave determines that we're going to move forward with this could absolutely
 do a college tour.
- M. Anselm: One quick question. 8%? How is that calculated? Is that like an 8% swing in one department or one college, or is it an average?
- E. Granberg: No, it's if you take the total amount of money that would need to move, as a
 proportion of the total operating budget. And it's 8% of the total operating budget that would
 move.
- Who?: Do we have a feeling on how much one department might actually experience in terms of a percentage?
- E. Granberg: Oh, you mean in terms of like, is there a college that might lose more than 8%? So until I get the PhD programs pulled out I don't know the answer to that yet.
- S. Malachowsky: I just want to make a comment relating to the possible tendency of colleges to kind of gobble up and duplicate courses. One of the things that I would say is based on the fact that you only get 50%, just on the credit hour, but also 50% of the graduates you're not losing all of it. I saw stuff that suggested that by knowing the actual cost of giving it to another school, some schools were more likely to do that because it wasn't a mystery thing. It was like okay, well, this is what it is, it's fine. Letting it go over there, it's only 50%, it's not 100% And then the other school was also happy to get it. Maybe the school that is looking at a budget decrease. Okay, it seemed like it was weirdly democratized and socialist at the same time.
- E. Granberg: What I've seen is that happens when there's good oversight. But if there's not good oversight and control, then it's like the Wild West. And so there does have to be a mechanism for being able to look at a new course and say is this clearly duplicative of something that is already offered? And once people know that's there, then they do what you just described, but if it's not there, then they don't.
- B. Thomas: I have two questions. When I look at the data that after the three year period we begin
 to lose funds, it's difficult for me to reconcile colleges losing funding and not having to lay people
 off
- E. Granberg: Let me explain that, and this is why you have a long lead time when you move to an ABB model. If you know you're going to lose budget, you have the time to pull the vacancies. Under an ABB budget and you're in a position where you are going to lose some revenue, that's done through the management of vacancies. And if there isn't a vacancy, then you use the risk pool to temporarily loan the funding to the college until vacancies are available. That's why it isn't necessary to lay people off because you manage your vacancies.
- B. Thomas: The second question has to do with the foundation of most of our colleges. Some have been here a very long time and some are new. And what is really an issue particularly in CHST, where we have faculty seeing close to 50-55 students and we have lines that are missing which we don't have right now. So what happens to such colleges where we need to infuse funds, we're in trouble. So how do you solve that? This model is based on enrollment. We need the University to pump in a lot of money to help us bring our program up to standards that we expect to find in other colleges. How are we going to handle that?
- E. Granberg: Your college is a very lean college, you generate and support a lot of credit hours and a lot of majors with the budget that you have. And so in an ABB model, what we look at is how much budget should CHST have given the number of majors it supports and the number of credit hours it offers. The fact that a college has a small budget now, that doesn't mean that the budget is the right size, and that's actually the problem that we're trying to solve. Our budgets don't represent the amount of activity going on in the college and we're trying to figure out a way over time to get those adjusted.

- S. Aldersley: Picking up on Robert's point earlier and your response about Duke and its Divinity School. And in the interest of transparency, the performing arts scholarship is a no-brainer. But there's got to be programs that fall short of that, that are culturally part of the university that don't reach to status level of a Divinity School, for example. So I'm wondering if there couldn't be a mechanism considered to evaluate those programs that fall below that.
- E. Granberg: So you don't do it on a program by program basis. You do it on a college by college basis. And that's a decision that a college would make, and most of our colleges are large enough that there's degrees of freedom in there for thinking about if you have a couple of programs that are really, you know, vital to the history of RIT that are very close to our mission and the college can make the decision even if that particular program has a budget that's a little larger than ABB might suggest, the college can make the decision to maintain it. Now if you get to the point where you have a college that is being pushed out of alignment by those kinds of programs, then that's a decision that the provost would have to make. Generally though, the way this works is the allocation is made to the college, and then the college makes the decision about how to fund the programs.
- Who? I just have one question. It's just a clarification. I just didn't understand the one slide about how we can support researchers based on student credit hours, and that release time for research will continue to be reflected in faculty teaching loads. What does that mean?
- E. Granberg: The allocation is made based on the student credit hours, but the operating budget still includes room for faculty release. So the simple fact that we're starting to move the budget around based on the credit hours won't affect the fact that the current operating budget has room for that. So that's what I meant. Thank you for asking. So I'm sure that you have other questions. You're very welcome to email me with them. That will help me prepare to do a provost office hour on this in April.

ABB Presentation

Agenda Item No. 12: New Business; A. Newman

Not enough time

Agenda Item No. 13: Adjournment; A. Newman (1:53)

Attendance March 30, 2023

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended	Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Abushagur, Mustafa	KGCOE Senator		Malachowsky, Sam	Treasurer, GCCIS Senator	X
Adrion, Amy	ALT CAD Senator (Fall 2022)		McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	
Aldersley, Stephen	Communications Officer, SOIS Senator	x	Newman, Atia	Chair, CAD Senator	x
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator	x	Newman, Dina	COS Senator	x

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Babbitt, Gregory	COS Senator	X		Olabisi, Joy	SCB Senator	
Bamonto, Suzanne	CLA Senator	x		Osgood, Robert	ALT CHST Senator	
Barone, Keri	CLA Senator	x		Perez Sanchez, Alejandro	CAD Senator	
Boedo, Stephen	ALT KGCOE Senator	X		Puchades, Ivan	KGCOE Senator	X
Brown, Tamaira	Senate Coordinator	X		Ray, Amit	CLA Senator	X
Butler, Janine	ALT NTID Senator	X		Reed, Mary Lynn	COS Senator	x
Chiavaroli, Julius	ALT GIS Senator	X		Ross, Annemarie	ALT NTID Senator	
Crawford, Denton	CAD Senator			Shaaban, Muhammad	ALT KGCOE Senator	
D'Amanda, Elisabetta	CLA Senator			Sheffield, Jr., Clarence	ALT SOIS Senator	
Deese, Franklin	CAD Senator	x		Song, Qian	SCB Senator	x
Dell, Betsy	CET Senator	X		Sparkman, Torrence	ALT SCB Senator	
Dibble, Leah	Student Gov't Rep	X		Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	X

Eddingsaas, Nathan	COS Senator	x	,	Tobin, Karen	NTID Senator	
Faber, Joshua	COS Senator	x	,	Tsukernik, Olga	ALT COS Senator	
Fillip, Carol	ALT CAD Senator		1	Ulin, Robert	CLA Senator	x
Gehret, Austin	NTID Senator	X	,	Van Aardt, Jan	ALT COS Senator	
Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer, CHST Senator	X		Venkataraman, Jayanti	KGCOE Senator	X
Granberg, Ellen	Provost	x	,	Villasmil, Larry	ALT CET Senator	
Hazelwood, David	NTID Senator	X	,	Warp, Melissa	ALT CAD Senator (Spring 2023)	
Heyman, Emily (sub - Joanna Prescott)	Staff Council Rep.	X	,	White, Phil	ALT GCCIS Senator	
Hsieh, Jerrie	ALT SCB Senator		,	Williams, Eric	GIS Senator	
Johnson, Dan	CET Senator	x	,	Worrell, Tracy	ALT CLA Senator	
Johnson, Scott	GCCIS Senator	x	2	Zanibbi, Richard	GCCIS Senator	x
Kincheloe, Pamela	NTID Senator	x		Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	X

Kiser, Larry	GCCIS Senator	x		
Kray, Christine	CLA Senator	x		
Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	KGCOE Senator	x		
Laury, Dino	NTID Senator	x		
Lawley, Elizabeth	Vice Chair, GCCIS Senator			
Lee, James	ALT CET Senator			
Liu, Manlu	SCB Senator	x		
Lutzer, Carl	COS Senator	x		
Ma, Yunn-Shan	ALT CLA Senator			

Interpreters: Danielle Cohen and Phillip Ynzunza

Student Assistant: Guru Goutham Gangadharappa Ramesha

Presenters: Clyde Hull, Dina Newman, Neil Hair and Provost Ellen Granberg

Tech Crew