Faculty Advisory Committee to the President
Meeting minutes, 04/22/22

Committee members present: Suanne Ansari, Dan Greenberg, Patricia Dillon (scribe), Chris Mothorpe, Joseph Weyers, Bob Pitts (via Zoom), Margaret Hagood, Bethany Goodier, Wes Dudgeon, Bob Podolsky (chair), Kathy Béres Rogers (via Zoom), Vijay Vulva.

Also present: President Andrew Hsu, Provost Suzanne Austin, Paul Patrick, William Neal (incoming Faculty Speaker)

The meeting began at 3:45 p.m. in the Randolph Hall Boardroom.

The final FACP meeting of academic year 2021-2022 opened with committee chair, Dr. Podolsky thanking President Hsu and Provost Austin for their willingness to invest hours of their time and effort with the committee, always engaging in frank and productive conversations. Both President Hsu and Provost Austin agreed that the year had been very productive and that it was particularly important to them to work as closely with faculty as possible. All agreed that Dr. Podolsky had been an excellent chairperson.

Future Development of Engineering Programs

Provost Austin shared that upcoming changes in the academic arena, reflecting more inclusion and intentionality will soon be shared with the college community. In terms of the proposed School of Engineering, philanthropic structures will soon be in place to raise needed funds. The search for appropriate faculty will reflect the anticipated needs of industry through the 21st century. It is expected that industry partners, other institutions, research studies and the Chamber of Commerce will outline those projected needs and provide prospective faculty. An example of academic specialization was given of the development of robots, two of which are currently on campus that would be developed to take on the mundane jobs of multiple workers. It was emphasized that Charleston is now uniquely geographically located amongst a sea of varied manufacturing and technology powerhouses.

Merit v. COLA Salary Increases

President Hsu stated that his team is completing a five (5) year budget plan. Their goal is to correct over time the fact that CoFC faculty and staff are paid less than their peers at comparable institutions. Accordingly, the College is looking for more COLA (4%) distribution, especially early on with less merit pay (1%) available. Merit pay will be distributed at the discretion of the departments. To that end, it is imperative that each department become transparent as to what is expected from members hoping to be awarded merit pay.

Fort Johnson Master Plan

Concerns have been raised that with the state in partnership with the Federal Government making historical and recreational changes at Fort Johnson, the important research at Grice Marine Laboratory might be threatened. President Hsu agreed that the work at Grice was very important and that he and/or Mr. Patrick will get more involved with the discussions with the government partners to protect the lab and the important research conducted there. Mr. Patrick stated that he had been speaking with Stephen
Coe of Rosenblum & Coe, who has worked with the College on other projects and finds him to be very supportive of the school in this venture.

Dr. Podolsky asked that a “Public Access Plan” be developed with the main actors as the site is re-developed. These plans are common in mixed use space and should be implemented from the early planning stages. President Hsu suggested that faculty might join the planning committee. Mr. Patrick will continue to follow with all potential partners.

**REI Initiative**

Given the recent vote in the Faculty Senate to approve sending the required REI documentation to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (“CHE”), the Committee requested a clarification and update as to the Administration’s position on the REI Initiative. Both the President and the Provost stated that they are fully supportive of the initiative and are continuing efforts to realize its success including:

1. Retaining REI in the title of the program and supporting materials.
2. Appointment of a New Director is imminent—Application submissions have just closed.
3. REI Workshop/Symposium to be held in May 2022.
4. College Administrators Mark Del Mastro, Associate Provost and Paul Patrick are working with CHE to prepare the documentation for submission. It is currently anticipated that the paperwork will be submitted to CHE by the end of the summer.
5. The CoC community will be updated as to all developments in Fall 2022.

**College Reads- Update**

The discussion continued as to the status of the College Reads program as a component of convocation. See earlier minutes for context. The Provost stated that she had received strong feedback since she arrived that the College Reads program was less effective as many students do not read the assigned text, they are distracted by the excitement of convocation, are not interested in small group book discussions and that it was increasingly difficult to find faculty to lead the discussions. Some committee members felt that it was an important academic exercise, introducing students to what was important and valuable in the college experience, created comradery and was enjoyed and well thought of by those who participated. The Provost reported that she is open to and is investigating a number of group activities that can tap the better aspects of the exercise. She left open the possibility that the College Reads may be revisited.

**Work of the Committee on Commemoration and Landscapes**

The Committee on Commemoration and Landscapes will soon be unveiling their updated text on a number of building and sites around campus. President Hsu remarked that this was “REI in action.” He was impressed that the new narratives are simple recitations of historical facts inclusive of those who contributed to the school and to Charleston.

**Year in Review**

A discussion was had as to the accomplishments of the committee over the past year. President Hsu stated that he was pleased with the Committee. He sees the Committee as pro-active and wants it to continue in the same format. The President noted that the school navigated the pandemic exceedingly well, moving forward with the Strategic Plan, improving student success data, and improving the school’s financial position. It has been a time of change that can be challenging for everyone, but the change has been
successful directly because of the extraordinary efforts of the faculty and staff. The committee is an important link to the concerns of the faculty. Going forward, the administration will be working on a series of Team Building exercises among Deans and Chairs to further strengthen the school.

The Provost reflected on her short tenure at the school and emphasized that her energies are focused on building trust among constituencies, ensuring transparency and communicating more effectively with the college community. She thanked the committee for their input and noted that much of that input will be reflected in changes in the academic structure. She particularly noted the success of the newsletter from the Provost’s office as a direct result of conversations with the Committee.

The President thanked the Committee members for their efforts and wished all a happy summer.

The meeting concluded at approximately 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Dillon

Patricia M. Dillon