

Academic Assembly
May 23, 2016
2:05 – 4:30pm, STCN 130

MINUTES

Present: Rick Block, Pat Buchsel, Isiaah Crawford, Bill Ehmann, Charlotte Garden, Leticia Guardiola-Saenz, Mike Huggins, Arun Iyer, Bruce Koch, Kate Koppelman, Charles Lawrence, Viviane Lopuch, Margit McGuire, David Neel, Michael Ng, Erik Olsen, Katherine Raichle, Rob Rutherford, Frank Shih, Heath Spencer, John Strait, Dan Washburn, Braden Wild

Minutes taken by Rosa Hughes

- I. Review of Minutes 5-16-16
 - A. Approved with no oppositions and two abstentions
- II. Suspension of Rules
 - A. Propose to delay agenda items: FHRC membership, APRC membership, Second and Dual Degree Policy revision
 - B. Allow reporters from Spectator to attend open session with the provision that anyone who speaks can request an executive session for confidentiality
- III. Provost Search Committee Recommendations
 - A. Faculty survey had 116 responses with strong priorities
 - 1. Faculty morale and caretaking of faculty of all lines
 - 2. Strong focus on quality teaching and research
 - 3. Attention to diversity, equity, campus climate, and bullying
 - 4. Pay equity
 - 5. Support of tenure track conversion
 - 6. Understanding of the nature of faculty who choose to teach at SU (not just a business)
 - B. Executive session
- IV. MRC Faculty
 - A. Overview
 - 1. AcA does not normally cover school/college issues, but this has reached a crisis level
 - 2. The newly revised standard of the faculty handbook provides AcA the purview of shared governance norms and principles
 - 3. The issues of mutual respect, goals and policies that came out of the Task Force for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence also informed the need to invite MRC guests to AcA
 - B. Statement from four concerned MRC faculty members
 - 1. MRC does not have tenured faculty lines, only full time non-tenure track and part time, so there is no system of checks and balances to protect faculty positions as in other schools/colleges
 - 2. Two serious problems that have prevented faculty providing education: curricular and cultural
 - a. Outdated, limited Core curriculum based in Western canon, does not reflect student realities and has not been significantly revised in decades
 - b. Rancorous culture has fostered a climate of fear, intimidation, and bullying of some faculty; systematic and ongoing efforts to impugn those with different points of view

3. History of issues with MRC leadership, including numerous incidents of personal and professional attacks
 - a. In 2012, a faculty member was told by the associate dean that she had no right to self-identify as Catholic for supporting the legalization of gay marriage in WA state
 - b. In the 2013 employee satisfaction survey, MRC had the lowest ratings on campus and it was easy for dean and others who saw data to identify who had made which qualitative remarks – dean said poor evaluation of her made it hard for faculty to receive tenure
 - c. In 2015, a program review was undertaken and was referred to by leadership as secretarial and a “box to check;” many faculty felt uncomfortable discussing their views on curriculum modification for fear of punishment
 - d. In February 2016, two faculty wrote a detailed letter to the dean expressing dismay at sexist and racist treatment of students by college faculty and felt threatened by the dean’s response
 - e. In April 2016, four faculty members submitted their experiences of a hostile work environment to the Provost’s office and were notified of an investigation being conducted, were advised they were filing a grievance, and have not been updated or seen any action come from that process – feel ignored by university leadership
4. Discussion
 - a. Program Review Committee has raised issues with the learning outcomes of the BAHT revision (e.g., “Encounter the East”), faculty are not involved in learning outcomes revision discussion – not aware of a curriculum committee in the college
 - b. Results of the employee satisfaction survey reference above were released in aggregate to AcA President, and specific feedback was given to Dean by Office of the Provost
 - c. Annual Performance Reviews (APRs) have not been distributed for this year and of these faculty, they have only received one each over the past several years
 - d. Faculty have experienced pressure from leadership to remove specific material from syllabi, not speak about social justice issues including faculty unionization, and have warned students not to speak to college leadership about what they discuss in class
- C. Other MRC faculty statements
 1. Curriculum is flexible, intended to be open, curriculum committees have been ad hoc based on necessity over the years
 2. Work of redevelopment of curriculum started in October, all proposals have been approved so far, all of the full time faculty attended a meeting on curricular reviewed, oddly phrased curricular objectives may be due to lack of training
 3. College faculty have been meeting since spring break to discuss curriculum for core and course sections, due to small number of faculty the curriculum committee does not look the same as larger colleges, never told what to teach or what materials to use/not use

V. MRC Students

A. MRC Student Coalition – *see full statement below*

B. Discussion

1. Many MRC students participated in campus climate survey that reflected diversity issues
2. Curriculum should be balanced across cultures, Greco-Roman history is not just white and European – need a critical race lens to inform curriculum
3. Western canon is not obsolete but is important to understand the way the world is today – the systems informing modern structures need criticism
4. University diversity training is not a big enough change

5. Administration has committed to aggressive response to concerns voiced
 - a. Committee formed to begin curricular review of MRC, including membership of faculty, students, reps from MRC student coalition, alumni, outside consultant
 - b. Broader institution needs to systematically engage in training around issues of race and cultural literacy, prioritizing with MRC and then part of larger work across campus
 - c. Secured funding to establish Chief Diversity Officer, form Diversity Council, professional development training on cultural literacy
 6. AcA is advisory in nature, although the body can take specific action on limited policy and curricular actions, it ultimately has to be Cabinet and Provost's Office to take action
 7. Motion to prevent MRC faculty from being changed in status and students not be punished for anything as a result of current happenings
 - a. There are tenured faculty that teach in MRC but they are part of other departments, MRC does not have departments by nature of being humanities
 - b. No vote taken on motion
- C. Other student experiences
1. MRC has not been all-encompassing or taught everything there is to know, but has been a great experience; tough to know that other students have been hurt by this experience, situation has polarized the campus, opinions are shifting, other students feel silenced by the MRC student coalition, current MRC students feel alienated that non-MRC students are speaking on their behalf about the college; disagree with students demand for administrative leadership change but agree with curricular changes and marketing changes; advising needs to be revised immediately – not adequate
 2. Positive experiences within MRC as a first generation American, first family member in college, and member of LGBTQ community; entered MRC not knowing much about it, feel empowered by professors and advisors; MRC office became home on campus, dean and professors did listen and make changes; has been a safe and inclusive environment; agree there needs to be more change, needs to be done through conversation
 3. Those who disagree with the student coalition do not feel represented; the many issues at stake (unionization, curriculum, dean's resignation demand) are too multi-faceted to be easy to choose one side – cannot fully agree with coalition; has had diverse experiences within college and always felt supported as a student
 4. Others can forward written experiences to AcA

VI. Executive Session

23 May 2016

To the assembled members of the Academic Assembly:

The MRC Student Coalition is a group of MRC students and their allies, led by and centering womxn and gender-non-binary people of color, people of color, queers, people with disabilities, and people with other marginalized identities. We draw on long traditions of resistance stemming from our ancestors as well as fellow students who have gone before us. It is heartbreaking and inspiring to know that many alumni spent much of their undergraduate experience seeking to reform the climate, culture, and curriculum of the college, regularly jeopardizing their emotional and mental health.

It is important for us to note that we do not wish to be here. We wish that the appropriate administrators had taken it upon themselves to create a humanities college that centered and celebrated the contributions and cultures of historically marginalized communities. The sheer number of testimonies that we will provide you today reveal that these issues are not new. Because of the normalcy of these experiences, many of us are tired and angry. We regret that our occupation of Casey 100 has been necessary in order to receive attention, urgency, and hopefully, the amelioration of long term injustices.

Matteo Ricci College was modeled after elite Ivy League universities, which have long been exclusive and inaccessible to students with marginalized identities. The vision of the college was to interpret the discipline of the Humanities as academia only pertaining to Greco-Roman and Western European thought. We have provided copies of the syllabi for the curriculum as is. Problematically, the curriculum centers Western European narratives without addressing the interaction of these philosophies with systems of power and privilege; colonialism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and other created systems are criminally neglected. How can we understand the history we are learning without understanding its impact? For future students, how can we cultivate a liberating education which centers narratives long ignored? We have documentation of proposed curriculum reform that has been suppressed or ignored for years. Last week, President Sundborg and Provost Crawford finally acknowledged that urgent curricula reform is necessary for 2016 and beyond. The Coalition knows that it is only because of such immense pressure that the college and university administration have begun to acknowledge this need.

The MRC Student Coalition in its current iteration began organizing in the summer 2015. However, we have documentation available to you that indicates a decade worth of student advocacy and organizing-- through email and testimony you can see the various ways in which students have engaged in formal channels of sharing grievances, often with administrators who are still present at this university.

To support these alumni testimonies, we have included a timeline available regarding this year's organizing. Some of the most salient dates include:

- Quarterly evaluations, in which many students recall regularly asking for more authors of color, more representative syllabi, etc.
- Spring 2015: BAHL senior presentations, during which two students of color gave testimony to the trauma, erasure, and irrelevant curricula they experienced in their four-year time.
- Summer 2015 Meeting w/ alumni Aldo Resendiz & Marianne Mork, during which history of resistance was explained in detail.
- January 16th, 2016: Sullivan Leader's Day, during which Feeza Mohammad, Gabrielle Goeglein, and Mara Silvers asked Dean Kelly how she was applying cura personalis to the care and support of her students with marginalized identities. During her response, Dean Kelly claims that deans do not have control over curricula and that academic freedom and tenure are incredibly important. Matteo Ricci College does not tenure any of its professors.
- January 28th, 2016: Meeting with Associate Provost Lawrence and Czarina Ramsay to discuss student concerns and experiences with the climate of Matteo Ricci College.
- February 28, 2016: Faculty of MRC record the micro-aggressions and curricula concerns of students; that list and a call of action is sent to Dean Kelly. Students tell faculty to suggest that Dean Kelly hold public feedback sessions for the entire college.
- April 26th, 2016: Dean Kelly holds a feedback session for just the BAHL Degree, caps the group at six students. MRC Student Coalition and senior BAHL cohort attend, present demands and testimonies. Associate Provost Lawrence, Czarina Ramsay, Dr. Drego Little, Fran Henderson, and Dean Kelly are present.
- May 6, 2016: Members of the MRC Student Coalition have a meeting with Dr. Lawrence, Czarina Ramsay, and Provost Crawford to discuss escalating urgency around demands. Students disclose that due to a thoroughly inadequate response, the Coalition is demanding the resignation of Dean Kelly
- May 10th, 2016: As asked for on the April 26th feedback session, Dean Kelly holds another feedback session to discuss the Coalition's demands. During this session, Dean Kelly becomes defensive and insists that she has never heard these complaints before, a claim later disproved by email correspondence included in these binders. The majority of Matteo Ricci College faculty were present, as was Associate Provost Lawrence.

We believe this timeline demonstrates both a lack of response regarding student feedback, blatant misinformation and denial on the part of Dean Kelly, as well as a failure on behalf of the upper administration. We have attempted to collaborate. We have attempted to report upwards our urgent concerns. In addition to the obvious oversight of alumni concerns across years, the University has had Constructive Notice on our behalf since at least January. We are incredibly disturbed by the lack of response or urgency on our behalf.

In addition to a timeline, you will find a document with some important facts about Matteo Ricci College which we feel are pertinent to understanding the structural challenges to redressing grievances. Because of the structural flaws of the college, there are additional challenges to engaging college and university administration with these concerns. These flaws include, but are not limited to, the fact that none of MRC's professors are tenured; students are unable to transfer out because of the incompatibility between the MRC core and the UCORE; the college uses peer advisors rather than professional advisors; students are often unaware of the quality or quantity of classes that exist outside of MRC, etc. Please see our list of facts attached in the binder of current MRC Student Coalition documents.

There are also testimonies of current students, students who transferred out of the college, and alumni provided in the binders. Additionally, this week's copy of The Spectator provides a helpful vision of current student experiences with MRC. Especially prominent amongst our concerns is the hostile learning environment of the College. We believe the administration of this university, staff, and faculty are aware and convinced of this point. Congruent with a hostile learning environment is our concern about the tactics of the leadership of the college; ultimately, we believe Dean Jodi Kelly fails to fulfill the basic requirements of her appointment. For example:

1. Based on extensive student, alumni, and faculty testimony, the dean does not demonstrate personal or professional integrity in all of her dealings.
2. We have no confidence in the leadership capacity of Dean Kelly. She lacks a clear vision and view of her role in the future of Seattle University, especially given the University's attempts to embody standards set forth by the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. Her understanding of the mission is archaic and inadequate for 2016. We regret to convey that in the aftermath of the April 26th listening session, Dean Kelly told a student that she was concerned about white students in younger cohorts being silenced in the classroom. The Dean feared for a "pendulum swing where the oppressed becomes the oppressor." This statement reveals Dean Kelly's incompetence in regards to personal and professional integrity in a myriad of ways.
3. The dean fails to work effectively with students and alumni, both within and outside of her division. In a closed-door meeting with a Black student from outside of the college, Dean Kelly lamented that as a white professor, she experienced "guns pointed at me in the classroom because of the color of my skin." The student responded by saying that guns were literally and figuratively pointed at Black people. In this interaction, Dean Kelly knowingly mispronounced the name of acclaimed author Ta-Nehisi Coates and did not see it necessary to correct herself or find the correct pronunciation. Furthermore, Jasmine Schwartz, a recent alumni, delivered a spoken word presentation as her final capstone project in front of Dean Kelly last spring. In their testimony, Jasmine explicitly spoke to being silenced and shamed for their contributions throughout their experience in Matteo Ricci College. Although Dean Kelly originally proposed a sit-down conversation to which Jasmine agreed, the dean never followed through. Even more disturbing was

Dean Kelly's inability to remember Jasmine's name at graduation, and confusing her for another student of color during the April 26th listening session.

4. In the above mentioned examples as well as countless others, the dean egregiously fails to maintain any awareness of or sensitivity to the needs, rights, experiences, and backgrounds of her students. This form of pathologizing is found in many examples of students' experiences in the College and specifically in engaging with Dean Kelly.

a. Aldo Resendiz, a BAHT alumna, recounts Dean Kelly comparing him to another Chicano student who she praised as "a team player." She went on to shame Aldo for having an animus towards the college and refusing to collaborate, although he had repeatedly communicated feeling threatened and unsafe in many of his interactions in the College. Dean Kelly showed little to no regard for the seriousness of Aldo's experiences.

b. At the 2015 Fall Quarter internship final presentations, several students shared their experiences abroad or working in local communities. One student who shared was exotified, tokenized and pushed in an unprovoked manner to connect their experience of completing their internship abroad with making deeply personal realizations and reflections about their identity. Another student was told that their experiences of feeling isolated as a womxn of color in MRC and at Seattle University were justified because otherwise they would not have been able to create the healing spaces and transformations they did.

5. The dean has demonstrated a marked resistance to feedback of various forms. Despite communal and private meetings with students, countless course evaluations, formal written letters by students and professors, numerous lists of demands that indicate a significant amount of time and dedication, as well as informal conversations and presentations with her own students, Dean Kelly continues to defend and uphold her personal leadership decisions as well as the general ongoing in her college. It is arguable that were there transparent and equitable processes in place for students and faculty to make recommendations and changes based on evaluations and dialogue, this severe situation and the current occupation of the Matteo Ricci College office would not have been necessary.

Based on these metrics and the testimonies included in the binder, we believe that Dean Kelly not only upholds a hostile working and learning environment but also demonstrably fails to achieve even a basic measure of success in her appointment. We urge you to consider not only the experiences shared here but to analyze holistically the testimonies and documents of both students and faculty. These collective experiences lead us to have no confidence in her previous, current, or future leadership of this college.

The upper administration continues to admonish us with the results of the campus climate survey. According to the campus climate survey, twenty eight percent of respondents have personally experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct within the

past year at Seattle University. The basis of conduct has largely been in relation to the intersecting aspects of identity-such as gender/gender identity, age, sexual identity, ethnicity, racial identity, physical characteristics and more. These exclusions are felt in instances of being ignored/left out, intimidated/bullied, being the recipient of derogatory verbal remarks, hostile classroom environment, and tokenization. Thirty one percent of students have considered leaving the university because the climate is not welcoming. In terms of academic excellence, a core value of the university, students based on their race, disability/ability, and/or sexual identity have struggled with performing academically as well as they feel they should. Within the campus climate survey there are qualitative responses that ask for the incorporation of multicultural competency training for faculty and staff through Human Resources. Despite this research and statistics that show the disparity between the experiences of students with privileged and marginalized identities, the university has made little progress in addressing the systemic issues that accompany being a predominately white (74%) university.

Task Force goals (according to January 25, 2016 vis. Father Steve)

1. Integrate inclusive excellence across curricular and co-curricular offerings
2. Build and sustain the capacity of students, staff, and faculty to engage, teach and lead through an inclusive excellence lens
3. Meet the challenges and opportunities of recruiting and graduating a diverse student body
4. Meet the challenges and opportunities of recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff
5. Maximize the university's capacity for social change in the local community

It is insufficient and reprehensible for the university to identify challenges and goals but fail to respond appropriately. Dean Kelly is not compliant with the current goals identified as necessary by the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence at Seattle University; as such she does not have a clear vision of her role to be an administrator in a university which claims it educates students to be leaders for a just and humane world in 2016.

Ultimately, we stand before you today out of a great love and hope for this university. We believed in the mission that was advertised, and we are here to uphold it as essential and central to the thriving of the Seattle University as a whole. We hope that our documents, testimonies, and presentations have properly conveyed our sense of urgency, devotion and commitment to this enduring fight.

We believe it is important to appeal to Academic Assembly in regards to many of the students, specifically in the Science & Engineering and Albers programs, who have been heavily involved in the organizing of the Coalition and are now behind in their coursework. As detailed by Faculty Staff Senate, "We strongly urge the administration not to meet the call to justice with disciplinary threats." The MRC Student Coalition has been placing the school's mission into

action. We strongly disagree with any of the members of our vibrant community being penalized for praxis.

Finally, we request respect for the sensitivity of these testimonies. Under no circumstances should these testimonies be copied, distributed, or otherwise referenced without explicit permission. Members of the Coalition can be best contacted through our Facebook or MRCStudentCoalition@gmail.com.

We would like to conclude with a few questions:

1. The Provost's office and other administrators have known about concerns of this nature since at least 2008. We believe it is an administrative failure to have not responded to these concerns when notified. In considering the constructive notice given, why has it taken so much time and pressure to procure a sufficient response from the administration?
2. What formal counsel can Academic Assembly provide us as students? We are seeking the Assembly's thoughts regarding the most appropriate and expedient channels for forward motion.