Kent State Stark Faculty Council Minutes
March 18, 2016

I. Chair Earley called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

II. Secretary Moneysmith called the roll and determined a quorum was present.


   Ex-officio: Dean Denise Seachrist.

   Absent: Leslie Heaphy, Mitch McKenney, Don Thacker, Bathi Kasturiarachi.

   Guests: Rob Kairis, Thomas Norton-Smith, Gwendolyn Purifoye.

III. Approval of Agenda

   Motion to approve: Councilor Warren.
   Second: Councilor Shepherd.
   The agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes of the February 19, 2016 Meeting

   Councilor Shepherd, who took the minutes for the February meeting, made a motion to approve the minutes at the next Faculty Council meeting, to give councilors more time to read them.
   Second: Councilor Warren.
   The motion was unanimously approved.

V. Chair’s Report

   A. RCFAC. Chair Earley reported that the idea of consolidating the deans for regional campuses was presented to the Board of Trustees. RCFAC wrote a letter to the provost asking for clarification.

   B. Provost’s Advisory Council Meeting. The provost discussed promotion from associate to full professor, indicating that he wants all departments to have differential language for regional campuses.
C. **Security Concerns.** Chair Earley noted that faculty had brought questions about campus security to his attention. He asked Dean Seachrist if there were plans to install security cameras. Dean Seachrist indicated that we are looking into this situation and have had people come from the Kent campus to assess our needs.

D. **Student Complaint Officer.** Chair Earley also mentioned that concerns had been raised about Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi serving as the Student Complaint Officer. The concern is that one of the assistant dean’s jobs is to advocate for faculty. Is also serving as the complaint officer a conflict of interest? Dean Seachrist explained that other regional campuses do have an assistant dean serving in this capacity, as she had herself earlier in her career. Many grievances come to the assistant dean before anywhere else, and often they can be resolved right then with no additional action.

Since the former complaint officer, Rob Kairis, was in attendance, Dean Seachrist asked his opinion of the situation. He verified that other campuses have an assistant dean serve in this role. He also indicated that he had had some conversation with Tim Gray, Student Conduct Officer, and they wondered if the campus needs a full-time ombud. Maybe adding the role of student complaint officer to someone’s full-time job was too much responsibility. It is a challenging position, and it can be very time-consuming.

Councilor Shepherd suggested that the role of the student complaint officer is more to facilitate the process rather than advocating one way or another. He also thinks that having someone at the dean level involved may help to resolve issues because of the kind of authority deans have.

Councilor Lloyd said that we should remember that for pre-tenure faculty, it can be scary to go to the assistant dean. When Rob Kairis was the student complaint officer, faculty didn’t need to see a dean for a small matter. Sometimes students come in to complain in the heat of the moment before they have fully processed the issue they want to discuss. Dean Seachrist agreed, saying that when she served as a campus complaint officer she would often have students write down the problem for her, and in the process of writing they would calm down and feel better about the situation.

Councilor Warren said that the unique situation of our campus should be considered as well. Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi wears “a million hats,” something that doesn’t necessarily occur on smaller campuses.

Dean Seachrist thanked everyone for their comments and indicated that she would continue to monitor the situation.

E. **Questions for the Chair.** At the end of his report, Chair Earley asked for comments and questions. Professor Norton-Smith asked to return to Chair Earley’s first point about reducing the number of regional campus deans, such that a total of only three deans would administer the seven regional campuses. Colleagues on other campuses are not in favor of this idea and seem to believe that any sharing of positions should occur at the assistant dean or other levels. If the Stark Faculty Council agrees, they should craft a resolution or letter of support. Chair Earley indicated that such action was possible if it were the wish of Council.
VI. Dean’s Report

A. **Connections with China.** Dean Seachrist indicated that Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi is now in China with Dr. Bei Cai. They are visiting Shenzhen Polytechnic, which is now thinking of sending us 30 to 40 students in the fall, as well as three universities in Beijing. Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi and Sarah Schmidt, Outreach Program Coordinator in the Office of Global Initiatives, have been negotiating housing arrangements with Staybridge Suites, which can better provide for the students’ needs. For example, they are willing to purchase rice cookers to put in the students’ rooms and to make their vans available for transportation. We are also looking at making arrangements with SARTA. SARTA may be able to make runs between our campus and Staybridge Suites, and it may be able to put a wrap on the bus so it says “Kent State Stark.” We are looking into making arrangements with additional Chinese institutions. We also have two visiting scholars now on campus, Tao Mei and Wen Qian Guo.

Councilor Taylor asked if there had been discussion about placing the students with host families as opposed to hotels. Dean Seachrist explained that had been discussed. Eventually they are hoping to place students in several different hotels or in apartments.

B. **Local Businesses.** Dean Seachrist is making a concerted effort to touch base with local businesses, much like she did with local schools last year. We need to think strategically about ways to help meet the needs of local businesses while also creating opportunities for our students.

C. **Fine Arts Expansion and Renovation.** Our current plan is to break ground in Spring 2017. We will be expanding the facility first to have enough swing space to renovate. We are also working on a proposal for the Stark Development Board.

D. **Admissions.** Our numbers are up for applications, including transfer applications, and the number of students admitted. We are working on new ways to reach out to students who have applied and been accepted. Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi and Assistant Dean Southards are crafting text messages that faculty could send out on university phones to help faculty connect to students.

E. **“Life after Tenure” Load Lift.** Dean Seachrist indicated that she would like to have Council’s advice on the best way to get faculty input on this new load lift designated for post-tenure faculty actively working on attaining the rank of full professor. The email announcement she sent out indicated that PAAC would not be reviewing this load lift because she wanted to stress that this load lift is a new category of support for faculty. Although it may have looked like only she would be looking at the proposals, the intent was always to get faculty input. She was not certain what the best method might be. For example, she thought about creating an *ad hoc* group composed of associate professors or full professors.

In response, Councilor Moneysmith indicated that she thought that PAAC should review the requests, and that PAAC could easily apply the different criteria to this additional set of load lifts. Although the dean had wondered if there might be an issue if PAAC had members who were at the assistant professor level, Councilor Moneysmith pointed out that PAAC’s responsibilities already include evaluating so-called regular load lift proposals from all ranks of faculty, including full professors, in addition to FPIL proposals and travel requests. Councilor Warren, who is serving as PAAC chair this year, agreed with this
assessment. Guest Professor Norton-Smith suggested that an alternative might be to have Faculty Council evaluate them, which might give junior faculty the opportunity to gain experience in evaluating faculty requests that could prepare them for evaluating future merit requests.

After some additional discussion, Dean Seachrist indicated that she could see the value in having PAAC evaluate them, at least this first year.

F. New Dean’s Fellow. Dean Seachrist announced that she will be creating a dean’s fellow position, which will be similar to the Provost’s fellow position at the Kent campus. The fellowship will give the person the opportunity to shadow her and Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi. Applications will be submitted at the end of April, with the decision being made in May.

G. College Credit Plus. Dean Seachrist indicated that Assistant Dean Kasturiarachi has said that numbers are continuing to grow, and we could have as many as 500 students in the program next year.

VII. Assistant Dean’s Report

No report, as Dr. Kasturiarachi is out of the country on University business.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. PAAC. Councilor Warren reported that since the last Faculty Council meeting, the committee made recommendations on five requests. The committee’s next big task will be reviewing load lift proposals, which are due on Friday, April 8.

B. Committee II. No report, as the committee currently does not have a charge.

C. Colloquium Committee. Councilor Starkey reported that at last month’s colloquium on February 19 the nursing faculty spoke about heart health. Twelve people attended. She reminded Council that tonight at 5:15, several people involved with the Bicentennial Project will be presenting.

The last Faculty Colloquium of the year will be held on Friday, April 15, with Eric Taylor and Andrea Myers presenting.

D. Treasurer/Social Committee. No official report. However, Guest Gwendolyn Purifoye, a member of the committee, indicated that the next Snack Day is on Wednesday, March 30 in Main Hall, and the Spring Dinner is on May 7.

E. Handbook Committee. No report. The committee does not have a charge.

F. Technology Committee. No report.

G. Ad hoc Memorial Garden Committee. Professor Norton-Smith and Councilor Shepherd reported on behalf of the committee. At present the committee is in a holding pattern, with nothing new to communicate at this time.

H. Ad hoc Space Committee. Councilor Engelhardt presented the committee’s final report. The committee learned from meeting with Brian Gardner that there is no actual policy to
govern space and faculty offices. They then surveyed faculty and found that 70 percent are basically satisfied with their offices, but there is no agreement on the details because faculty have different needs. After studying the issues thoroughly, the committee makes these three recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Establish a permanent Academic Spaces Committee.

Recommendation #2: Adopt and publicize a set of “Standard Office Configuration” guidelines.

Recommendation #3: Possible uses for “Dead Spaces.”

The full text of the committee’s report is included as an addendum to these minutes.

Councilor Moneysmith moved that Faculty Council accept the report, and Councilor Taylor seconded the motion. Discussion ensued, focusing on issues such as whether a standing committee was actually needed, or if clear guidelines would suffice; whether faculty can request to have their office repainted; and whether faculty could get a standing desk.

After thorough discussion, Council unanimously voted to accept the report. Chair Earley indicated that at the next Faculty Council meeting, we can decide if we want to recommend that any action be taken.

IX. Old Business
None

X. New Business

**Strategic Plan.** Dean Seachrist said that we need to discuss getting faculty input on our Strategic Plan and its implementation. When Professor Norton-Smith was Council Chair, he was in charge of faculty input. How should we proceed now? Chair Earley indicated that it would be good to have a group, but it should not be too large. Councilor Moneysmith asked if Cabinet would be too large. Councilor Warren indicated that she thought that Cabinet would be appropriate, but there may need to be a special Cabinet meeting. It was determined that the task would be allocated to Cabinet. Chair Earley indicated that he will arrange a meeting.

XI. Announcements

A. Councilor Starkey announced that the Ohio Academy of History Conference will be held on our campus on April 1 and 2. Yesterday our colleague Shawn Shelby sent out an email message that includes additional information.

B. Councilor Birch announced that he will be giving a recital on campus on Monday, March 28 at 7:30 PM.

C. Chair Earley reminded Council that the President’s Excellence Awards need to have input from Faculty Council. The deadline for submitting information is April 11. The Dean’s report is due April 18th.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Earley adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.