Kent State Stark Faculty Council Minutes
March 17, 2017

I. Chair Warren called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

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


Ex-officio: Dean Denise Seachrist, Associate Dean Bathi Kasturiarachi.


Guests: Stephanie Monastra, Stephen Neaderhisser, Gwendolyn Purifoye.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: Councilor Shelestak
Second: Councilor Lehnert
The agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes for the February, 2017 Meeting

Motion to approve: Councilor Starkey
Second: Councilor McKenney
The minutes were unanimously approved.

V. Chair’s Report

A. President’s Faculty Excellence Awards. On Friday, March 3rd, the tenure-track members of Faculty Council met to review the four nominees for the President’s Faculty Excellence Awards and make recommendations to Dean Seachrist. Chair Warren extended her thanks to the faculty who attended the meeting.

B. RCFAC. RCFAC also met on Friday, March 3rd. Dr. Ritchey commented on several ongoing activities. First, he discussed campus safety. The heads of security at Kent are in the process of determining security and safety needs at all campuses (they are calling it a gap analysis), and Dr. Ritchey advised that he will be given the results of the analysis once it is complete. Dr. Ritchey stated that he is in favor of having armed security on the regional campuses, although at this time the powers that be at Kent disagree. Secondly, he provided an update on the comprehensive campaign. Campuses have been
challenged to come up with “big ideas” to get funding sources. Dr. Ritchey stated that he also wanted to generate a collective regional campus “big idea.” He wants to take the established rural scholars program on the Salem campus and modify it to fit all of the campuses. He is calling it the “Rising Scholar Initiative.” He has proposed it to President Warren and has gotten her support. Finally, Dr. Ritchey has been placed on a committee that is charged with determining what to do with the data gathered from the climate survey, as it applies to regional campuses. He has asked RCFAC to come to the next meeting with ideas on how to address the findings of the faculty portion of the study. If anyone has any ideas, contact Chair Warren so she can incorporate them into the discussion next month.

C. Spring Faculty Meeting. Chair Warren ended her report with a reminder that the spring faculty meeting will be held on Friday, April 7th at 2:00 p.m. in the SNB # 101. When cabinet met on Monday, they discussed the agenda for the meeting. Chair Warren invited Cindy Howard (bookstore manager) to come and address faculty regarding some of the issues raised through the bookstore survey as well as other updates she might have.

VI. Dean’s Report

A. Death of Staff Member Nathan Johnson. Dean Seachrist indicated that since both Nathan and his brother worked on the night crew, they wanted to make sure that support was provided for those on that shift. To that end, last Sunday a counselor from IMPACT came down at 10:30 p.m., and Dean Seachrist was present as well. They talked until shortly after midnight. The staff was also given the opportunity to give input on some new procedures that might be put into place.

B. Main Hall Elevator. Dean Seachrist indicated that they were well aware of the ongoing problems with the sole elevator in Main Hall and were looking at different options to address them. The necessary repairs or renovations are extremely costly.

C. Space for LGBTQ Resource Center. Dean Seachrist announced that the Canto office, Room 206 in the library, will be repurposed as temporary space for an LGBTQ Resource Center. The space is now ready and will be kept open. There is no signage on the office, but a large rainbow has been placed on the large window that is adjacent to the office door. The ultimate goal is to create a large space for multicultural programs, and the LGBTQ center could be part of that. Councilor Moneysmith, whose students in her editing class are in the process of completing a project on reviving Canto, asked if dedicated space would still be set aside for Canto. Dean Seachrist explained that if approval was received to bring back Canto, perhaps it could share some of the Writing Center’s new space.

D. Office for Emeriti Faculty. Prompted by our discussion of designating an office for Emeriti Faculty at last month’s meeting, Dean Seachrist explored the options and has determined that the office will be in Main Hall room 407.

E. Baby Changing Stations. Brian Gardner has been asked to look into installing baby changing stations in both men’s and women’s rest rooms.
F. **Library Renovation.** Library renovation to create new space for the Writing Center is planned for May to August, with everything being in place by the fall semester.

G. **Fine Arts Expansion.** Expansion of the Fine Arts building has begun. We do not do a ground-breaking ceremony for an expansion (as opposed to new construction). Instead we will have a grand opening celebration when the building is completed, in approximately two years.

H. **Covering Bus Shelter.** Waiting for the bus can be an unpleasant experience for our students during inclement weather. Consequently, we are planning to cover our bus stops to create a shelter. We currently have three, and they will cost about $8,000 each. We may be downsizing to two. Because we are planning to move Loop Road, we many need to move the stop to the other side of the street.

I. **Mass Notification System.** By April 1, a mass notification system will be in place, which will be available to all office phones. Several phones on campus will be equipped to send out messages, with the proper codes. There will be a number of pre-recorded messages, but it will also be possible to create messages specific to the situation.

J. **Scheduling Software.** We will be transitioning to a new system that will enable us to schedule all space on campus, resulting in greater efficiency and convenience. For example, faculty will be able to use the system to schedule a room for a meeting. A consultant will be here on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of spring break. After this group is trained, training will be available for the rest of us.

K. **State Budget.** The State Share of Instruction (SSI) may see an increase of one percent. Tuition and fees will continue to be frozen. A preliminary study suggests that it will cost Kent State anywhere from 17 to 41 million dollars if the university pays for students’ books as has been proposed. We as Kent State University do not pay sales tax, but our students do when they purchase books. As a result, the state would also take a bit of a hit with sales tax.

L. **Textbook Orders.** Speaking of textbooks, Dean Seachrist reminded Councilors that federal law requires that faculty submit book orders by March 1 for summer classes and April 1 for fall.

M. **Dean Search.** A search is underway for a permanent dean for the Salem and East Liverpool campuses.

N. **Dining Contract.** On March 2, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation that the university contract with Aramark LLC for dining services and PepsiCo for exclusive cold beverage rights. Our students will also have the option of having a meal plan. The university will also benefit because Aramark has promised capital improvements.

O. **Signing Ceremony.** President Warren recently signed an MOU (memo of understanding) with Xi’An International Studies University. This is the third Chinese institution we are partnering with.
P. **Early Separation Program.** An early separation program for staff was recently announced. Initially there was some discussion of also including faculty, but many administrators were concerned that it would be too late to staff classes. It is likely that the offer will be extended to faculty next academic year. A consultant estimated that approximately 160 faculty would take advantage of the offer. If so, the university would save a great deal of money, which could result in more tenure-track hires.

VII. Associate Dean’s Report

A. **Schedules.** Summer 2017 enrollment is going well. Associate Dean Kasturiarachi suggested that faculty encourage students to register soon. Memos about summer proportional pay will be issued in the coming weeks. The Fall 2017 schedule will be ready for registration by March 22, 2017. He would like to thank all the coordinators for their cooperation.

B. **Searches.** Our search for an FTNTT position in English is progressing, with three candidates coming to campus next month. We hope to wrap up this search soon afterwards.

C. **Bulldog Flash.** Bulldog Flash Institute, a partnership with McKinley HS and Kent State Stark, has 58 applicants. We hope to select 25 for the first year’s cohort. The first activity will be a week-long program on our campus. All participants in the program will have a mentor. The first year, Stark students will serve as mentors. Beginning the second year, high school seniors in the program will serve as mentors. When they graduate from high school, the students will have a scholarship waiting for them if they meet certain benchmarks.

D. **Global Initiatives.** Dr. Birch’s “Understanding Music” course has been selected to be part of the Florence program this summer. We also had a good session today for faculty on opportunities for study abroad. In addition, we have identified five programs to target for international recruitment for degree completion. The Office of Global Education will be recruiting for us, presenting the Stark campus option along with the Kent options. As Dean Seachrist noted, recently President Warren signed a partnership agreement with Xi’An International Studies University in China. Our colleague Dr. Bei Cai has been instrumental in forging this new partnership.

E. **Grant Activity.** We received a Choose Ohio First STEM scholarships grant; however, we did not receive the full amount to support 15 new students. We will adjust to supporting 12 students. Anyone who is currently a high school senior is eligible to apply. Recipients will receive a scholarship for 80% of their tuition.

F. **New Programs.** We recently signed a memo of understanding to deliver the Computer Design, Animation, and Game Design programs in conjunction with the Tuscarawas campus. There will be synchronous delivery of courses here from Main Hall Room 313. Six courses will be delivered here initially. We will be working on an adjacent virtual reality room; Tuscarawas will provide the equipment.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. **PAAC.** No report.
B. **Committee II.** Councilor Starkey reported that since the last Council meeting, Committee II sent out a Qualtrics survey to the entire faculty to solicit greater faculty input for the next strategy map. Julie Spotts set up the survey for the committee. It was open from March 6 through 13, and 22 responses were received. Committee II discussed all of the submissions and revised the draft. The committee used two criteria to determine which suggestions to incorporate: (1) new language was incorporated when it clarified the meaning, and (2) substantive changes or additions were made if it seemed feasible to accomplish the task or initiative in one year, the time period the new strategy map will cover. The types of feedback received fell into three categories: (1) concerns about imprecise language, much of which came directly from the strategic plan and could not be altered; (2) concerns about study abroad and exchange programs, especially fully integrating students and visiting faculty once they are here; and (3) a desire that reports would be shared so that faculty would know the results that stemmed from the initiatives in the strategic road map. Councilor Starkey asked if anyone else had any changes they would like to make, but there were no suggestions. She then moved that Council approve the revised draft to be submitted to the deans. Councilor Mukherjee seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed. Councilor Shelestak noted that the committee had done a great deal of work and commended them for their efforts. A copy of the revised strategic road map is included at the end of these minutes.

C. **Colloquium Committee.** Councilor McKenney reminded Council that a faculty colloquium will be held after this Council meeting, beginning at 4:30. Dr. Nowakowski, Dr. Martinez, and Dr. Gasper-Hulvat will be presenting. The next faculty colloquium will be held on Friday, April 21 at 4:30.

D. **Treasurer/Social Committee.** Councilor Sato reported that the coffee fund and the faculty fund both have money at this time. She also explained that the date of the Spring Dinner had to be changed from Saturday, May 6, as originally planned, to Friday, May 5, because costs are prohibitive when an event is planned on the weekend.

E. **Handbook Committee.** No report, as the committee has already completed its work.

F. **Technology Committee.** Dr. Neaderhiser reported that he had been asked to contact a representative from BoxCast, a company that does streaming of audio and video, to see if they offered capabilities that could be used for synchronous distance learning and if a demo could be set up. However, it became clear that what they offered would not be effective for synchronous learning, so he pulled back on setting up a demo. The information gathered was sent to Dr. Ritchez, who is very interested in offering synchronous courses across regional campuses. Dr. Neaderhiser asked that anyone with insights or experiences with synchronous teaching contact him or any member of the committee. If synchronous courses are definitely on the horizon, we may want to get on top of it so we have a voice in the decision-making process. Dr. Neaderhiser also mentioned that it might be possible to make some positive changes in Main Hall Room 208, although he noted that faculty who teach in the room have very different ideas on how it should be changed.

G. **Ad hoc Peer Review Committee.** As chair of the committee, Dr. Seelye first explained that the idea for this committee came from the meeting that the dean held with pre-tenure faculty. He indicated that all the committee members worked efficiently to gather information and opinions by talking to as many people as possible and thanked them for
their efforts. He then summarized the findings outlined in the committee’s report that had been distributed to Councilors earlier. He noted that although we are expected to have two peer reviews a year, that expectation is not specified in the campus faculty handbook, nor are there any written guidelines about how the peer review process should be carried out or how peer reviews should be written. Consequently, many questions can arise in conjunction with peer reviews. For example, how should faculty new to campus go about finding peer reviewers? Who is qualified to do them? Should FTNTT faculty be able to complete peer reviews? Should the associate dean keep a list of those who are qualified? Should a form that outlines characteristics of good peer reviews be made available for those who wish to use it? How many times should a peer reviewer visit the class being reviewed? What is a reasonable time for the instructor to receive the completed peer review? Because peer reviews of teaching are so important to faculty and there are so many questions surrounding them, it was decided that the committee’s report should be distributed to all faculty, with a discussion of the report’s suggestions added to the agenda of the April 7 faculty meeting. A copy of the committee’s report is included at the end of these minutes.

IX. Old Business: None

X. New Business

**Stephanie Monastra: Conference Center Update.** Ms. Monastra gave some background information about the Conference Center, explaining how the business model had changed when she came on board approximately 18 months ago. Previously the Conference Center was doing many weddings and social events. The role of the Conference Center was reexamined, and its operations were realigned more to corporate education. A minimum cost had been set for weddings, so it was easier to allow for a weekend event such as our faculty and staff events because the Conference Center was also getting revenue for weddings. Now, under the new model, discounts are available for our events when held Monday through Friday, but their hands are tied on the weekends. In order to cover weekend costs (such as staffing, etc.), they need to have a minimum of $12,000. That is why our Spring Dinner, for example, is far more affordable if we hold it on a Friday rather than on Saturday as we have in the past when the Conference Center was operating on a different model.

Ms. Monastra also explained the new level of training and certification required of employees and the changes in staff job descriptions that enables them to give high-quality service and sets the Conference Center apart from other venues in NE Ohio. Dean Seachrist added that these changes also enable us to work with the hospitality management program. Finally, Ms. Monastra encouraged faculty to get better acquainted with the Conference Center, perhaps by coming to have lunch there occasionally, the cost of which is $12.00 for those working at the campus.

Chair Warren thanked Ms. Monastra for attending the meeting and sharing this useful information.

XI. Announcements

Councilor Taylor reminded Councilors that the “Run the World” 5K will be held at the campus on Saturday, April 15.
XII. Adjournment

Chair Warren adjourned the meeting at 4:16 p.m.
Stark Campus Strategy Map for 2017-2018

**Strategic Priority 1: Students First**

1.1 Student Success and Academic Excellence

**Goals**

1. Promote academic excellence among students
2. Support student success, progression, and retention
3. Strengthen incoming freshman class
4. Deliver academic courses and programs in the most effective manner

**Key Priorities for 2017-2018**

A. Boost efforts to craft schedules of classes to meet the needs of students
B. Maintain academic rigor
C. Strengthen the relationships among students, faculty, and advisors
D. Bolster initiatives for grants and scholarships for all qualified students
E. Improve and promote student research options
F. Strengthen students’ connections to career opportunities and internship programs
G. Continue to mitigate student debt through financial literacy education
H. Advance efforts to revise the First Year Experience (FYE) program to enhance retention and to strengthen the first-year student class
I. Expand student activities outside the classroom
J. Continue to involve high-achieving current students in recruitment

**Strategic Priority 2: A Distinctive Kent State**

2.1 Faculty Excellence

**Goals**

1. Promote excellence in teaching
2. Promote excellence in faculty research and creative activity
3. Maintain a vibrant academic community

**Key Priorities for 2017-2018**

A. Support faculty use of innovative strategies, course offerings, and interdisciplinary faculty partnerships
B. Increase support for faculty research and creative ongoing activity
C. Increase the recognition and celebration of outstanding teaching
D. Increase the active recognition of faculty scholarly and creative activities
E. Foster effective communication and collaboration among all campus constituencies
F. Continue to strive toward effective shared governance
2.2 Campus Community

Goal
1. Build and support relationships within the campus community

Key Priorities for 2017-2018
A. Cultivate a respectful environment in the classroom and workspace
B. Support the professional development of all campus constituencies
C. Acknowledge past campus contributors
D. Devise new ways of including the families of campus citizens in the life of the campus
E. Leave a thriving campus community to future students and colleagues

Strategic Priority 3: Global Competitiveness

3.1 Global Awareness

Goal
1. Enhance the global cultural awareness of all campus constituencies

Key Priorities for 2017-2018
A. Continue to support study abroad and exchange programs
B. Reaffirm commitment to and respect for diversity in the classroom
C. Stress the importance of diversity in the recruitment of all community members
D. Nurture diverse campus communities such as veterans, LGBTQ students, first-generation students, international students, etc.

Strategic Priority 4: Regional Impact

4.1 Image and Community Relations

Goals
1. Promote the Stark Campus as the preferred choice in the region for education and economic partnerships
2. Build and support relationships within the wider community
3. Respond nimbly to regional needs
4. Enhance image as a community asset

Key Priorities for 2017-2018
A. Emphasize the ways in which our degree programs meet the dynamic educational and employment needs of the region
B. Identify community partners/stakeholders for select programs, including experiential and service learning programs
C. Conduct ongoing research to determine economic growth areas in the region
D. Support faculty, staff, and administrators’ engagement with schools, businesses, and organizations to meet community needs
E. Develop additional academic, articulation, and completion agreements with area colleges and universities
F. Promote the Conference Center and the Corporate University as avenues for the business and professional community
G. Engage local arts and cultural groups to promote reciprocal relationships
H. Connect Kent State Stark alumni to the campus

**Strategic Priority 5: Organizational Stewardship**

5.1 Sustainability

**Goals**

1. Increase traditional and non-traditional revenue streams
2. Develop cost-reduction strategies and budget efficiencies
3. Act in environmentally responsible ways

**Key Priorities for 2017-2018**

A. Maximize enrollment at Kent State Stark
B. Create and expand courses, certificates, degree programs, and adult programs
C. Nourish current and create additional fundraising opportunities
D. Increase transparency in operating budgets
E. Develop a campus and community education program in environmental sustainability
F. Pursue innovative partnerships to bring new energy technology to campus
Committee Members:
Ann Martinez
Jim Seelye
Lindsay Starkey
Scott Tobias

Introduction and Charge

Associate Dean Kasturiarachi charged this committee in February 2017 as an ad-hoc committee to consider the current practice of peer evaluations of teaching on the Stark Campus. Current practice dictates that faculty at various levels secure evaluations of their teaching by colleagues from both the Stark Campus and their home department at the Kent Campus. The committee focused on evaluation practices for pre-tenured faculty, and only those for the Stark Campus, as departments have their own guidelines.

The committee held a number of informal discussions with faculty members in order to gain a better appreciation of how our current practice of peer evaluations of teaching is understood. Unfortunately, due to time and scheduling constraints, we were unable to speak with everyone who would have been in a position to provide additional input, but based on the number of colleagues we were able to speak with the committee was able to compile an instructive illustration of how peer evaluations are completed, and suggestions for how the current system could be improved upon in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

The committee acknowledges and expresses appreciation for all of those faculty who took the time to speak with us. It is obvious that the Stark Campus prides itself on the excellence of its teaching, and the following recommendations and observations are intended to further strengthen this area.

Recommendations

1. A list of faculty both willing and qualified to complete peer evaluations of teaching will be kept by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and updated annually. Faculty who need peer reviews of their teaching will be able to consult this list and seek out faculty to complete their evaluations.

2. The Stark Campus Handbook should be updated to include language relevant to peer evaluations. Practice indicates that probationary faculty are required to have two peer evaluations of their teaching annually (one coming from the Stark Campus, and one coming from the Kent Campus). The current handbook language does not require this practice. The Stark Campus Handbook states that candidates are to “demonstrate
excellence in teaching. Excellence in teaching may be evaluated in multiple ways, including, but not limited to, . . . supportive peer evaluations. . .” (p. 28). The Stark Campus Faculty Manual states, “Two peer evaluations per year would be helpful” (p. 23).

3. A form that outlines the key elements of good peer evaluations will be made available. Its use will be completely optional.

4. Examples of what constitutes excellent peer evaluations need to be made available. In this case “excellent” refers to content that is well-organized, thorough, and thoughtful.

5. Faculty who agree to complete peer evaluations of teaching understand that their reviews will be part of RTP files. A due date for submission of the written report should be standard practice to help those completing their RTP narrative; three weeks from the date of the classroom visitation is suggested as a fair and reasonable amount of time for both parties.

Observations

1. The work of this committee demonstrates that larger conversations need to take place on the research and literature of quality peer evaluations. Perhaps a professional development workshop could be offered. It should be noted that the committee specifically steered away from pursuing this as part of its work and deliberations.

2. Since many peer evaluations are entirely laudatory, a number of faculty who review them as part of the RTP process pay little or no attention to them.

3. One-time classroom visits are not ideal, and multiple visits could constitute a more complete picture of teaching patterns, but due to time constraints, multiple visits are logistically difficult.

4. Since these evaluations are part of the RTP process, some faculty indicated a need for more uniformity in them to make it easier to track changes over time.

5. In order to spread the workload around more evenly, faculty who indicate a willingness to complete peer evaluations will undertake a maximum of two evaluations per year. A number of faculty expressed concern that typically a small number of faculty writes numerous reviews during the year. Capping the number will both alleviate the workload and allow a larger number of interested and qualified faculty to complete peer evaluations of teaching.