Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Arts & Sciences Council

Thursday, March 8, 2018

Call to Order

Anita Layton (Chair) welcomed the committee, then reminded all eligible Council members vote in the election for the next A&S Council chair. She also asked members to encourage their colleagues to vote. As of that morning, only 150 faculty, or 22 percent of all eligible voters, had voted. The deadline to vote is Monday, March 19, the Monday after Spring Break.

She then asked for any changes or corrections to the February minutes. There being none, the minutes were then voted on as approved.

Veto Referendum

Layton then introduced the veto referendum discussion, reminding everyone that Council has been discussing this issue since November. After today’s discussion, the Council will vote.

Mike Munger (Political Science) reminded Council of the history of the referendum:
- First discussed in ECASC in 2013, after 2U vote.
- Considered briefly by Council last academic year.
- Brought up for consideration in November.
- Presented with history and explanations, in December.
- Presented with amendments in January.
- Presented with an amendment in February.

While the process has been a long one, Munger said, this is a bylaw change and rules about rules take the highest scrutiny.

He listed the five issues -- eligibility to vote, domain, trigger, quorum, and outcome/decision rule -- that he had talked about quite a bit during the last two meetings. He reminded Council that the eligibility to vote in Council is taken from existing bylaws. Council should pay specific attention to the following: “Representatives from outside Arts & Sciences shall vote on matters concerning general undergraduate education, but not those specific to Trinity College nor on faculty issues, as determined by ECASC.”

Munger then went over the proposed bylaw change:

III. K. Faculty Referenda
The Arts & Sciences Faculty can, by a vote of the members at large, veto motions passed by the Arts & Sciences Council. A veto referendum is triggered when a qualifying petition is received by ECASC within 10 academic business days of the vote on the original motion. An academic business day is a weekday during the fall or spring semester in which classes meet. A qualifying petition must contain valid signatures (actual or electronic) of at least 10% of the faculty eligible to vote. An announcement will be made that the referendum process has been triggered within 3 academic business days of the submission of a qualifying petition.

The wording of the referendum shall take the following form:
“Motion X (date passed by Council) should be nullified. [Text of Motion X passed by Council]”

A "yes" vote signifies that the voter believes that the challenged motion should be nullified. A "no" vote means that the voter approves the challenged motion and wants it implemented. Faculty will be allowed 10 academic business days to vote. A valid quorum is 40% of the faculty eligible to vote.

Eligibility will depend on the subject of the motion that triggered the referendum: if a representative of the Council voted (or would have been eligible to vote) on the motion, then the regular rank faculty from that unit are eligible to vote in the referendum, and count toward quorum requirements. If a valid quorum was attained, then the votes will be tallied. A majority vote would nullify the original motion.

Munger pointed out that the recording equipment did not work last meeting, so there was not an exact transcript of Professor Janan’s amendment. His understanding was that the definition of an academic business day is a weekday during the fall or spring semester in which classes meet. Council discussed that definition and voted on it, so it’s now the definition, at least for the purposes of this proposed bylaw change.

Munger than made the case for bylaw revision:
• The process by which votes are translated into outcomes, in a representative body or other aggregate decision rule, can be complex and even distorting.
• How do we choose Presidents? Not vote by majority, but Electoral College. Might wish we had some recourse, if that goes “wrong.”
• How do we choose “voters” for A&S Council? One department, one vote. Much like the U.S. Senate. No reason to expect Council actions to be representative of “the faculty.”
• That’s okay, for many purposes. But for many important issues, we need more faculty buy-in and voice than a “MWC” (minimum winning coalition) of departments.

To ensure that Council decisions represent the will of the faculty, even though Council acts more like the Senate, we might want to have some recourse to population. We also want to provide a forum if a large group of people disagree and they just missed the issue. Munger pointed out that we saw this exact thing happen with the discussion of the bylaw revision. Many people missed the initial discussion. Faculty are all busy and have other things to do, so it’s quite possible for important information to go under the radar. The veto referendum would address both those issues, though there’s no question that the veto referendum would protect the status quo.

Munger then made the case against the bylaw revision because a number of people have made useful points in previous meetings and he wanted to reiterate those. The first, and perhaps the most important, is that the process by which votes are translated into outcomes may be complex, but it’s the one we have and it’s based on departments as units that get things done in the university. Since implementation of
programs is done by departments, that’s the level at which votes should be represented. A decision rule of one department, one vote makes more sense. Second, the proposal finds a problem where none exists and it imposes a solution that no one understands. Even the example raised, 2U, didn’t pass Council, so there’s not a single example of a resolution that this would have been used for. Since it’s not clear what this would be used for, a conservative approach says we should be cautious. Third, the thresholds are at once too high and too low. It is so hard to get more than 50 percent that it will never be used successfully, but the requirement of a 40 percent quorum means that the vote will not be representative in any case. A number of people were concerned that this would do one of two things, neither of which is desirable: disenfranchise smaller, mostly humanities departments or create an environment where Council won’t take its job seriously since if people disagree, they can always veto something.

Munger said he hopes Council can move toward voting, but he also welcomed comments.

**Micaela Janan (Classical Studies)** pointed out that the amendment language in Munger’s slide doesn’t match what was in the minutes, and the minutes are the official record of Council.

**Munger** asked for the issue to be tabled and taken up later.

**Chris Walter (Physics)** asked if Council voted during the last 10 days of the semester, people would have all summer to trigger a veto referendum?

**Munger** said yes; the deadline would be 10 days past the vote, so if there are three days left in the spring semester, one would have seven days left after the start of the fall semester.

**Walter** asked about the rationale behind adding this language.

**Munger** said there was a concern that people leave campus at the end of a semester and anything that would trigger such a referendum would be controversial and Council wanted as many faculty as possible to weigh in on the issue.

There being no more questions, the Council voted 13 in favor, 17 against the proposed bylaw revision.

**Interdepartmental Majors**

Layton then asked Jeff Forbes to lead the discussion about interdepartmental majors.

**Jeff Forbes (Computer Science and chair of Curriculum Committee)** reviewed the discussion from the previous meeting. Current curricular options are Program I and Program II. Program I houses majors and minors that are departmentally proposed and approved by the Curriculum Committee. Program I also houses student-proposed majors. The Curriculum Committee is proposing that interdepartmental majors (majors proposed by students and split between two departments) would now become department-originated pilot majors. Requirements would be publicly available and students could declare any existing IDM. The Curriculum Committee wants to encourage innovation on behalf of departments, so if they want to come up with an interdisciplinary major, but don’t want to go through the entire process of proposing a new major, they will now be able to do that. Students could potentially declare that major for up to five years, then the major would sunset. At that point, the department could choose to not offer it anymore or create an actual major.
If students want to do an individually designed major just for them and the departments didn’t want to propose a major, those students could go to Program II. The Curriculum Committee also recommends that the Program II committee be flexible in reviewing student-authored IDMs.

He then welcomed questions.

Sherryl Broverman (Biology) appreciated the addition of recommending Program II be flexible, but this puts all the burden on the Program II committee. Right now, the Program II committee would instantly reject an IDM because it’s not interdisciplinary enough. So students would be put in limbo because Program II’s current rules won’t allow it to support them. Program II would have to change its rules, which is fine, but shouldn’t the Program II Committee join this conversation? She worried about the possibility of leaving some of Duke’s most creative students without an avenue for study.

Forbes said he would imagine most departments would happily propose an IDM submitted by students if, under the current model, it is no greater overhead to the department to submit that. If the department does not think the IDM is appropriate, then there is onus on the Program II Committee to consider the student’s proposal. There’s nothing in the Bulletin that stops Program II from doing this, that’s why it’s just a recommendation. But he agreed that some relatively small number of students could be caught in limbo.

Broverman said that if a proposal looks like an IDM, the Program II Committee instantly rejects it. Maybe before a vote happens, the Program II Committee should be brought into this conversation so there’s consensus moving forward.

Forbes said he believed Program II has been informed of this; he does not know if the committee has discussed the proposal.

Charlotte Clark (NSOE) missed the last meeting and is unclear about the problem we are trying to solve.

Forbes said one of the problems was consistency: Student A and student B could both propose IDMs, but whether either is accepted depends on the two DUSs involved. There was no Curriculum Committee vetting or even knowledge of what was happening there. There is also an issue with subsequent changes. Once an IDM of 14 courses is proposed, there is no system for monitoring since it’s not programmed into the advising report. Changing them to departmentally originated makes them easier to monitor. And arguably there’s the idea that if a student has a particularly good focused idea, it made sense for them to do a Program II. Otherwise, the faculty have come up with a lot of curricular options that would work better than an IDM.

Cary Moskovitz (TWP and member of Curriculum Committee) said it was a balance of infinite flexibility versus being able to track and monitor progress towards degree given that it was a small number of students. Also, unlike Program II, where self authorship seems to be the key idea, if a student had a good idea of combining a major between two departments, why not let other students do that too without having to faux author or make up some rationalization. If it’s a good thing, it’s a good thing, so let other people do it. This also seemed to be a good way for students and faculty to innovate new curricular ideas.

Clark said she’s still not seeing why the current system can’t accomplish those goals. She also is concerned about the term limit and timing. She was concerned that the time it takes for two departments to approve a new IDM might take longer than what a particular student has when declaring a major. She assumes that right now, the requirements are less onerous.
Forbes said the Curriculum Committee proposes continuing to use the same IDM form that it has now. The only difference is that one would specify both the required and elective courses. In terms of getting it approved, it’s not really a much longer process. Currently, both DUSs have to approve an IDM, so it doesn’t have to be a longer process. And the five-year limit is five years of declaring so it’s not going to run out on a student.

José María Rodríguez García (Romance Studies) said that there are quite a few conversations going on around campus after the proposal was first presented. His department and others are looking at ways to incorporate IDMs. These departments believe that department-originated IDMs encourage curricular innovation. He doesn’t see this as a labor-intensive process and it gives departments the opportunity to rethink part of the curriculum. It would also create opportunities for departments to chat intellectually. He recognizes that the logistics of implementation might present a problem, as does the possible repercussions on the Program II Committee.

Catherine Admay (Sanford) wanted to think out loud about this proposal because in Public Policy, they’ve made a policy decision not to have a minor. Though they currently have IDMs, there are not that many and so it doesn’t threaten the policy decision to have a few people take considerably less courses than the full complement for the major. If Council passed this proposal, it would create a lot of pressure on Sanford to have a minor because there would be more people who would see it and then argue for a minor.

Forbes, addressing both Admay’s and Clark’s point, said that part of the reason this came up in the Curriculum Committee is that the number of students declaring IDMs is increasing relatively quickly. From a student perspective, there isn’t much difference on their resume for an IDM and a double major. But from the perspective of the number of courses they have to take, there is a very large difference. So the Curriculum Committee wanted to make sure the process was regularized and it was clear that departments have signed on to something that is a good idea. They also wanted a better differentiation between Program I and Program II. He expects that if we kept the status quo, there will be a lot more IDMs than currently exist.

Broverman asked if he expected the number to go up if this passes. Forbes said yes, in either case, the number is going up, though in one case, it’s going up with appropriate monitoring. Curricular innovation is good, but it seems reasonable to have some modicum of oversight on that.

Walter asked who makes the decision about IDM approval?

Forbes said the DUSs.

Lee Willard (Trinity) asked if students could have a major or minor?

Forbes said and IDM is a major, so students could have a minor. Program II does not allow minors or certificates.

David Malone (Education) expressed concern that a students could propose an IDM and it would be denied, so he thought involving Program II in these discussions was very important. Some of Duke’s most creative students are thinking about how they can create coherent integration in their experience here at Duke and he doesn’t want to support something that might deny students the opportunity to take charge of their own education. He is also concerned about how these IDMs are represented because some students have told him they say “double major” on their resumes when it’s really an IDM. He wasn’t sure how to stop that, but there has to be some clear communication with students on how these are represented.
Forbes said that when students get a Program II degree, their transcript says “Program II” and the title given to the course of study. For IDMs, the transcript says “Interdepartmental Major” then “department/department.” This is also a problem with assessment because IDMs are just counted as one of the majors and that seems wrong. Forbes said that moving forward, the Registrar could create a list of what the IDM could be, instead of assigning it to one department randomly, but that’s an implementation detail.

Malone liked the idea of regularizing things. He saw two ways to proceed: fix the administrative issues related to the current IDM or reinvent the IDM. He pointed out the proposal allowed IDMs between two departments that have majors. What about departments that offer co-majors? Forbes said that was fine.

Clark said she was excited about the idea of more well-trodden path of combinations, but right now wouldn’t it be possible for departments to put a path out there ahead of students?

Forbes said no. According to the current rules, IDMs can only be proposed by students. Part of the reason this came up was because the Computer Science and Statistical Science departments wanted to have and IDM that they advertised on their web pages and made available to any student. Since IDMs are individual, they should not be listed on the department website.

Walter expressed concern that as Duke adds more ways for students to specialize, that it will become one more thing for them to check off to get more things on their transcripts. He doesn’t understand what problem this solves instead of just having a major and minor or a double major since at least somebody reading the transcript knows what those terms mean.

Forbes said that some people argued to get rid of IDMs but others were opposed to the idea, so that’s how the Curriculum Committee came to this proposal. It solves the perceived problems with IDMs but still allows departments to propose new ideas in a relatively quick way and allows students with particular individual interests to still go in that direction.

Walter said that there are some students who would use this to add more things to their transcript while taking fewer classes than are required for a double major.

Forbes said this already happens. The current proposal would give some oversight to the process.

Broverman said that Rachel Murphy-Brown, the dean of Program II, has not yet been approached about this proposal. She requested a motion to table the Council discussion until after the Program II Committee is consulted and approves of their proposed role. The motion was seconded and approved.

**Question about Agenda**

Randy Matory (Cultural Anthropology) asked about the overall agenda for Council. He thought this meeting’s agenda was supposed to include brainstorming about possible future curricular reform. Layton said Council would do that in April.

**Pratt Certificates**

Layton turned to the next item on the agenda: Trinity students who want to pursue Pratt certificates. She asked if anyone remembered the Global Development Engineering Certificate? That program was discussed and voted on by Council a little over two years ago. It is one of four Pratt certificates. By default, Trinity students are not allowed to get certificates from Pratt. Exceptions were made for two
certificates, however: Global Development Engineering and Energy and the Environment. But if an A&S student wanted to get a certificate in either Architectural Engineering or Aerospace Engineering, the Registrar’s Office will tell them no. Her understanding is there is no written policy prohibiting A&S students from getting Pratt certificates, however there are historical coding issues in the Registrar’s Office for reasons that are no longer understood. Pratt would like to be inclusive and allow Trinity students to earn these certificates. So the Curriculum Committee has requested that the Council pass a resolution making it clear that A&S imposes no impediment on our students pursuing Pratt certificates. If Pratt wants to put up a wall, it will be their choice. The wording of the resolution is:

"Whereas the Arts and Sciences Council seeks to formalize its policy on Trinity undergraduate students pursuing Pratt Certificates; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Trinity College of Arts & Sciences imposes no impediment on Trinity undergraduate students pursuing Certificates offered by the Pratt School of Engineering."

Linda Franzoni (Pratt) said Pratt certificates historically weren’t available to Trinity students because the two certificates (Architectural and Aerospace Engineering) do not fit the definition of a Trinity certificate. They are not interdisciplinary in the way Trinity wants them to be. It’s possible the Architectural Engineering Certificate was brought to Council and denied or it was not brought to Council because it didn’t meet Trinity’s definition of certificates. The Aerospace Certificate from the start was not meant to fulfill the interdisciplinary criteria. Pratt’s understanding of Trinity certificates is that multiple departments have to be included, not just two or one. The Aerospace Certificate, other than one Social Science course, is all Mechanical Engineering courses. The Architectural Engineering Certificate has some Art History and Civil Engineering courses. She is also unclear whether the number of courses meets Trinity’s criteria. However, Trinity students are welcome to take the courses.

Franzoni added that the reason Pratt certificates aren’t put on Trinity transcripts is because they didn’t meet Trinity’s criteria.

Val Konczal (Trinity) said that over the years, a number of students have asked about the Architectural Engineering Certificate but they have always been turned down because it is heavily geared toward engineers. Art History now has a concentration in their major. About 10 years ago, they started allowing Trinity students to get the Energy and Environment Certificate and now students can earn the Global Development Engineering Certificate.

Franzoni added that David Schaad specifically wanted Trinity students to enroll in the Global Development Certificate, so he developed that certificate to meet the Trinity criteria.

Moskovitz said there appeared to be a definitional problem with the same word having different meanings. He guessed that the Aerospace Engineering Certificate is a specialized program geared mainly for ME students since there is no degree program in aerospace engineering at Duke. That seems to be a very different than a Trinity interdisciplinary certificate.

Konczal said the Energy and Environment Certificate has a number of CE and Environment courses, so there’s an easier path for students. Less so than Global Development because that certificate has engineering courses as pre-requisites. But if a student can do it, they can enroll. But the other two are not certificates in the way Trinity defines them.

Malone asked if the number of Trinity students interested in Pratt certificates is available?
Layton said there are numbers of students enrolled in the energy certificate. Her understanding is there were at least a couple of students who wanted to enroll in the architectural certificate but were turned down.

Franzoni clarified that they are not turned down. They can enroll in the classes but there is no recognition on their transcript.

Konczal said the way the system is set up, Trinity students cannot enroll in the architectural certificate. Students can enroll in an ECE minor, but most who have enrolled dropped out.

Franzoni said that Pratt only created the ECE minor for Trinity, when ECE was in a slump, but that’s not the current situation.

Konczal thought the question is are these requirements acceptable for certificates? If so, students should be able to enroll in them. If not, then we might consider broadening the definition of certificates.

Franzoni said, for example, if their certificate requires only five courses, is Trinity comfortable with that?

Layton asked for Pratt’s definition of a certificate. Council members answered with various numbers: Trinity has six, experiential certificates have four, Pratt’s numbers vary, so Franzoni would have to look that information up.

Moskovitz said one option would be to define Trinity certificates with their own set of rules. Pratt certificates can then have their own set of rules. Then we’d have to make that work with the system.

Walter said this issue sounds like something that people want to fix, but it’s a technical problem and the resolution doesn’t address that. He thought the problem should be addressed in the various committees rather than passing a resolution saying we’re not trying to stop anybody.

Forbes said we are currently stopping them.

Walter said not in the sense of the A&S Council stopping them.

Layton said it’s not clear where the Council stands.

Franzoni said two of the certificates have been approved by Council. One possibility would be for Pratt to bring the other two to ECASC to begin the Council approval process.

Forbes said the resolution just says we’re allowing Trinity students to enroll in these certificates and have them on their transcripts.

Walter said Trinity has rules for certificates and if we want to change the rules of what certificates include, we should do that. He asked if Trinity students can currently pursue Pratt certificates.

Franzoni said they can fulfill all the requirements but they will not get notation on their transcripts.

Willard said A&S certificates have a gateway and a capstone and electives while Pratt’s do not.

Konczal suggested that we can acknowledge that Pratt certificates are different and then allow Trinity students to pursue them.
There being no further discussion, the Council voted 29-2 to approve the referendum.

**Amendment Concerning the Minutes**

Layton then addressed Professor Janan’s amendment to correct the February 8 meeting minutes to match the language that was used in Munger’s slide and approved by Council. Layton asked for unanimous consent so the minutes will be corrected.

**Question about April’s meeting**

Matory asked if student input would be included in the discussion. His students would love to participate.

Layton said she would bring the issue to ECASC.

Admay asked why.

Layton said she would like input on decisions rather than answering immediately.

Walter said Council should think about the best time to bring in student input since not a lot will be accomplished in one meeting.

Layton asked for ideas on how to structure such a discussion.

Franzoni suggested that whenever Council is ready for student input, each Council member bring a student so there will be a variety of voices.

Willard said she hoped each department has already had conversations about their introduction to the discipline courses since that’s a good place to involve students.

Valerie Ashby (Dean) said several departments are bringing students together to talk about their experiences when they were introduced to the discipline.

Malone thought it was important to start the process. Perhaps start the meeting in April by having a questionnaire or survey of Council to see where people want to start.

Jennifer Ahern-Dodson (TWP) wanted to know how this meeting would be different from what Council did in January. Maybe start with the outcomes of those discussions so we’re not repeating the same conversations.

Walter referenced a speech by Dean Ashby when she talked about stopping the process. He thought Council had promised it would survey the faculty to understand the issues we were trying to address. To his knowledge, that hasn’t happened, but it might be a good place to start.

Matory asked if everyone should bring a student?

Layton said students are always welcome, but she would like input from Council and ECASC first to see how we can incorporate student input.

The meeting was adjourned.