Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences
Minutes of the February 13, 2018 faculty meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. in Harris Hall by Dean Adrian Randolph.

I. The minutes of the Faculty Meeting of October 17, 2017 were approved as submitted.

II. Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives Ann Bradlow presented an update on the work of the Committee on Degree Requirements. She noted they were convening a committee on the “Foundational Disciplines Convention.” Once the list of delegates was confirmed, the committee would share it with faculty. They hope to have three faculty members per area, who would define their area’s learning goals and share these goals with the larger group during a full-day “Foundational Discipline Convention” on June 7th. The outcomes of this convention would then be shared among faculty. Bradlow noted that overlays and first-year seminars were under active discussion in the dean’s office, and definitions for such would be presented to the Curricular Policy Committee once they are confirmed. The language requirement recommendation would be covered separately in the future.

III. Professor Brian Edwards gave a presentation on the work of the Weinberg Language Initiative (WLI) as chair of the committee. The WLI was appointed by Dean Adrian Randolph to advise him on how to build a strong foundation for language study at Northwestern within a context that respects and promotes cultural pluralism. He noted that the goals of the committee were to explore the norms, practices, and needs (both met and unmet) across the broad constituencies in the College with deep interests in language study; to look at practices at other institutions; and to delve into the literature on these matters with the goal of advising the College on whether/how the College should/could do anything differently. He remarked that the Committee on Language Instruction also has been investigating these topics and that WLI hopes to take advantage of that research. Edwards explained that WLI’s goal is to make three to six recommendations, ranging from the practical to the aspirational, on how language might function in the College, and how we might think creatively about how to bring language learning to a variety of undergraduates from different disciplines. Edwards discussed how language learning in graduate training and graduate research were different from the way undergraduates learn languages, and he noted that the committee would work to find new ways to deliver language education outside of undergraduate coursework for this population. He remarked that the committee hoped to work with the population of international students to build international partnerships. He invited faculty input on language needs and requests throughout the College.

IV. Associate Dean Joel Trammell facilitated a discussion on Weinberg College Space Planning. Trammell began by noting that the allocation of space always begins in Central Administration, the “owner” of all space on the Evanston and Chicago campuses. Each school receives additional space to support growth and expansion and justifies requests for more space based on the number of successful faculty recruitments. After space is allocated to the schools, the deans allocate it to department chairs, who then assign space based on the needs of their faculty. He noted that the College has a presence in almost 40 buildings on the Evanston and Chicago campuses and occupies the majority of the space in 30 of these buildings. The College inventory has grown from a net 600,000 sf to 700,000 sf in the last seven years. He remarked that the College did not have a surplus of assigned space, which means that the College and department chairs must think creatively about how to make the best use of the space they do have available. In order to meet
the needs of our growing faculty, the College often attempts to retrieve unused space from another school or space in a new building. In each case, the College was required to justify its request by specifying how such space would be used.

The College created a set of guidelines, which are reviewed on an annual basis, for managing existing space and for requesting additional space from Central Administration. He outlined the current guidelines: tenure and tenure-line faculty were guaranteed a private office, preferably with a window, of approximately 150 sf in size. One exception to this guideline involved areas with physical limitations (e.g. oddly-shaped offices or with offices with barriers,) Teaching-track faculty were guaranteed working space, generally in a shared office, but effort was always made to secure a private office if possible. Post-doctoral fellows and senior visiting faculty were allocated shared space, preferably with not more than two people per office. Departments and program offices, whether single or shared, were provided with identity signage that also provides wayfinding information. Full-time staff members were given a shared workspace unless they were a senior staff member supervising two or more Northwestern employees, in which case the College attempted to provide a private office. Graduate students were given workspace that is appropriate for their study, ideally 20 sf. (Graduate students in the sciences are provided a desk in or adjacent to their lab, while those in the non-sciences are provided a desk or workspace close to their department headquarters or mentor.) Laboratory space was dependent upon the needs of the primary investigator.

Trammell noted that Facilities Management attempted to anticipate growth within a department or program, but only two to three years in advance so as to avoid holding vacant space, which then would become subject to retrieval by Central Administration.

Trammell discussed how the University was addressing the poor condition of some of its buildings, as well as the need for expansion. He remarked that in 2009, Silverman Hall was built to house the Center for Life Processes and laboratories for some of the chemical and biological science departments. This building occupies 149,000 sf. In 2013, an infill of 50,000 sf was built in the Technical Institute at a cost of $50 million to provide a home for Earth and Planetary Sciences, in 2017, a total renovation of Kresge Hall, which houses many of the College’s humanities departments and programs, was completed to address HVAC insufficiencies, cramped space, and inappropriately-sized classroom space. This renovation allowed the College to create sufficient space to meet the current space management guidelines outlined above. In 2016, Mudd Hall was expanded by two floors to create additional space for newly-recruited scientists.

Trammell noted that this project is indicative of the University’s response to a problem that has plagued the College, which is that much of our existing infrastructure does not meet environmental operating requirements for modern technology. Central Administration responded by agreeing to build new laboratory space that meets these strict new environmental requirements.

Trammell noted that the College’s inventory of available space is currently fully allocated, and that any vacant space that is part of a department or program’s inventory will be occupied by the department or program’s unfilled faculty lines. Trammell disclosed his hope for a long-range space allocation plan for the College based on a five-year growth projection, since it takes roughly that amount of lead time for a planned building to become a reality.

Trammell mentioned that most Weinberg College buildings are between 70 to 125 years old, with some requiring structural renovation and others complete demolition. He remarked that the
University has an ongoing planning exercise underway to update the campus master plan and that the College will participate in this process.

Trammell detailed future plans for space in the College, including the Jacobs Center. On the garden level at Jacobs, there would be several classrooms controlled by the Registrar’s Office, offices and workspace assigned to NUART, and ample common space dedicated to food service. The plan was to continue food-vendor services and maintain a large open area for dining. He noted that the first floor, which was accessible from the ground level, would include common gathering spaces for students, meeting spaces, Coon Auditorium, and office space for Global Learning, as well as a remnant of Kellogg staff. New entrances and exits will be built to provide easy east/west traffic through the first floor. The second floor would house the Buffett Center on the south and west sides of the building, with a second remnant of Kellogg staff occupying office space on the north side. The third floor would contain more space for the Buffett Center on the south side, while the Department of Statistics would be located on the north side. The fourth floor would house the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) on the south and west sides, while a third remnant of Kellogg staff would occupy space on the north side of the building. The fifth floor would become the new home of Anthropology on the south and west sides, while Linguistics would occupy the north side. He remarked that the sixth floor would house Linguistics (stacked above their space on the 5th floor) and that the remaining space on this floor was still under programming review.

Trammell remarked that the move of several of these departments would vacate several houses located on Sheridan Road and Hinman Avenue. University policy requires that these vacated houses revert back to the Provost for reassignment, so the College would have to make a case for retaining these houses. He noted, however, that according to the campus master plan, many non-landmarked houses were scheduled for demolition in future years.

V. The Dean thanked the faculty in attendance, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:27p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Courtney Essenpreis, Assistant to the Dean.