Academic Assembly
October 7, 2019
2:05 – 3:35pm, STCN 130

MINUTES

Present: Bryan Adamson, Sarah Bee, Pat Buchsel, Mimi Cheng, Terri Clark, Marc Cohen, Yancy Dominick, Theresa Earenfight, Nicole Harrison, Nalini Iyer, Angie Jenkins, Kathleen La Voy, Shane P. Martin, Margit McGuire, Patrick Murphy, Michael Ng, Katie Oliveras, Chris Paul, Russ Powell, Frank Shih, Heath Spencer, Colette Taylor, Mark Taylor, Kirsten Thompson

Minutes taken by Rosa Hughes

I. Review of Minutes 6-3-19 and 9-30-19
- A. 6-3-19
  1. Motion to approve, vote: 7 approve, 0 oppose, 11 abstain
- B. 9-30-19
  1. Motion to approve, vote: 15 approve, 0 oppose, 3 abstain

II. Provost Update
- A. Waived to allow more time for discussion

III. Planned Parenthood Motion
- A. Motion to consider motion with exception to one week rule
  1. Vote: approve 15, oppose 1, abstain 1
- B. Motion language

To the President, Provost and Cabinet:

The members of Academic Assembly and faculty, staff, students and alumnae view with dismay the recent actions of President Sundborg which have led to Seattle University officials removing references to Planned Parenthood from the University web pages. These actions were taken in response to the demands of Students for Life of America (SFLA).

While the members of Seattle University community acknowledge and respect the Jesuit ethos and the religious and cultural traditions on which the university was founded, and to which they contribute through their professional endeavors, we also wish to state that we are a diverse and inclusive community of many different faiths and belief systems, including atheists, agnostics, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Catholics, and many others. Moreover, many committed Catholics respectfully disagree with the social policies of the Catholic Church around sexuality, contraception and other matters. SFLA mischaracterizes Planned Parenthood as simply a provider of abortion services when the organization offers a wide range of healthcare services.

President Sundborg's censorship of information and resources to our students are an assertion of conservative Catholic authority over faculty and student welfare policy matters and do not recognize the autonomy and special character of academic institutions nor the role of faculty in shared governance. He fails to understand the vital social justice mission that Planned Parenthood plays in women's health and in our student, staff and faculty lives. This censorship is disrespectful to the academic institution in which we serve, and a profound betrayal of our mission for educating the whole person and empowering our students as leaders for a just and humane world.

We call upon President Sundborg to:

1. Appear at a university-wide community meeting to be called as soon as possible to discuss this matter,

2. Clarify what policy he suggests has justified this action, and

3. Rescind these actions and restore all references to Planned Parenthood to sites in which they were removed

C. Discussion

1. One of the most viable healthcare service providers in the area for our students
2. Spirit of the motion is similar to the community support around drag show previously
3. Broader issue: what does it mean to work at a Jesuit and Catholic university?
4. Nothing in materials received as a prospective faculty member indicated a conflict of interest with organizations such as Planned Parenthood
5. A matter of faculty and student welfare and firmly within the purview of AcA
6. Infringement of academic freedom to restrict the provision of services to students
7. Important issue for the Law School because there are students who have wanted to do work at Planned Parenthood in the past
8. Some colleagues have only just found out about this – no time to consult constituents and stakeholders prior to this discussion
9. College of Nursing has placed students in clinicals and has been in this discussion for years
10. Midwifery program has walked a delicate balance between accreditation requirements and backlash against clinical placements by conservative outside groups
11. Exterior forces monitoring the university that have historically caused issues
12. Profound impact for students and programs
13. Worry about framing issues – President chose to make an issue out of this, we cannot censure our response
14. One of the initial emails from Students for Life of America listed a number of areas of concern across campus (student development, CAS, Law school, etc.)
15. Planned Parenthood is not only about abortion
16. This was a decision that should have been discussed, if we are going to have shared governance, what are the processes and procedures for when these questions come up?
17. External groups taking professors' words out of context and using them to attack academic freedom
18. Worry about the effect of pursuing a very righteous stance: higher scrutiny and less access, both in services to students and academic programming
19. Mission Examen process revealed that we agree to hire for mission, but there are mixed views of what this means: academic development of students, spiritual development of students, faculty who are Catholic
20. Agree with the ask to clarify what policy was used to justify the action
21. Worry about students in crisis and access to information
22. As a Christian university, we are called to provide information and rely on people to make their own choices based upon their own conscience
23. SGSU first half of meeting tomorrow is open to public comment, including further information from the Spectator if they have it, also have a resolution that will be finalized after the meeting
24. Planned Parenthood has become a litmus test in some circles
25. Concerned when conservative groups focus on abortion without recognition of the broad view of services and issues surrounding Planned Parenthood

26. President definitively said no to the question of editing faculty CVs or censoring speakers
27. In cultural wars, outside groups are willing to pounce on these issues to serve their causes
28. Larger questions
    a. How do we respond to the issue as a university?
    b. What is the educational opportunity?
    c. What is the most helpful way to approach this?
    d. Could there be a subset of AcA to meet with the President prior to a public meeting, in order to raise some of these issues?
    e. Is there a difference between endorsing and listing for informational purposes only? And related, are we intentional about what is on our website?
29. Worried about a small group meeting privately with the President, the President has already responded publicly and campus should be able to respond publicly
30. Implications for capital campaign
31. Not sure if he will receive the message if the discussion is not public – the public forum about the drag show was an effective platform
32. Policy is a broader question – what does it mean to have a substantial Catholic presence and substantial academic freedom and independence?
33. Nursing faculty handbook states that nursing students cannot participate in the medical act of abortion, but can provide care before and after – this public attention could potentially result in further restrictions
34. Don't want to hide what we do in the classroom and what we are teaching, we are protected and we should be

D. Motion to table the main motion until next meeting, to give time for AcA members meet with constituents
    1. 10 approve, 9 oppose, 0 abstain
E. Motion to identify a subgroup of AcA to meet with the President and the Provost to discuss a variety of faculty perspectives related to this issue, in preparation for a larger community meeting
    1. Motion to suspend one week voting rule, in order to vote on this new motion
        a. 13 approve, 3 oppose, 2 abstain
    2. Discussion
        a. Logical issue – original main motion is tabled, so no community event is requested currently
        b. Sense of urgency to communicate to students
        c. Concern about community meeting – Law School meetings about race and immigration had protest groups that interrupted and at times prevented programming, we need to be prepared for a community meeting
    3. Vote on motion (subgroup meeting with President and Provost)
        a. 12 approve, 0 oppose, 7 abstain
    4. Formation of subgroup
        a. Bryan Adamson, Mark Taylor, Kirsten Thompson, Patrick Murphy, Margit McGuire
        b. Amendment: suggestion to also invite Alvin Sturdivant and Theresa Earenfight
            i. Vote: 19 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain
        c. Vote on full group constituency, including five AcA members and two additions via amendment: 19 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain

IV. Small Groups – Agenda Planning