

RYERSON FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Meeting of Council of Department/School Representatives

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

International Room, ILC

MINUTES

Present

Peter Danziger
Kileen Tucker Scott
Ron Babin
Ian Sakinofsky
André Foucault
Chil-Hung Cheng
Tammy Landau
Angela Valeo
Perry Schneiderman

Thomas Barbiero
Vadim Geurkov
Jonathan Rollins
Henry Navarro Delgado
Stephen Swales
Rich Adams
Joey Power
Bernard McEvoy
Vanessa Magness

Seth Dworkin
Corrine Hart
Yvonne Yuan
Vladislav Toronov
Carolyn Meyer
Paul Brunet
Dawn Onishenko
Julie Tomiak
Joe McPhee

Regrets

Seyed M. Hashemi
Umberto Berardi
Leila Farah
Bryan Koivisto
Susan Preston
Elsayed Elbeshbishy
Khandaker Anwar Hossain
Andriy Miranskyy
Joanna Holt
Sejal Patel
Amy Peng
Kaamran Raahemifar

Lev Krischian
Jennifer Burwell
Richard Shaker
John Morgan
Rupa Banerjee
Gerda Cammaer
Katy McCormick
Franklyn Prescod
Aziz Guergachi
Taymoore Balbaa
Marsha Barber
Jamin Pelkey

Jane Schmidt
M.J. Suhonos
Sharon Paton
Jim Dianda
Meredith Schwartz
Miriam Anderson
Matthew Flisfeder
Alexandra Fiocco
Maria Gurevich
Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee
David Bouchard
Charles Zamaria

Staff

Agnes Paje

Stacy Stanley

Minutes

1. Order/Establishment of Quorum

Meeting began at 5:26 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda (Magness /Adams) - Adopted.

3. Approval of minutes from November 30, 2015 (Hart/Rollins) - Adopted.

4. Opening remarks and announcements

- All Reps' Council members are invited to the President's Appreciation Cocktail to be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott at 475 Yonge Street (Yonge/College) in the Porter Room from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Please RSVP at www.rfanet.ca/presidents-appreciation-cocktail if you are planning to attend.

5. Political Action Committee – Update

- The Political Action Committee (PAC) is encouraging all members to show their support to the RFA's Negotiating Committee during the arbitration process. PAC is planning to distribute buttons which members can wear on days of arbitration and stickers that members can place on their office doors. PAC will provide members with more information shortly. Thank you to Corrine Hart, Henry Navarro Delgado, John Morgan and Marsha Barber for their contribution toward this work.

6. 'From the Floor' – open forum

- Wi-Fi
 - Members discussed the issue of Wi-Fi in lecture halls
 - Some students have been disruptive during classes while using electronic devices
 - Some members suggested electronic devices be banned during tests and exams
 - Remind faculty to review Policy 61; managing non-academic misconduct is best done within the context of the school/department level
- Course Hero and OneNote websites discussion
 - Members discussed implications of Course Hero, OneNote and various websites students are using to post their lecture notes and professors' power point presentations, course assignments etc.
 - Some members questioned whether using these websites were on the borderline of academic misconduct
 - Member commented websites do remove teachers' notes within 48 hours if requested and is careful with intellectual properties
- Overload payment issue
 - Some members stated they were advised \$ 6,300 is the maximum paid for overload teaching, contravening the language of the Collective Agreement
 - The RFA reminds members that overload teaching is voluntary and asks that members inform the RFA if they are being advised contrary to the Collective Agreement
 - The Executive will discuss this issue with the Administration at the next meeting

- Garbage Collection/Cleanliness
 - The Executive has addressed the issue of garbage collection and cleanliness with the Administration on several occasions and will raise it again at the upcoming meeting
 - Ryerson University is decreasing cost by outsourcing to cleaning companies. Members expressed privacy concerns if non Ryerson University employees are cleaning offices etc.
 - Members commented the garbage and cleanliness problems are health hazards and should be taken seriously. It is also embarrassing to members who have visitors.
 - Please ask all members to report health issues related to cleanliness and garbage to the RFA's Health & Safety Officer, Habiba Bougherara, at habiba.bougherara@ryerson.ca

7. New Business

- RFANET – Discussion and consultation
 - RFANET was suspended on February 1, 2016. An explanation was posted to rfa-announce on February 25, 2016 (Attached)
 - Most Faculty Associations do not have or have stopped hosting forums like RFANET
 - As the RFA is the host of RFANET, our lawyers have advised that the RFA, as the publisher, is potentially liable for postings that appear on it. For context, many publishers (newspapers etc.) are removing sites that allow comments on articles. As a result, the RFA is concerned that we may be exposed to significant legal costs
 - The RFA and its officers do not want to be put in the position of adjudicating discussions. Nor, does the RFA and its officers want to censor or disrupt members' Freedom of Speech. Nonetheless, a culture of civility must be maintained
 - Given these concerns Reps' are being asked to consult members for their opinions on the future of RFANET. Reps' can email Ron Babin at rbabin@ryerson.ca with feedback. This issue will be revisited at the Reps' Council meeting on April 13, 2016
- Negotiating Committee Update – Ian Sakinofsky
 - Preparation for arbitration sessions have began
 - Reps' Council members may be called upon during arbitration if departmental information is needed
 - The Negotiating Committee continues to work diligently on the bargaining process

8. Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 30, 2016 in the International Room, ILC from 4:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Dinner will be served from 4:30 p.m.

Rfanet Suspension Letter – Posted to RFA- Announce on February 25, 2016

Dear colleagues,

A few weeks ago, the RFA Executive suspended rfanet as a result of the nature of the material being posted and the response of our membership to these postings. As per the rfanet policy, the concerns related to rfanet activity were referred to the rfanet use Committee. The RFA Executive thanks you in advance for your patience as the process to address these concerns unfolds.

In terms of background, there were some posts on rfanet centered around the RFA elections which were becoming personal and represented a potential contravention of the rfanet use policy. The RFA Executive received general expressions of concern from some of our members about the deteriorating tone of the email exchange as well as complaints about specific components of this exchange. According to the policy, complaints about rfanet posts are referred to the rfanet use committee. This was done immediately. However, since the exchange was continuing to deteriorate and complaints were proliferating, the RFA Executive decided to end that particular discussion thread. Because rfanet is a simple, unmoderated listserv, the only way to end a conversation thread is to suspend its operations, and thus the suspension of the listserv in its entirety. However, given that the RFA election was underway, the RFA Executive felt it important that candidates for the elected positions have the opportunity to circulate their revised election platforms prior to the election. These platforms were distributed via rfa-announce.

The RFA Executive is concerned about the recent increase in the number of incidents that need to be referred to the rfanet use committee. As indicated in our policy:

"rfanet is a forum for Association members to share information and discuss academic life within a culture of respect, anti-racism and equity."

Even though the rfanet use policy is distributed regularly, the Executive is concerned that this fundamental principle is not reflected in all exchanges, especially as they relate to anti-racism and equity. A singular lack of respect and aggressiveness towards other participants who have differing opinions has been displayed and, as a result, many of our members - participants and non-participants alike - have reported that they are distressed at the content and tenor of these exchanges. Of particular concern is the fact that some of our racialized colleagues have reported experiencing rfanet as a hostile and threatening component of their work environment. This is in complete opposition to the basic principles of rfanet and cannot continue.

The RFA Executive is committed to supporting a culture of respect, anti-racism, and equity, as well as to the tenets of academic freedom and due process. It should be possible to conduct discussions that respect all of these principles. Within that context, the Executive has begun an investigation regarding what changes, if any, need to be made to rfanet and the policy that governs it, prior to reopening it, if it is to be reopened.

Just prior to the recent election, the Executive received recommendations for changes to the rfanet use policy from the rfanet use committee and the RFA Equity Committee. In addition, the Executive has received legal advice on the liability associated with running a listserv such as rfanet and the role of such a listserv in our workplace. We will also be seeking the input of members, starting with the Reps Council

meeting next week, to help the Executive to better understand and find strategies to address the concerns associated with maintaining (or not) the rfanet listserv.

The RFA Executive again thanks all RFA members for their patience as consultations, discussion and decisions related to the use of rfanet continue.

Thank you,
The RFA Executive