

William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – April 14, 2020
FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>

PRESENT: Aktan, Andreopoulos, Brillante, Chung, Crick, Diamond, Duffy, Ellis, Finn, Gazzillo Diaz, Griswold, Hack, Helldobler, D. Hill, Jurado, Kalaramadam, Kaur, Kearney, Kecojevic, Liu, Magaldi, Natrajan, O'Donnell, Orr, Owusu, Potacco, Powers, Pozzi, Ramos, Ranjan, Rosar, Shekari, Silva, Simon, Snyder, Spagna, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Vega, Verdicchio, Vishio, Wallace, Watad, Weisberg

ABSENT: Janos, Mwaura

GUESTS: Andrew, Ashnai, Bannister, Bartle, Bolyai, Cammarata, Cannon, Chambers, Chavez, Christensen, Corso, Davis, Decker, DeDeo, DeLoatch, Diaz, Esslet, Fanning, Feola, Ferguson, Fuller-Stanley, Galetz, Ginsberg, Godar, Goldstein, Green, Griffin, Gritsch, McLaughlin-Vignier, Guzman, Harris, Hertzog, S. Hill, Hinkle, Jackson, Jones, Keane, Liautaud, Lincoln, Lowe, Lubeck, McCaffrey, Miles, Molloy, Noonan, Otriz, Owusu Ansah, Refsland, Ricupero, Rosenberg, Ross, Sabogal, Salvesen, Scardena, Schneider, Sharma, Spereo, Stanfield, Tiernan, Torres, Vasquez, Zeman, Zito

PRELIMINARIES: Chairperson Natrajan called the online meeting to order at 12:30pm. Verdicchio and Griswold moved acceptance of the Agenda. Verdicchio and Griswold moved to set an order of the day at 1:20 for discussion of the elections issue (Item 6A3). The amendment and the amended Agenda were then approved unanimously. The Draft Minutes of the March 10th meeting, moved and seconded by Natrajan and Kaur, were also approved unanimously.

PROCEDURAL NOTE: Natrajan posted the PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING WPUNJ FACULTY SENATE ONLINE (that were included in the Packet for this meeting). We have clarified to the senator that we will record the Senate proceedings only for minute-taking purposes. Our clarification has been accepted by the senator. All senators' microphones will be muted. When one wishes to speak s/he should type SPEAK in the Chat box. The Secretary will keep track of those desiring to speak and recognize each in order. When recognized, the speaker will then unmute the microphone. Only the Chair's screen will be visible.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS COUNCIL: MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (K-12): Hinkle and Ellis moved acceptance of the Council's resolution, which was approved unanimously.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS COUNCIL: STUDENT ASSISTANT COORDINATOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM: Hinkle and Pozzi moved acceptance of the Council's resolution. After brief explanation of role of a Student Assistant Coordinator to support student mental health needs beyond the work of the school counselor, the number of credits involved, the recipient's job prospects, etc. (Griswold, Ellis, Ranjan, Hinkle), the program was approved unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Pass/No Credit discussion in SEPP led to focus group with Accreditation department
Enrollment is down (we will have a clearer picture by our next Senate meeting)

Retention: We have two outstanding motions to pass that are very important for all faculty. We are major stakeholders in doing everything we can within the classroom to aid retention. It is a necessary though not sufficient condition since retention is a multi-factor phenomenon. So, let's pass these two motions unanimously if possible. We will then be able to work with the administration to see what else may be needed to keep our students with us through to graduation.

RESOLUTIONS ON 1000 LEVEL COURSES: Debate resumed on the President's Resolutions #1 and #2, which had been untabled at the end of the last Senate meeting.

Resolution #1: Attendance must be taken every class period and entered into Blackboard weekly. Attendance must count in the final grade.

Simon asked if advisors, who would be able to view attendance information in individual teacher's Blackboard shells, and would they also have access to other things besides attendance, and what else would be done with the information beyond motivating students to attend class. Powers said that the attendance data would be extracted in an automated way into Starfish or Banner 9. No advisors will have access to anyone's Blackboard.

Snyder expressed concern about how much attendance will be weighted in the final grade, and will faculty have flexibility in determining this. He also stated that faculty already do this, so setting up a new system would be redundant. Helldobler

responded that attendance policy will be not be mandated by the administration but would be controlled by the individual faculty member. Tardi said this corresponds to current practice as well. Helldobler said, that not all faculty do it and thus, it's impossible to get reliable data for advisors to use when discussing attendance and grades with advisees. We need better microdata to see how well our students are doing.

O'Donnell asked if grading data will also be extracted, to which Powers said no, only attendance data will be automatically extracted. How grading data will be handled is still being studied. It could be automatically extracted into Banner or faculty could enter it into Banner as is done now. Faculty should only have to perform the grading action once.

Ellis asked if there were differences between 3-times a week and 2-times a week courses. Natrajan responded that this would be for all 1000 level courses.

Ranjan asked for more information about this macro level data collection process across universities. Helldobler said that predictive analytics and the Georgia State Model use data to determine what supports student needs, to see how students are doing over time. If a student doesn't attend or has poor grades, what is the likely outcome for that student. The build supports around the students who haven't performed well. This is all to support student achievement and improve retention and graduation rates.

Potacco said that she has already adopted this policy and has noted that it has increased student concern for attendance. She asked about weighting attendance and Helldobler responded that the literature shows that when attendance is taken students show up more often and are more likely to do better. He wants to give faculty as much flexibility in implementing this in their own classes.

Kaur asked if faculty have to set aside a specific percentage for attendance. Natrajan said no. She asked if things would be different for online vs in person classes. Helldobler replied that this policy would apply to all 1000 level courses.

Andreopoulos added that attendance must be clearly stated in the syllabus along with proper conduct in class (e.g., texting).

D. Hill called the question, which was approved with one negative vote. Gazzillo Diaz called for a closed ballot. Miles, chair of the Elections Council, outlined the procedure to used. The Secretary will send the Council the accurate list of voting

senators in attendance. The Council will send a Qualtics ballot to those eligible to vote (yes, no, abstention) with a three hour window for responses.

The results of this ballot and any others conducted by the Elections Council today will be reported to the Chair and will be posted at the end of these Minutes.

Discussion then turned to the second resolution dealing with 1000 level courses:

Resolution #2: One graded assessment must be given and entered into Blackboard by the end of the fourth week of classes.

Snyder wondered if an early assessment is meaningful in courses where much of the work done in the first few weeks is review of material learned in previous courses. He also pointed out in that in some courses, most grades in the first few weeks are from lab work. Helldobler reiterated that the student needs to have some idea how s/he is doing in the class. It might be an assessment of how well they're prepared for the current class based on what they were taught in the earlier courses. It can be an indication to an advisor that the student doesn't know the basics. If the student doesn't get a grade until the halfway point in the class – and it's a failing grade – it's very hard to save that student. They are dropping out at a rate of 30-35%. We're not helping them if we don't intervene earlier.

Simon asked how advisors would know about the grades. Helldobler was perplex that people are afraid of advisors knowing how the student is doing in the class. The point of this is to give the advisors the information they need to help the students.

Ranjan stated that this might not work for all courses.

Ellis noted that sometimes students don't join a class until the third week and don't buy the text until the fourth week. He said we have to be more creative in how we teach.

Potacco said that the purpose of early assessment is to tell the student that they are getting into trouble and that they need to get support quickly.

Tardi clarified that the early assessment need not be a major assessment by the fourth week. It could be something smaller. Helldobler agreed.

Swanson asked if the early assignment is to be entered into Blackboard so the advisors can have access. Powers said yes, it is intended to help the advisors get the students to the appropriate supports they need.

In order to be consistent, Andreopoulos asked for a closed vote. Miles will send out a second Qualtrics ballot in the same way as for Resolution #1.

SENATE ELECTIONS:

Natrajan said: “Am very happy that there is now a deep concern about disenfranchisement due to reorganization. As we know, some Senators had raised this on the senate floor in November. Let’s make sure then that the GC 1-year recommendation is passed with a very strong mandate since that is key for us to move out of this situation. Here is my way forward.” He posted a slide [archived in the Packet of this meeting] and briefly reviewed the actions that have led to the current discussion. He suggested two motions, one modifying the timetable and one modifying the timeline. He supports having a year-long serious discussion.

Gazzillo Diaz and Ranjan suggested that the departmental consolidation should take place first and then elections should be held reflecting the new departments. Natrajan reiterated the need to discuss what Senate representation actually means, which would require lengthy discussion. He suggested making his Chair’s Motion #3 -- to accept the Governance Council’s short-term, one-year recommendation on Senate representation -- the first one to be debated.

Verdicchio, a member of a consolidated department, supported the Chair’s suggestion.

Tardi spoke against the motion and pointed out that with the exception of Simon, she doubts that any of us have experience as parliamentarians. She noted that having to confront a contested election in the Union, she consulted the AFT General Counsel, David Strom, who stated that we should follow the Constitution as closely as possible, while being reasonable about the extraordinary circumstances. She noted that if we hold elections now, once July 1 arrives, the consolidated departments would have to select their one representative, or we are in violation of our Constitution. She disagreed with a member who commented on the chat that process is unimportant. She believes that process is very important, noting that without it you have anarchy and dictatorship. In addition, she advocated for transparency and stated that consolidation has already begun: departments have chosen their new chairs, and she was told by the administration that they would be

the chairs not just for the Summer, but in the Fall as well. We don't need another year to decide on future Senate representation. She suggested that in order to not disenfranchise anyone, we leave current representation as it is for now, and in September present all the potential models for senate representation, engage in discussion, vote on the future senate representation model, and then hold elections. Ranjan said that the emergency situation that WPU is in with COVID, etc. must be taken into consideration. She would prefer to defer this discussion until September. She and Simon noted that several states have altered their state's constitutional requirements regarding voting in face of the corona virus. Simon also agreed with Tardi that we should maintain the current roster until the Fall and discuss the issue in September.

Andreopoulos was surprised to learn about the consolidation having already taken place. She agreed with this should take place in the Fall.

Helldobler agreed that Tardi was correct regarding the chairs, but repeated that full consolidation will not effectively happen until July 1st, no matter what conversations have occurred about it. For him, the real issue for the Senate is does the current construct really meet the needs of the University going forward. He also thinks the conversation will take a year, including things like at-large and constituency group representation.

Wallace, a member of a consolidated department, agreed with Helldobler and said that serious discussion must take place. We need consider what the Senate looks like. Without making changes we will automatically lose certain members. She supports the Governance Council recommendation. She would have the departments being affected should be allowed to choose a senator to represent them for the coming year.

Owusu, also from a consolidated department, agreed with Ranjan and Wallace. He would like to hold off and let these things to be discussed in the Fall. We need a year to discuss things within departments and in the Senate.

Verdicchio's motion to extend Adjournment time until 1:55p was approved without objection.

Griswold supports the motion. If we wait until September and October, we'll be under pressure to get things done. He also thinks that keep the current roster in place until the Fall it will be a lame duck Senate.

Crick asked for clarification: Which of the Chair's three motions are we voting on? Natrajan posted Chair's Motion #1: The Senate approves to modify the timetable for the election cycle to begin on April 15th. Natrajan moved approval and Verdicchio seconded.

Miles stated that the Elections Council would be able to begin the elections on April 15th, but noted some problems it would have for conducting the elections according to the normal schedule since elections have to be completed by April 30th.

After Natrajan mentioned his other two motions, Marks reminded the body that only one motion can be discussed at a time.

Tardi suggested that the third motion should go first. Natrajan agreed and asked the Parliamentarian if this could be done. Marks said that past practice has allowed for the removal of one motion and its replacement by another. Natrajan then moved the Chair's Motion #3: The Senate approves to accept the Short-Term 1-year recommendation on Senate representation put forth by the Governance Council. Verdicchio seconded. Tardi called for a closed ballot. Miles stated that eligible senators will get three separate Qualtrics ballots.

Andreopoulos asked what vote would be required to pass this motion. Marks said the Governance Council recommended that 2/3 of those present at the meeting would be the vote necessary to pass the motion. Duffy and Ricupero will send the Elections Council the accurate Attendance List of the senators eligible to vote after the meeting. Marks added that the Governance Council agrees with the President that this issue can't be resolved in a single meeting, and its plan is to have any potential Constitutional amendments ready for a February 2021 meeting, after various models have been discussed by the body.

Simon pointed out that if this motion fails some may want to wait to September to discuss the other two motions. Natrajan said that they could be discussed at the April 28th meeting.

Snyder and Gazzillo Diaz moved to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT: The Senate adjourned at 1:54pm.

ELECTIONS COUNCIL: RESULTS OF THE THREE CLOSED BALLOTS:

MOTION ONE:

1. Motion on Attendance (1000-level courses):

"Attendance must be taken every class period and entered into Blackboard weekly. Attendance must count in the final grade."

Yes/No/Abstentions Votes

Yes 27

No 11

Abstain 0

Turnout: 88.3% (38 ballots submitted out of 43 sent)

MOTION TWO:

2. Motion on Early Assessment (1000-level courses):

"One graded assessment must be given and entered into Blackboard by the end of the fourth week of classes."

Yes/No/Abstentions Votes

Yes 27

No 10

Abstain 1

Turnout: 88.3% (38 ballots submitted out of 43 sent)

MOTION THREE:

3. Motion to Adopt Governance Council (GC) 1-Yr Recommendation on Senate Representation

"The Senate approves to accept the Short-Term 1-year recommendation on Senate representation put forth by the Governance Council". GC Recommends passage by 2/3 majority (N=43)

Yes/No/Abstentions Votes

Yes* 24

No 9

Abstain 3

Turnout: 83.7% (36 ballots submitted out of 43 sent)

(FAILED TO PASS 2/3 MAJORITY)

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 28th at 12:30pm.

It will be an ONLINE meeting. Details regarding the technology to be used, how to access it, etc. will be forthcoming.

Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

THIS AND OTHER SENATE DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: