

1 William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – October 11, 2022  
2 FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>  
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5 **PRESENT:** Alford, Andreopoulos, Bliss (for Nocella), Christensen, Crick, Diamond, Duffy,  
6 Elleithy, Gazzillo-Diaz, Gill, Gerst, Griffiths, Hack, Helldobler, D. Hill, Hong, Kaur, Kernan,  
7 Kollia, Marshall, Nassiripour, Natrajan, Nemeth, Newman, Onaivi, Powers, Robelledo, Rosar,  
8 Sheffield (for Orr), Simon, Snyder, Steinhart, VanderGast, Vega, Verdicchio, Wallace, Watad,  
9 Williams, Wright, Yoo  
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11 **ABSENT:** Shannon  
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13 **GUESTS:** Bartle, Boucher, Broome, A. Brown, G. Brown, Cammarata. Cannon, Cedeno,  
14 Ciccomascolo, Corso, Davis, Decker, DeLoatch, DeVega, Diaz, Fanning, Ferguson, Frye,  
15 Fuentes, Gerber, Ginsberg, Goldstein, Griffin, Gritsch, Harris, S. Hill, Hirshon, D. Jones, S.  
16 Jones, Kalaramadam, Kashyap, Kearney, Lincoln, Mahmood, Mandik, Marks, McLaughlin-  
17 Vignier, McMahan, Miles, Mongillo, Najarian, Noonan, Ortiz, Panayides, Potacco, Puglise,  
18 Rabbitt, Reardon-Henry, Refsland, Ricupero, Ryblewski, Salvesen, Schwartz, Seuss, Sharma,  
19 Spero, Tajes, Torres, Tsiamtsiouris, Vasquez, Victor, Von Dohlen, Weiner, Zeleke, Zeman  
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21 **N.B.** If you were in attendance and your name does not appear above, please e-mail the  
22 Secretary directly ([duffy@wpunj.edu](mailto:duffy@wpunj.edu))  
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24 **PROCEDURAL NOTES:** The meeting was held, live, in the 1600 Valley Road Auditorium.  
25 Everyone else could join via Teams. When someone viewing remotely wishes to speak s/he  
26 should type SPEAK in the Chat box. Duffy will keep track of those desiring to speak and will  
27 recognize each in order. When recognized, the speaker will then unmute the microphone. Only  
28 the Chair's screen will be visible. The session will be recorded, but only the Secretary will have  
29 access to the recording. In order to avoid feedback, crosstalk and distortion, all virtual attendees  
30 must keep their microphones muted until they are recognized by the Chair and have the floor.  
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32 **PRELIMINARIES:** Chairperson Christensen called the meeting to order at 12:33pm, presented  
33 the Land Acknowledgment, and noted Indigenous Peoples Day and National Coming Out Day.  
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35 Kaur and Bliss moved acceptance of the Agenda, which was adopted by voice vote. Hong and  
36 Snyder moved acceptance of the Minutes of the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate,  
37 which were approved unanimously. Marshall and Williams moved acceptance of the Minutes of  
38 the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty and Professional Staff. It, too, was approved  
39 unanimously.  
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41 **VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT:** Hong moved (Crick seconded) the amended rosters for the Senate  
42 Councils and the UCC Review Panels. They were approved unanimously.  
43

44 The Senate had been asked to reduce its food budget, but an anonymous donor has offered to pay  
45 for a full lunch for the remainder of the year. The Senate expressed its vocal support and thanks  
46 for that generous donation.

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48 **UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL: MINOR IN MUSICAL THEATER:** Sheffield moved  
49 (Duffy seconded) the Council's resolution. It was approved unanimously. Duffy and  
50 McLaughlin-Vignier noted that the Department is putting on *Sweeney Todd* from November 3<sup>rd</sup>  
51 through November 6<sup>th</sup>.

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53 **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

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55 [The PowerPoint slides for the Chair's Report are archived in the Packet of this meeting.]

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57 Christensen announced the SGA representatives to the Senate for this academic year: Nathalia  
58 Rebolledo, the SGA VP for Academic Affairs, and Sarah-Michelle Shannon, the President of the  
59 SGA.

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61 She also welcomed Laurie Ciccomascolo, an ACE fellow, who will be attending Senate meetings  
62 with the President Helldobler.

63  
64 The PowerPoint [archived in the Packet of this meeting] included statistics regarding the deficit,  
65 faculty layoffs and student-faculty ratios. Natrajan asked for more information about right-sizing.  
66 He noted that we have lost more than a quarter of our faculty. Christensen said that the SEC told  
67 Helldobler that to reduce faculty any further would jeopardize our ability to fulfill our  
68 educational mission, a point that he has also made to the Board. He is still awaiting notification  
69 from the State regarding future funding. He wants the \$7.5M added to our permanent base. There  
70 are conflicting arguments in the legislature. In any case, we can't be in the red \$12M a year and  
71 survive.

72  
73 Powers reminded everyone that Human Resources sent an e-mail last week explaining some  
74 opportunities in the Voluntary Separation Programs for AFT members as well as higher  
75 education managers, which can be a vehicle for reducing potential layoffs.

76  
77 Crick asked if there were zero deficit would there be no layoffs? Helldobler said that as long as  
78 there is a deficit there would always be the possibility of layoffs.

79  
80 Tardi addressed these academic concerns to the Board. She noted that Kean's Reserves are much  
81 lower than ours, but their president is willing to dig into them more deeply because he knows he  
82 can turn things around. She appealed to the Board to use our Reserves for two years to help  
83 stabilize the University. The Union and the President are aligned in not wanting even one more  
84 layoff.

85  
86 Snyder said we've had major faculty and staff cuts, but our student-faculty ratio is relatively high  
87 – and we're still bleeding money. Where is this continuing deficit coming from? Helldobler  
88 stated that undergraduate enrollment is the primary driver of the budget, but it contracted by  
89 13.1%. In addition, the University's costs (utilities, supplies, etc.) have risen by 9%. Higher  
90 education is a high personnel industry.

91  
92

93 Andreopoulos said we need to generate more revenue. She hopes that the Academic Partnership  
94 (AP) contract can be revised so that WPU gets a higher percent of the profits. Faculty need to  
95 identify the best programs students want so they can get jobs, and to look for synergies between  
96 departments. Natrajan agreed and said there are multiple ways of tightening our budget and  
97 many ways to generate revenue. There was a list of 50+ ways of doing things to address these  
98 issues, but it was not enough. Layoffs must be the absolute last resort. We have reduced faculty  
99 by 29% but our enrollments haven't fallen by that much.

100

101 Christensen said that AP would be on the Agenda for the next meeting.

102

103 The Senate Executive Committee invited the AFT Executive Board to meet. The AFT declined  
104 the invitation [archived in the Packet of this meeting]. She expressed the SEC's intention to  
105 continue to work with the AFT going forward.

106

107 Alford stated that the Department of Educational Leadership and Professional Studies is  
108 disappointed by the AFT's decision. It is important that the two entities that drive us as faculty  
109 and staff work together. He hoped that the SEC would reiterate its invitation, which Christensen  
110 did immediately.

111

112 Natrajan was distressed by the AFT response and wanted to know how the Senate will represent  
113 congruent but independent views with the AFT. The crux of the issue is: Is the Caucus illegal?  
114 Is it not part of the democratic process? We need to get past the issue of the Caucus.

115

116 Tardi asked that the AFT response be reposted. She stated that the Union is more than willing to  
117 work with the Senate, but it cannot work with the SEC. Some people are spreading lies and  
118 mischaracterizations about the Union. How can you work with people without trust? The Senate  
119 is an academic body and we should not be discussing what happens in the Union here. As noted  
120 by Tardi, Natrajan said, this should have been brought up in a closed meeting, not in front of  
121 administrators. The Union is not going to reconsider its decision unless there is different  
122 leadership in the Senate.

123

124 Gazzillo-Diaz added that Union Executive Board members are uncomfortable speaking with  
125 members of the SEC who are also leaders of the Caucus because of the untruths stated in the  
126 past. Three of the Union leadership are Senate members, so we will continue to work with the  
127 Senate that way.

128

129 Christensen noted that the next AFT meeting will be next Tuesday, 10/18.

130

131 Action items discussed during the September 27<sup>th</sup> closed meeting included several topics.

132

133 The use of EAB data to assess programs. Last year the Assessment Council updated the Program  
134 Review Process to include EAB data as one criterion. In Fall 2021 the Senate passed a  
135 resolution stating that the Senate does not consent to using the Program Review Process to close  
136 programs. We have requested that EAB meet with the entire Senate (and the President has  
137 conveyed that invitation to EAB).

138

139 What would be the best way to address the Board of Trustees at their November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting?  
140 The SEC members have been invited to have lunch with the Board members after the open  
141 Board meeting, which will provide an opportunity to have a conversation with them, rather than  
142 just making a statement at the Board meeting. We would still be able to make a formal statement  
143 at the following Board meeting.

144  
145 Student retention is a shared project. We need to study trends over time, changing student body,  
146 the pandemic, changes in the delivery of instruction, what's working and what's not working,  
147 etc. Marshall moved (Natrajan seconded) the formation of a COVID Impact Task Force:

148  
149 The goal of this Task Force is to analyze the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has  
150 had on WPU. It will examine the last five years of academic data to understand how our  
151 students and their university have changed as a result of the pandemic. How has the  
152 pandemic impacted our student body? What are the needs of our student population? Are  
153 our current practices working? What do the data tell us about how we can improve?

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155 Steinhart called the Order of the Day. After brief discussion, the Order of the Day was extended.  
156 Formation of the short-term Task Force was then approved with one negative vote.

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158 **COAHSS DEPARTMENT MERGERS:** Christensen said that the SEC didn't receive the  
159 proposal for the mergers (History & Philosophy and English & Languages and Cultures, as well  
160 as the movement of Latinx Studies to Community and Social Justice) in time for discussion last  
161 term. While the SEC could have commented upon them *in loco Senatus*, we preferred to bring  
162 the issue to the full Senate, and to discuss what the process should be in the future. The Senate  
163 won't vote to approve these mergers, but we want to hear what faculty see as the ideal process.

164  
165 Dean Davis (joined by several of the chairs of the affected departments) began by stating that  
166 History and Philosophy have agreed to rename the new department: History, Philosophy and  
167 Liberal Studies. Languages & Cultures and English are close to agreement on a new name. She  
168 expects the synergy among Latinx Studies, Women & Gender Studies and Africana World  
169 Studies will provide fertile ground for all to grow. The mergers also provide opportunities for  
170 fiscal savings.

171  
172 Cedeno echoed what Andreopoulos said earlier about new revenue-driving options, seeing  
173 opportunities growing out of combined departments where they might not have existed  
174 separately (e.g., certificates, adult learners, maximizing credits for undergraduates).

175  
176 Steinhart asserted that History and Philosophy had been having informal discussions,  
177 independent of fiscal or administrative concerns, prior to the merger, and that it was not imposed  
178 upon them. D. Hill added that Community and Social Justice voted overwhelmingly to invite  
179 Latinx Studies to join their department.

180  
181 Andreopoulos asked if there were more mergers in the offing. Christensen said the Senate is not  
182 aware of any others at this time. She added that the SEC will draft a model for future mergers to  
183 be presented to the Senate next semester.

184

185 **COUNCIL FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE:** D. Jones posted a multi-part statement [archived  
186 in the Packet of this meeting]: Equity & Inclusion, Vision, and Core Values: Community, Equity  
187 and Inclusion, and sought feedback.

188  
189 Verdicchio asked if the Alumni Association were actively involved in drafting this? Jones noted  
190 the drafters' membership, which did not include alumni. Verdicchio and fellow alum G. Brown  
191 suggested that alumni/ae be included in all areas.

192  
193 Marshall added that it is important that our voices are not only included, but are heard.  
194 Helldobler stated that being heard and taking advice is important, but that doesn't mean that  
195 those voices will end up in the decision or be the decision. The outcome will not be co-managed.

196  
197 Natrajan asked about the word "accepted" in the very first sentence. Jones replied that the  
198 Council was very intentional in its wording. It chose accepted since we don't just respect them,  
199 we embrace everyone and bring them into our community so they can be their full selves and  
200 reach their potential in and out of the classroom.

201  
202 Gill thinks "confront and reduce" should be included, to make this a dynamic and not a static  
203 document.

204  
205 Tardi suggested "embraced" to replace "accepted." Helldobler agreed that accepted is a nuanced  
206 word.

207  
208 Jones then posted the Belonging Statement of the Council for Equity and Justice's Diversity  
209 Assessment Committee [archived in the Packet of this meeting]. The Campus Climate Survey  
210 revealed how faculty, staff and students felt about being at WPU. We all have the responsibility  
211 for making students feel like they belong here. He urged faculty to take these factors into  
212 consideration in curriculum and teaching.

213  
214 Wallace likes that it creates actionable items for which we can be held responsible. There can be  
215 a clear and reliable reporting system where students can go to report aggressions,  
216 microaggressions, or racial slurs in the classroom.

217  
218 Andreopoulos added that not only do students not feel comfortable, they don't feel proud.

219  
220 Helldobler said this is a great statement for students, but shouldn't the definition of belonging be  
221 broad enough to also include faculty and staff as well? The Campus Climate Survey noted that  
222 faculty and staff of color, in particular, didn't feel a sense of belonging.

223  
224 Jones asked that everyone respond to the Qualtrics survey that the Council sent to provide  
225 additional feedback. The Council intends to finalize these documents and send them to the  
226 President in November.

227  
228 **NAVIGATE OVERVIEW:** Refsland's slides are archived in the Packet of this meeting. Since  
229 time was running short, she suggested that people review all the information that they have  
230 received from her and send her questions and comments via e-mail ([RefslandL@wpunj.edu](mailto:RefslandL@wpunj.edu)).

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Kaur requested that there be more training sessions. Refsland will share the recording of the training session as well as other materials. There will also be a repeated round of training sessions. Duffy asked her to send them to him for inclusion in the Packet of this meeting.

Crick asked whether Navigate triggers anything when a student's attendance falls below a certain threshold? Refsland said faculty are currently reporting attendance in Banner. She's working with IT to see if something can be triggered automatically. When in doubt, raise an alert in Navigate since attendance is such a key early indicator of things going awry.

Kaur asked if it were possible for Navigate to synergize with Banner and BlackBoard, since we now have to record things in three different systems. Refsland said that most of the information in Navigate comes from Banner already. It can integrate with BlackBoard as well. They're working on it.

Hong pointed out that it's tricky when a student is falling behind, but is not yet failing. Refsland suggested putting those concerns in the Notes. Those comments will give the advisors something to work with when they make interventions.

In response to Simon's question, Refsland said everyone is encouraged to use Navigate. Since adjunct faculty do not have to hold office hours, they shouldn't post them in Navigate. The best way to raise a red flag is to use alert in Navigate. She will send out specific directions on how to do these things to all adjuncts and full-time faculty.

Helldobler emphasized that everyone should be using Navigate.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Christensen reminded everyone that Thursday and Friday, 10/13 and 10/14 are Wellness days. Natrajan and Jones announced that Wallace will be presenting on Decolonizing the Curriculum at the next Community Dialogue Series on Thursday, 10/20 during Common Hour via Zoom.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Many voices moved for adjournment, so Christensen declared the meeting adjourned at 1:51pm.

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm in Ballroom BC. Senators are urged to attend in person. The meeting will also be streamed live on Teams. The link will be included in the Packet for that meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Duffy.