

1 William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – January 26, 2021  
2 FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>

3  
4 **PRESENT:** Abraham, Aktan, Alford, Andreopoulos, Brillante, Christensen Crick, Diamond,  
5 Duffy, Ellis, Fuentes, Gazzillo Diaz, Hack, Helldobler, D. Hill, Jurado, Kaur, Kearney,  
6 Kecojevic, Kollia, Liu, MacDonald, Marks, B. Marshall, Martus, McMahon, Monroe, Mwaura,  
7 Nassiripour, Natrajan, O'Donnell, Owusu, Powers, Pozzi, Rebe, Rosar, Sabogal, Schwartz,  
8 Shekari, M. Silva, Simon, D. Snyder, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Tosh, Vega, Verdicchio,  
9 Wallace, Watad, Weisberg, Mag. Williams

10  
11 **ABSENT:** Jubran

12  
13 **GUESTS:** Abouk, Albuquerque, Andrew, Astarita, Bannister, Bartle, Berg, Betts, Bolyai,  
14 Boucher, Bowrin, Brenensen, Broome, Brown, Cai, Cammarata, Cannon, Cauthen, Chau,  
15 Chavez, Chen, Corso, Coyne, DaSilva, Datchi, Davi, Davis, Dean, Decker, DeLoatch, DeLuca,  
16 Desroches, DeVeyga, Diaz, Escobar, Fanning, Felson, Feola, Ferguson, Galetz, Gelfer,  
17 Ginsberg, Gerst, Gladfelter, Goldstein, Gonzalez, Gramoccioli, Griffin, Gritsch, Guo, Guzman,  
18 Harkins, Harris, Healey, Henry, S. Hill, Hollerma, Hong, Jackson, Jian, Jones, Kashyap, Keene,  
19 Kernan, Korgan, Kromidas, Kuran, Laud, Liautaud, Lincoln, Lockhart, Louie, Lowe, Lubeck,  
20 Marks, I. Marshall, McLaughlin-Vignier, Malindretos, Mankiw, Mattison, McNeal, Milanes,  
21 Miles, Mongillo, Nagaraj, Ndjatou, Nesenjuk, Newman, Nobler, Noonan, Nyaboga, Nyulssay,  
22 Ortiz, Owusu-Ansah, Panayidis, Peek, Pinkston, Plaskow, Potacco, Rabbitt, Refsland, Ricupero,  
23 Rosen, Rosenberg, Ross, Salvesen, Salerno, Scardena, Schneider, Shalom, Sharma, Sheffield, J.  
24 Silva, Skoloda, Smith, T. Snyder, Soto, Spero, Stanfield, Suess, Sullivan, Tiernan, Tormino,  
25 Tsanacas, Vasquez, Verzani, Wahrman, Weiland, CL Williams, Mar. Williams, Wilson, Yucel,  
26 Zeleke, Zeman, Zhang

27  
28 **PRELIMINARIES:** Chairperson Natrajan called the online meeting to order at 12:30pm., and  
29 called for a moment of silence for the hundreds of thousands who have died from  
30 COVID. Martus and Hill moved acceptance of the Agenda, which was approved  
31 unanimously. Marshall and Verdicchio moved acceptance of the Minutes of the November 24<sup>th</sup>  
32 meeting, which were approved with two abstentions.

33  
34 **PROCEDURAL NOTE:** All senator's microphones should be muted. When one wishes to  
35 speak s/he should type SPEAK in the Chat box. Duffy and Ricupero will keep track of those  
36 desiring to speak and the Secretary will recognize each in order. When recognized, the  
37 speaker will then unmute the microphone. Only the Chair's screen will be visible. The session  
38 will be recorded, but only the Secretary will have access to the recording.

39  
40 **UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL: PROGRAM CHANGE: BS IN COMMUNICATION**  
41 **DISORDERS SCIENCES:** Broome and Hill moved acceptance of the Council's resolution.  
42 After Martus clarified a point, the program change was approved with two abstentions.

43  
44 **ALUMNI SPEAKER: John DeLuca:** Marshall introduced John DeLuca, a distinguished  
45 WPU alumnus. He has multiple advanced degrees and has established several successful  
46 business and social service enterprises. DeLuca spoke about the opportunities he had at WPU to

47 do research, write his first grant, and present with faculty mentors (like Marty Hahn).  
48 [Unfortunately, the recording only picked up the last few sentences of Dr. DeLuca's comments.]  
49

50 **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

51 Thank you Dr. de Luca. Your testimony is a crucial reminder that William Paterson  
52 University is not simply a factory producing a commodity with a price based on the cost  
53 of production, but a **public institution that produces priceless public value**. In this  
54 case, human beings with deep and broad education, who combine domain-specific skills  
55 and expertise, with a holistic sense of the self and community, ability to learn  
56 continuously, take on civic responsibilities, and capable of being change makers in this  
57 world. We are proud of you and wish you the best. Your presence today is a reminder  
58 about what our faculty are capable of collectively delivering.  
59

60 It is also timely since we are in a crisis, facing the loss of a large proportion of our  
61 faculty. As chair of the Senate, I have been asked by several of the faculty members as to  
62 what we – the faculty - can do and what the Senate Exec is doing about this situation.  
63 Well, here it is:

64 **[SLIDE 1]** Over the last several weeks, the SEC has met with the P&P and asked one  
65 main question: Whether 'Curriculum' enters decision-making about restructuring &  
66 resizing? For, if it does then we need to know when and where the Senate enters the  
67 discussion. And if it does not, then what it means for shared governance, role of faculty,  
68 and student success. We have also asked several times for the following information:  
69 Criteria (for program changes?), Process (and the Senate's role?), the implementation  
70 plan & timeframe for when it will be brought to Senate, the Mission, Values of the  
71 university (and whether they will be compromised?) due to the changes, and the Core  
72 curriculum (and whether it will be diminished?) due to the changes.  
73

74 At our last SEPP meeting, it became clear to us that the **Senate has no meaningful role**  
75 in this process of restructurings. The Senate, as we have been told, is only to be the  
76 recipient of information post-factum, at which point the Senate's role would be to find a  
77 way for all of us to live with the losses that are looming large. **The SEC is deeply**  
78 **concerned about the process by which decisions are being made about lives and**  
79 **livelihoods, and the pace of the changes being instituted.** For, when such drastic  
80 decisions are done without caring and reflexivity, then not only will there be suffering  
81 and bitterness (as is to be expected), there will also be long-term impacts to the surviving  
82 members of the faculty in terms of loss of morale, seeds of distrust and mistrust, and  
83 damage to the ability to imagine ourselves as a community. Such a situation will ensure a  
84 **closed culture of fear rather than an open culture of dialog and cooperation** between  
85 faculty and the admin. It puts into motion a process of **concentration of power at the**  
86 **university** and entirely hollows out shared governance, making a mockery of  
87 transparency, participation, and community. If this happens, there is no easy turning way  
88 to turn the institution around – come July 1, 2021, at least not for a very long time as the  
89 history of our present national moment of a society torn apart has alerted us all.  
90

91 After Natrajan's introductory remarks, he invited members of the Executive Committee to  
92 comment.

93 Marshall wove a detailed medical metaphor of the roles of the Senate and the administration,  
94 with the sad conclusion that the Senate will have no real input until after the surgery is complete.

95  
96 Wallace pointed out all the work that the Senate and its councils have done on curriculum this  
97 year, yet she feels that we've been working without any real understanding of what's going on.  
98 Major changes will be made without the Senate having serious discussion nor input into the  
99 decisions within the established timeline. When will we see the plans for program closures and  
100 restructuring and discuss the impact they will have on the institution, the faculty and the  
101 students? If we are just handed decisions, it effectively renders us moot if we're working after  
102 the fact. Departments affected by this process should have input in advance of decisions. She  
103 wonders where shared governance exists in this environment and whether a dangerous precedent  
104 is being set going forward.

105  
106 Christensen said faculty have the expertise to make decisions regarding curriculum and what is  
107 best for our students. Our curricula reflect our students' diversity, encourage civic engagement  
108 and foster justice through learning. Shared governance works. I hope we continue to value the  
109 expertise faculty bring to designing the education we provide.

110  
111 Duffy noted that we have just come through a year and a half of wrenching discussions regarding  
112 reorganization and the consolidation of departments. We're now going to go through another  
113 period of downsizing. Can we even go forward with our discussion about reframing the Senate  
114 since we really don't know what the situation's going to be in the future. We're playing in the  
115 dark and that's not a good place to be.

116  
117 Verdicchio does not like wheel-spinning. He wants to move forward. It is clear that the Senate  
118 has no role in this process and we never have. We have not been engaged in the discussion of  
119 layoffs or the consequences to academic programs. When we asked the administration for an  
120 implementation plan or timeline, we were told that counsel and the legal process are guiding  
121 decision-making. The media reported ten program cuts before the Senate knew about them. I will  
122 not be part of a process that patronizes us. The process is being driven by labor lawyers, and the  
123 AFT rightly represents us in these legal matters. Let us consider reducing our meetings to once a  
124 month when we don't have a real role to play. When we again have a role, then we can play it.  
125 Don't ask people to work on things only to find out that things have changed.

126  
127 Riffing on Marshall's metaphor, Natrajan said that the Senate is being asked to act as the  
128 mortician and we don't like that role.

129  
130 He then introduced President Helldobler and Provost Powers to make their presentation.

131  
132 **DISCUSSION ON STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION:**

133  
134 Helldobler knows that this is a difficult time and that morale is low. He doesn't think anyone  
135 should surmise about how anyone else feels in this situation or to say that people are uncaring or  
136 that the timeline is unthoughtful. The timeline is determined by the collective bargaining  
137 agreement. People should not try to articulate how others feel or think and try to learn by  
138 listening rather than by talking.

139

140 He said his role today was to explain the respective roles of the Senate and the Union during the  
141 layoff process, how we got here, and the important work of the Senate going forward.

142

143 The reduction in force is a negotiated process with the various bargaining units on campus, each  
144 with different processes. The Senate does not have a formal role in this process. The process  
145 limits what he and the Provost can share with the Senate. The AFT, whose President is also a  
146 senator, can share information as it sees fit. If he or the Provost gets involved with the Senate  
147 regarding programs or people, we'd be negotiating with the membership and that would be an  
148 unfair labor practice. I pledge to the Senate that I will share information when I can, or when the  
149 AFT and I agree that it is mutually acceptable to do so. The Executive Committee expressed its  
150 concern about the lack of a formal role in the layoff process, and that it feels demoralized and  
151 sidelined due to this lack of a formal role.

152

153 He asked senators to tell him what role they think the Senate should have. This would help him  
154 better understand the concerns as he tries to address them going forward.

155

156 Natrajan invited speakers from each college to present their comments.

157

158 College of Arts and Communication:

159

160 Crick said we want information as soon quickly as we can get it, as honest and as authentic as it  
161 can be. We need information as honestly, as authentically and as quickly as possible so we can  
162 make decisions.

163

164 Schwartz stated that people are scared due to the lack of transparency. Her department has lost a  
165 lot of lines already. They are already lean and mean. People are scared and it's unkind.

166

167 Williams noted that what art history does is different from what is done in the studio. The Senate  
168 could discuss curriculum and the content of what we do in all our areas. These conversations  
169 could inform the legally binding negotiations with the Union regarding the practical realities of  
170 jobs and the terms and conditions of employment.

171

172 College of Business:

173

174 Andreopoulos stated that the priority is to save jobs. The curriculum comes later. She has not yet  
175 seen any synergy between the Senate and the Union. It is time for the Senate to join with the  
176 Union to elaborate a common strategy.

177

178 College of Humanities and Social Sciences:

179

180 Kaur, representing the department slated to lose the maximum number of faculty, echoes the  
181 angst of her department. They are in the dark. They don't know the principles upon which  
182 programs and faculty are going to be axed. It is not only demoralizing; it is gut wrenching. What  
183 are the principles guiding the cuts? If curriculum is its purview, can't the Senate make  
184 recommendations on what programs should be kept or not kept? The department has spent time

185 over the past few years developing new programs. Are our energies being used wisely? They are  
186 not just reinventing the wheel. They are coming up with pragmatic and trend-setting programs,  
187 like an interdisciplinary MA program. Create in us.

188  
189 O'Donnell said that in December there was a message about how many people would be cut  
190 from various departments, but that's not what seems to be happening now. We need more clarity  
191 regarding the expectations going forward.

192  
193 College of Education:

194  
195 Fuentes has little understanding of administrative decisions, but much knowledge of educational  
196 reform. We have historically spent time on fixing students and teachers. The time is upon us to  
197 fix structures. Decolonizing the curriculum means creating spaces and resources for dialog on all  
198 members of the university on how to imagine it, to envision all cultures and knowledge systems  
199 in the curriculum in respect to what is being taught and how it frames the world. He quoted Sean  
200 Harper: The last bastion of equity being focused on curricular change and how it relates to  
201 students and how it relates to teachers. We need to think carefully about what role curriculum  
202 has to student outcomes and student learning.

203  
204 Hill agreed with previous speakers and drew attention to extraordinary chairpersons who must  
205 deal with being flexible in terms of programming and scheduling. She thinks the Union should  
206 join the Senate as opposed to the Senate joining the Union. What power does the Union have in  
207 this current space of retrenchment? Is it negotiating power as in going from 10 down to 7  
208 programs to be cut?

209  
210 Pozzi stated that if curriculum is the Senate's purview, it needs to be involved all the way  
211 through, so we don't have a mismatched mess when we're done. The curriculum needs to be  
212 addressed in thoughtful ways and this can't be done after the fact. We need a coordinated and  
213 thoughtful way forward when we're done.

214  
215 College of Science and Health: No senator took the floor at this time.

216  
217 Natrajan asked: What role does, or can the Senate have? He sadly feels that the train has left the  
218 station and that it may be a little too late and a little too little. These decisions have quantitative  
219 and qualitative aspects. If the point is to decide what is the number, and various numbers have  
220 been reported, that is entirely in the domain of the Union. That is the quantitative aspect: How  
221 many people should go. It can not only be a quantitative thing. There has to be a qualitative  
222 aspect. Where are we looking in this institution How are we looking? And at whom are we  
223 looking? We needed to get the curriculum right, right from the start. But we missed that bus, so  
224 let us try to get it on in a serious manner now. We can't cut first and then deal with whatever we  
225 have left. We need to make a decision that is qualitative and that is the Senate, that is the  
226 curriculum.

227  
228 Tardi speaks with two hats: One as long-time senator and Executive Committee member and one  
229 as President of the Union. She said the Union reached out to the Executive Committee and  
230 received no response. The Union is interested in protecting every single job that we can. It is

231 clear by what is said in the Senate that there are conflicts of interest. By supporting one program  
232 over another you are, in essence, that program can rot. The Union will not take that position nor  
233 should any of you. The President is accurate about the Senate's role. The Union will present  
234 information as soon as it gets it. The process is not just "the administration has made up it's mind  
235 and these are the people who are definitively slated. We will put out the information carefully  
236 and strategically. Having this open discussion rather than at a closed meeting is careless. The  
237 Union will present the information it knows with clarity on Thursday (at the AFT meeting).  
238

239 Marshall said we are focused on curriculum and not on making suggestions that would in any  
240 way impact negotiations. The Union and the Senate are not adversaries. We all belong to the  
241 Senate and we all belong to the Union. The Senate should work on curricula while the Union  
242 fights to keep jobs.  
243

244 Natrajan noted that most Senate members are due-paying Union members. We can agree to  
245 disagree about whether the Senate has not wanted to talk with the Union. We can discuss this  
246 later. He noted that Trump's last executive order called diversity training divisive. We need to  
247 use the word 'divisive' carefully. Are we using it to quell people who speak differently? People  
248 who raise different questions? People who beg to dissent? People who have slightly different  
249 ideas from those who are in power? If we do that, we are being undemocratic. It's a cynical use  
250 of the word 'divisive' and prevents discussion with someone who uses that word to describe  
251 everything you say. He noted that the next meeting of the Senate (February 9<sup>th</sup>) will be a closed  
252 meeting. Only elected senators will be in attendance. Today's is an open meeting today because  
253 we believe in open dialog. We do not want a culture of fear. The Senate and the Union are the  
254 two fora where faculty concerns are voiced. We are all in this together and we will learn to work  
255 across our differences, but differences don't go away and cannot be crushed.  
256

257 Helldobler thanked the previous speakers and wished to clarify some points. O'Donnell  
258 mentioned that the target keeps shifting. He said the Voluntary Separation Program was intended  
259 to get those who were thinking about retirement to take it because they are those who are making  
260 the higher salaries, which would reduce the number of layoffs. If you do last in first out you have  
261 to lay off more people to make up the dollar deficit. The VSP yielded only 35 people and sadly  
262 very few faculty members. He agreed with Tardi that when the Senate engages in thinking about  
263 criteria and curriculum, it is providing a sense of what program should grow and what programs  
264 should shrink, what program we should cut and what new programs should we develop. That is a  
265 process of directing resources which is a part of shared governance. It gives the administration  
266 the ability to say we consulted with the faculty on this and here was the thinking.  
267

268 He said that in thinking about the respective roles of the Union and the Senate, he thinks of the  
269 Senate as the Who, Why and What of the University. Who we are as an academic community.  
270 Who the students are. Why we do the work that we do. What in the curriculum is reflected in the  
271 ethos that defines Who and Why? The Union is How and When. How do we pay, how do we  
272 promote, etc. Both are needed forms of faculty governance. Sometimes they're in tandem and  
273 sometimes they're in opposition. Faculty leadership has to step forward and sort that out. Just as  
274 the Union doesn't have a role in approving curriculum, the Senate doesn't have a formal role in  
275 the layoff process. The Who, Why and What of the Senate is still critical to the work of the

276 university in recruiting, retaining and graduating students. If that work stops, we will be in a  
277 much more difficult place.

278  
279 He complimented Marshall for her questions, especially: How did we mismanage faculty to get  
280 to this point? The Provost then displayed two slides [archived in the Packet of this meeting]. The  
281 first slide is the 30-year trend in State support, which has declined while tuition and fees have  
282 increased. Students, not the State, are paying their tuition. While he and Natrajan agree about the  
283 value of public education, the State of New Jersey is saying: Students, it's on your backs. The  
284 second slide is the WPU enrollment trends 2011-2020. We have been growing the faculty while  
285 enrollment was dramatically declining. In 2011 our faculty and enrollment were more closely  
286 aligned. William Paterson University is the only institution in New Jersey that has not grown its  
287 enrollment in over ten years. The Board of Trustees has been clear: With the recent downgrade  
288 by Fitch, WPU needs a turn-around strategy that includes a realignment of resources with need.  
289 We are facing a \$16M to \$23M deficit next year, and that assumes a 5% increase in enrollment,  
290 which is a very lofty goal.

291  
292 He believes that Verdicchio articulated what many feel: that it might be better for the Senate to  
293 concentrate only on program and curricular matters until the layoffs are complete. He could  
294 disregard his other duties and only focus on the layoffs, but where would we be? And we would  
295 be in the same dangerous place if the Senate did as well. In addition to curriculum, the Senate  
296 still has two major issues before it, one of which Fuentes spoke to (decolonizing the curriculum).  
297 You have to rethink representation. If you don't, the current Constitution stands and it will be  
298 one department, one vote. I continue to fear that minority voice will be impacted. I want to be  
299 clear to the Senate, should you choose not to deal with this, another year without constitutional  
300 reform is not acceptable. And if I am convinced that minority voice is not present, I will create a  
301 venue to seek it out and I will deliberate on the recommendations from the Senate. I urge you to  
302 take it on. It's too important.

303  
304 Echoing what Fuentes said, we need to take on the decolonization of the curriculum. If we do not  
305 address the whiteness of our curriculum as we seek to recruit, retain and graduate more students  
306 of color, a demographic that is growing in New Jersey, we can hardly be the university of choice  
307 when they don't see themselves reflected in the content that we teach. In my opinion they don't  
308 need to learn about whiteness. They live it every day, and we can and should do better.

309  
310 The Provost is going to ask the Senate to identify criteria we should be looking at going forward.  
311 Will you engage in this process which will help define who grows, who shrinks, who is  
312 eliminated and what new programs we develop. Or do you not?

313  
314 Powers said the conversation has been one of the extraordinary of his career. He's glad there are  
315 people who want this institution to be healthy and strong. There are two ways he's inviting the  
316 Senate to be a partner.

317  
318 One: In the same spirit that the President invited the Senate to add criteria to those he set forth  
319 for the academic reorganization last year, the Provost invites the Senate to do the same thing.  
320 The administration has been using total enrollment in specific programs, both at a moment in  
321 time and in trend data, and the same thing regarding the number of graduates. Those are the four

322 lenses with which we're looking at this. He does not think these are sufficient, so he's inviting  
323 the Senate to add up to three more criteria that would be helpful for informing the health and  
324 vitality of programs. He will be sharing with the Senate the data he's already shared with the  
325 Union. Tomorrow the Union will receive preliminary data regarding what programs are  
326 candidates for closure or hiatus. He would like to receive those criteria by March 10<sup>th</sup>.

327  
328 Two: He invites the Senate to engage the following question: What programs and relevant  
329 faculty specializations are needed in the future? We need to move forward in parallel with the  
330 other process. We can bring in experts who know the labor markets and growth opportunities in  
331 New Jersey and the nation, all in respect to driving enrollment, retention and career  
332 development. He would like that committee to provide its recommendations to March 6<sup>th</sup>.

333  
334 Gazzillo Diaz and Powers confirmed that the Union will get and transmit the data tomorrow.  
335 Helldobler and Natrajan agreed that the Union is not hiding anything.

336  
337 Christensen noted that it is difficult to work on restructuring the Senate at a time when we may  
338 lose up to 100 of our colleagues and we don't know what that is going to look like. It's also  
339 difficult to do in terms of diversity, especially when we're looking at so many potential layoffs in  
340 a college which has so much diversity: Humanities and Social Sciences. We know what Senate  
341 representation looks like over time, but it's difficult to do this work without knowing who  
342 remains.

343  
344 Natrajan recognized two non-senators. Shalom thinks we went off track in trying to totally  
345 separate on whether there should be layoffs and who the layoffs are. He believes these are  
346 integral things and are part of the general question: Where is the University going? He quoted the  
347 AAUP: "Program closures are matters of curriculum central to the educational missions of  
348 colleges and universities over which the faculty should always have primary responsibility.  
349 Closures ordered by administrative fiat, even or especially when they are ordered by  
350 administrators who believe they have done due diligence in program review, are therefore  
351 inimical not only to the educational mission of colleges and universities, but also to the social  
352 contract according to which faculty expertise, academic freedom and tenure serve the public  
353 good." We should not be involved in the question of which 60 or 80 or 100 lines should be cut,  
354 but is this the best future for the University? Is slashing a quarter of our faculty is the only way to  
355 solve our financial difficulties? This seems to me to be the conversation we should be having,  
356 rather than being told that this is the situation. Natrajan thanked Shalom for his comments and  
357 noted that the Senate has Undergraduate and Graduate councils with charges regarding the  
358 termination of programs, as he reminded the Provost recently.

359  
360 Wilson reiterated that the Union is fighting hard to save jobs and that it's important to attend  
361 meetings and engage in our democratic process rather than operate on your own in splinter  
362 groups. It is important to work together to protect as many jobs as possible.

363  
364 Natrajan agreed that the Union is working hard to protect jobs, but disagreed with the speaker's  
365 insinuations about faculty. He thanked Helldobler and Powers for helping us get more light than  
366 heat and looks forward to more constructive conversations.

367



368 **ADJOURNMENT:** Upon Hill's motion, the Senate adjourned at 1:54PM.

369

370 The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm.

371

372 **It will be a CLOSED online meeting. Only ELECTED Senators are allowed to attend.**

373

374 **Please "check in" as early as possible (ideally, before 12:30 so the secretaries can confirm attendance).**

375

376

377 Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

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381