

Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
October 6, 2021

The complete Recording for this meeting can be found at:

<https://myau.american.edu/groups/Committee/fs/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Present: Professors: Garret Martin, John Heywood, Lillian Baeza-Mendoza, Rebecca Hazen, David Haaga, Britta Peterson, Laura Beers, Robert Hauswald, Sarah Irvine Belson, Randall Blair, Mirjana Morosini, Alan Levine, Nikhat Ghouse, Benjamin Leff, Shawn Bates, Jim Quirk, Richard Shaw, Elizabeth Cotter, Kelly Joyner, Mike Cabot, Rhonda Zaharna, Cathy Schaeff, Gabriel Mathy, Mauro Tiso, Olivia Ivey, Elissa Margolin, Carolyn Parker, Jennifer Steele, Provost Peter Starr, DOF Monica Jackson

Chair's Report – Garret Martin

The Chair of the Faculty Senate, Professor Martin (SIS), began the meeting promptly, then he shared a series of announcements:

- President Burwell will visit the Faculty Senate at the November Senate meeting.
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee approved some changes to the AU Core committee membership.
- A working group is being formed to propose recommendations to revise the freedom of expression and dissent policy established in 2016. Both faculty and staff members will join this group, which will start working soon. This group is also expected to present its recommendations by the end of this academic year.
- Mask policy discussion: Discussions about our current University mask policy started at our last Senate meeting, and they continued afterwards. Senators were encouraged to seek feedback from their units. After reviewing this issue at our last meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the consensus was to keep the status quo regarding this policy.
- There will be a Faculty Senate Orientation Luncheon on October 20.
- Lura Graham has been promoted to Faculty Senate Operations Manager.
- Updates on the University Budget Committee: If you have any questions for the committee, please contact their representatives: Olivia Ivey, Carla Flink, and Octavian Ionici.
- Professor Martin asked for all senators to vote and to inform Lura if they are having technological issues that are preventing them from voting.

Approval of the September 15 Minutes

Professor Martin opened the floor for discussion of the September 15 minutes. No discussion or changes were brought forward. The Senate **VOTED** 24-0-0 in favor.

On behalf of the Senate, Professor Martin congratulated Peter Starr for being appointed to AU's permanent Provost.

Provost's Report – Peter Starr

Provost Starr thanked the AU community for their best wishes and hard work and followed with the following items:

- Family Weekend was a success.
- Undergraduate admissions was a multi-unit effort. The Office of Enrollment will keep its current structure. Fanta's knowledge and experience with enrollment and retention will be vital in the new operational model.
- We should continue our support for research. We need to push it forward. This drives the excellence of the institution.
- Retention: 47%, above target.
- Sustainability will be our 5th strategic focus.
- Announcement of open forums where faculty and staff can share their thoughts about different topics. Future forums will be organized on topics such as term-faculty issues, how to prepare students for the workplace, research reputation, and distinguished talks (Provost Myer's initiative).

Action Item: Approval of BoT Nominees for Campus Representatives Steve Silvia (SIS) and Shawn Bates (SIS) – Garret Martin

Professor Martin thanked those colleagues who volunteered to be campus representatives for the Board of Trustees committees. We had multiple candidates (7). The Faculty Senate Executive Committee reviewed all the candidates, and then all members voted via a secret ballot to determine the two nominees: Shawn Bates (SIS), and Steve Silvia (SIS). Professor Martin reminded the Senate that there will be more opportunities to serve as campus representatives next semester, and he encouraged diversity in the pool of candidates.

After discussion, the Senate **VOTED** on the nominations for BoT Campus Representatives. Professor Bates, 23-1-1, and Professor Silvia, 24-1-0, both in favor.

Action Item: Dean's List Benchmarking Regulation 5.4 Credits for Dean's List– Jessica Watters

Dean Waters presented a proposal to change Undergraduate Regulation 5.4, which currently has the Dean's List requirements at 15 completed hours each semester. The proposal asks for a change to 12 completed credits instead of 15. Dean Waters shared that this change would align the Dean's List eligibility with the full-time status regulation, which sets 12 credits as full-time status. This change would also support students' wellness, and those who take a reduced semester load as an academic accommodation.

After a discussion, the Senate **VOTED** 24-0-1 in favor.

Presentation: Capital Campaign & Connection with Research – Courtney Surls, Matt Bennet, and Diana Burley

Diana Burley (Vice Provost for Research), Courtney Surls (Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations), and Matt Bennett (Vice President of Communication), provided an overview of the Capital Campaign and research. Their presentation included information on campaign progress to date, progress to budget goal, and the campaign's priorities framework (transforming the student experience, driving global impact through faculty research and teaching, and building better

communities). They also shared that AU launched the AU Fund for Faculty, Research, and Innovation, which helps support the work of top AU scholars. They invited faculty to share stories with Matt's office. This office is also available to support faculty with training on how to work with the media. Lastly, they shared that there will be an upcoming event called "The Provost's Open Forum on Building AU Research" scheduled to take place on November 15 at 4:00 pm.

A discussion session followed, which touched on topics such as science education, how to educate our students to become effective researchers, and how we can support research in humanities.

Discussion: Retirement Plan – Monica Jackson, Karen Baehler, Beth Muha, and Bethany Bridgham

Monica Jackson (DOF), Karen Baehler (Associate DOF), Beth Muha (Assistant Vice President of Human Resources), and Bethany Bridgham (Senior Associate General Counsel) presented a Faculty Retirement Incentive Policy (FRIP) revision. The updated version of the FRIP provides three transition options for tenured faculty members who are planning for retirement: one semester of paid transitional leave at their current salary, or one academic year with a 50% course release each semester and 50% salary reduction, or 2 academic years with a 50% reduction in salary. They expect the new policy to become effective January 1st, 2022. Faculty members that are contemplating retiring soon have been informed of this upcoming change so they can make an informed decision.

A question-and-answer session followed. It included issues related to the situation of librarians, who do not work on a semester schedule or have course release options. Also asked was how this information will be implemented, and whether faculty need to be enrolled in one of AU's health insurance plans to qualify for insurance benefits after retirement. Presenters also confirmed that this plan is for tenured faculty only. Term-faculty retirees can opt in to receive health insurance benefits after retirement.

For the Good of the Order – Garret Martin

Professor Martin wanted to start a conversation of the modality of Senate meeting in the future. He invited senators to start thinking about what modality (fully online, hybrid, in person) would make sense to adapt in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50pm