

*Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
December 2, 2020*

The complete Recording for this meeting can be found at:

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

Present: Professors: John Heywood, Garret Martin, Elizabeth Worden, Laura Beers, Randall Blair, Mike Cabot, Elizabeth Cotter, Todd Eisenstadt, David Haaga, Robert Hauswald, Olivia Ivey, Kelly Joiner, Benjamin Leff, Stacey Marien, Tom Merrill, Lillian Baeza-Mendoza, Mirjana Morosini, Hannah Park, Carolyn Parker, Britta Peterson, Jennifer Poole, Rick Semiatin, Richard Sha, Cathy Schaeff, Jason Snyder, Jennifer Steele, Laurie Stepanek, Brian Yates, Acting Provost Peter Starr, Interim DOF Monica Jackson

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 pm

Chair's Report – John Heywood

The Minutes for October 14, 2020 and November 4, 2020 were voted on and approved. October, 21-0-1, November 23-0-0.

Professor Heywood gave a brief overview of the November board meeting. Additionally, he highlighted two challenges connected to the current pause in merit pay: ensuring that faculty who produced significant work recently can still have this recognized at a subsequent time; and acknowledging the faculty who are facing hardships at present and how that is affecting their scholarship. Professor Heywood reminded all that Interim Dean Friedman (CAS) is also chairing an ongoing task force on equity, which is delving into the precise issue of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Provost's Report – Peter Starr

Provost Starr stated the following updates:

- emphasizing the need to re-engage students who deferred this year or took leaves of absences. This is crucial as it is going to be a challenging environment for the recruitment of the 2021 class.
- The current presumption is that face-to-face teaching will be the norm, with a few exceptions, for instruction in the Fall 2021 semester.
- AU is striving to encourage more students to take summer courses in 2021, as part of a more general goal to use the summer period more effectively. The main barriers for that objective remain the lack of financial aid for students in the summer and the limited residential experience in that period. If AU can succeed in bolstering the summer term, that could eventually allow greater teaching flexibility for faculty.
- Depending on the evolution of the pandemic, the plan is to welcome several hundred first year students for a residential experience in the latter part of the spring semester, which

could last anywhere from four to eight weeks. Based on recent polls, there seems to be strong interest from first year students in taking part in this residential experience.

- There have been a series of in-person co-curricular initiatives put forward by the various units of AU and which would be potentially offered in the spring. These would be targeted for the several thousand AU students who are currently living in the greater Washington DC area.
- Ongoing discussions about establishing project-based learning programs in the summer or fall and offering sophomore Living Learning Communities, which could be important for the retention of first year students.
- Changing the current mentorship program, which is offered to students who are not likely to enroll at AU, and extending the experiences of that program, which include internships and study abroad opportunities, to all students.

The Faculty Senate then held a question-and-answer session with the Provost that covered some elements of his report, especially reforming the mentorship program and the plan to bolster the summer semester.

Undergraduate Online Degree Approval Process – Peter Starr

Provost Starr then opened discussion on the idea of an Undergraduate Online Degree, as suggested by Vice Provost & Chief Online Office Joseph Riquelme.

The Undergraduate Online Degree would not interest all, but that its affordability could be appealing to some students. The per-credit cost would not change, but students would save on accommodation costs if they were living at home. The Plan is to launch a pilot on a small scale in the Fall 2021, targeting majors that have many students and fields where online classes are already the norm. If the pilot is successful, the plan would then be to establish a more regular and standard review process by the Faculty Senate. The Provost added that there is not sufficient time to go through the usual curricular review process for the planned Fall 2021 pilot initiative.

A discussion then followed with the Provost. The Faculty Senate agreed to revisit this matter soon, with further updates from the Provost once the pilot has been launched.

Graduate regulation change – Wendy Boland

Dean Boland presented the graduate regulation change to 10.2 as explained below.

10.2. Enrollment in Courses in the Academic Calendars

A student enrolled in a graduate program or certificate is required to take courses only aligned with the academic calendar for that program or certificate. If a graduate student enrolls in courses which are not aligned with the academic calendar of his or her program and/or certificate, the Dean of Graduate Studies reserves the right to drop or withdraw the student from any courses misaligned with the appropriate academic calendar.

Thus, we are requesting a year-long temporary amendment to Regulation 10.2 to allow for this Plan. The proposed amended text to the regulation would be as follows:

Students enrolled in a semester calendar program Fall 2020 will be allowed to enroll in T4 courses, with the permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. Additionally, students enrolled in a semester calendar program Spring 2021 will be allowed to enroll in T1 courses, with the permission of the Associate Dean of the academic unit. For the purposes of these regulations, four-term courses taken by students enrolled in semester program will be treated as semester courses during the semester in which the term begins and ends.

Cross-calendar enrollments/credits cannot exceed 49 percent of the student's total program credits. Academic units must keep track of all on-campus program students that cross-enroll into any of the Four-Term Academic Calendar courses.

As we move forward, and with the hope of increasing flexibility for students and allowing more cross-enrollments in the future, we would look to permanently adjust regulation 10.2. The Senate **VOTED** 23-0-0 in favor.

Retention Update and Spring Retention Initiatives – Jessica Waters and Jimmy Ellis

Assistant Dean James Ellis and Dean Jessica Waters gave a retention update and presentation on spring retention initiatives to the Faculty Senate.

James Ellis outlined the results from the 2020 Fall Transition Survey; an annual survey normally reserved for first year students. The survey covers several subjects, including if classes are academically challenging classes; social integration; the ability to finance education; and the intent to return.

Dean Waters briefly discussed the ongoing outreach efforts with students who deferred, such as organizing webinars or setting up complex problem classes.

CFA/DOF Instructions Memo – Todd Eisenstadt & Monica Jackson

The Committee on Faculty Actions discussed with the Faculty Senate the draft annual Joint Instructions Memo, written with the Deputy Provost Monica Jackson, that covers all files for action for the AY 2021-22. The plan is to present this memo to all interested faculty at an open meeting in February.

Professor Eisenstadt (SPA) highlighted a few issues that the CFA and Deputy Provost Jackson had to tackle with the Joint Instructions Memo. This includes implementing the requirements of the Beyond the SETs task force as it pertains to including median scores; factoring in the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the understanding that there is a task force focusing on this issue; and articulating the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requirements in the Instructions Memo.

The Senate **VOTED** 17-3-2 in favor.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm

