

*Minutes  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
February 3, 2021*

*The complete Recording for this meeting can be found at:*

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

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**Present: Professors:** John Heywood, Garret Martin, Elizabeth Worden, Laura Beers, Randall Blair, Mike Cabot, Elizabeth Cotter, Todd Eisenstadt, David Haaga, Robert Hauswald, Rebecca Hazen, 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, Matt Taylor, Brian Yates, Acting Provost Peter Starr, Interim DOF Monica Jackson

**Chair's Report – John Heywood**

**Approval of the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Minutes.**

Professor Heywood opened the floor for discussion of the December 2 minutes. With no changes or discussion needed the Senate **VOTED** 23-0-0 in favor.

Professor Heywood began the meeting by thanking Professor Stacey Marien (University Library) for stepping up and agreeing to represent the Senate on the task force on informal resolutions of complaints against faculty at the unit level headed by Associate Dean of Faculty Karen Baehler.

He also welcomed the new Senator, Professor Rebecca Hazen (CAS) who is replacing Professor Laurie Stepanek. He mentioned that Professor April Shelford (CAS) was resigning as an At-Large Senator and that the Senate would soon select a replacement to complete her term. Additionally, he reminded all that the call for nominations for the next Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate was open.

Prof. Heywood gave a statement on the thirteen SPEXS colleagues whose contracts were not renewed for the Spring semester, and the challenges raised by seeing their medical benefits cut during a pandemic.

Professor Heywood stated that the Faculty Manual task force and the Faculty Senate Bylaws task force plan to report to the Faculty Senate soon.

**Provost's Report – Peter Starr**

Provost Starr began his report by stating that the enrollment to budget for undergraduate students and study abroad is down by 14%, meaning that AU is doing better than expected with retention. The retention from fall to spring this academic year is only slightly below the results of the previous academic year, which is a real tribute to the work of the AU community.

He added that the number of applications for Undergraduate students for this year was down 3%. But this needs to be put in the context of 2020 being a record year, and this year being on course to

being the second-best total. Conversion will be, like every year, key at a time when AU cannot host large face-to-face gatherings with prospective students.

The Provost mentioned that he hoped to soon get the authorization to review all the outstanding multi-year Term faculty reappointment applications, as well as a certain percentage of the one-year applications.

He stated that the Task Force on Equity in Faculty Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Merit will be presenting its findings at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Before that, the Provost will be sending out a memorandum to the AU community, endorsing most of the recommendations of part I of the report. Later in February, the Task Force Co-Chairs will also hold two townhall meetings that will focus especially on parts II and III of the report, which cover equity in scholarship standards, as well as how to better recognize Faculty Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

### **New SET Data Report - Karen Baehler and Karen Frosliid Jones**

Associate Dean of Faculty Karen Baehler and Assistant Provost Karen Frosliid Jones (Institutional Research and Assessment) provided a brief update on the implementation of the Beyond the SET's report, with a presentation of a new SET data chart. Associate Dean Baehler also briefly touched on Symplectic Elements, the platform that will soon replace the Faculty Activity Reporting System (FARS).

The Senate **VOTED** 20-1-3 in favor.

### **Pass/Fail Implementation – Jessica Waters, Emily Jones-Green and Derek Jansante**

In October 2020, the Senate approved, for the 2020-2021 Academic Year, a limited temporary suspension of the pass/fail regulations. This time, undergraduate students would be eligible to take a second course pass/fail in addition to the one course they could always take pass/fail, and this second course would not have to be an elective, but could be in their major, minor, or in the AU Core. Graduate students would be eligible to take one course each semester pass/fail.

Dean Jessica Waters (Undergraduate Education) provided an update regarding the challenges associated with the implementation of the October 2020 decision, especially the significant and unanticipated mechanical implementation on the advising community across AU.

Emily Jones-Green (Senior Director, Advising, Retention & Recruiting, CAS Undergraduate Advising) and Derek Jansante (Director, Undergraduate Programs Kogod School of Business) provided additional details on the difficulties faced by advisers and brought forward a proposal that the temporary pass/fail regulations would apply to two courses of any category for undergraduate students. After a follow up discussion, the Faculty Senate approved this request for the Spring 2021 semester but committed to revisit this issue for future semesters.

The Senate **VOTED** 14-7-3 in favor.

### **Inclusive Excellence Update**

Vice President Fanta Aw (Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence) provided an update on Inclusive Excellence, as part AU's Strategic Plan "Changemakers for a Changing World".

The Inclusive Excellence work is in its third year and the phase two plan will be more detailed, with five major areas of emphasis, namely: 1) Learning, Curriculum, and Professional Development; 2) Campus Culture, Climate and Community 3) Policies, Procedures, and Practices 4) Access and Equity and 5) Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work.

Vice President Aw emphasized that this second phase will have a heavy focus on academic affairs, as a corrective to the first phase of the plan. It is also key to clearly identify who are the drivers when it comes to the implementation of the Inclusive Excellence plan.

### **SPEXS Reorganization – Peter Starr**

Provost Starr started by acknowledging the tough situation faced by the SPEXS faculty who were not reappointed for the Spring semester, including those who have served the AU community for many years.

Shifting to the larger organization question, Provost Starr emphasized the structural challenges faced by SPEXS in the past, noticeably the competition and occasional turf battles with the other schools on campus. Moreover, if AU wants to really focus on lifelong learning, it will need to leverage the expertise and reputation of all the schools and all the faculty. And there is the odd disconnect between the International Accelerator Program/Master's Accelerator Program, which are currently run from the Deputy Provost's Office, and the English Language and Training Academy. While these initiatives are symbiotic, they do not currently have a common reporting structure.

Provost Starr announced that the plan is to disband SPEXS by July 1 and to redistribute its various components across the AU community. The Mentorship Program will be mainstreamed and open to all AU undergraduate students in their first year.

There will be a new Office of Global and Off-Campus Education (name could change), which will report to the Provost, and which will include the Washington Semester program, the International Accelerator Program/Master's Accelerator Program, AU Abroad, and the English Language and Training Academy (ELTA).

The plan is also to establish a Professional and Lifelong Learning Lab, which will report to the Dean of Graduate Studies Wendy Boland. The idea is to create incentives for the various schools to work together and to focus on lifelong learning, bolstered by improved marketing capacities.

The Provost added that there are still points to be determined in this reorganization plan, such as where SPEXS staff will migrate. As for where current SPEXS faculty will hold appointments after the reorganization, the Provost suggested that those in the ELTA program would likely end up in the Teaching English as a Second Language program (TESOL in CAS). The faculty connected to the Washington Semester have natural affinities with SIS and SPA and would be the most likely fit.

The implementation and development of the reorganization plan is being led by a Steering Committee, with the Provost as Chair, and with five sub-committees dealing with specific dimensions of the plan. These sub-committees will tackle the following subjects: AU Cornerstone (new name for the Mentorship program, chaired by Dean Waters); Professional Studies (chaired by

Dean Boland); Off-Campus Education (chaired by Gihan Fernando); Budget (chaired by Associate Vice Provost Prita Patel); and Faculty (chaired by Deputy Provost Monica Jackson).

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm**