

*Minutes  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
September 15, 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:** Garret Martin, Lillian Baeza-Mendoza, John Heywood, Shawn Bates, Laura Beers, Randall Blair, Mike Cabot, Elizabeth Cotter, Nikhat Ghouse, David Haaga, Robert Hauswald, Rebecca Hazen, Sarah Irvine Belson, Oliva Ivey, Patrick Kelly Joyner, Benjamin Leff, Alan Levine, Elissa Margolin, Gabriel Mathy, Mirjana Morosini, Carolyn Parker, Britta Peterson, Jim Quirk, Cathy Schaeff, Richard Sha, Jennifer Steele, Mauro Tiso, Rhonda Zaharna, Acting Provost Peter Starr, DOF Monica Jackson.

**The meeting was called to order at 2:35 pm.**

**Chair's Report – Garret Martin**

Professor Martin welcomed everyone to the first senate meeting of the year. He began by going over Senate processes and the importance of shared governance. He introduced the other members of the Senate leadership team (John Heywood, Lura Graham, Lilian Baeza-Mendoza), and he provided Senators with the Zoom meeting format, tips, and expectations.

Professor Martin shared new, general principles that the Senate will follow this year:

- After going through 18 difficult months because of COVID, the Senate will try to return to regular order;
- The Senate wants to keep track of issues ahead, but also keep working on legacy issues, such as the centralized academic integrity office, term faculty sabbaticals, and the establishment of an ombuds office;
- Civility and accountability will guide our conversations.

Professor Martin updated Senators on President Burwell's upcoming visit to the Faculty Senate, which is scheduled for November 3<sup>rd</sup>. He also informed the Senate of some initiatives that started over the summer: A joint Senate/Provost Office task force on term faculty appointment, preliminary discussions on possible revisions of Curriculog, and the postponed implementation of teaching portfolios until next academic year.

**Approval of the May 5, 2021, Minutes** – Professor Martin opened the floor for edits and discussion of the May 5 minutes. No discussion was needed, and the Senate **VOTED (21-0-1)** in favor.

**Provost's Report – Peter Starr**

Provost Starr thanked the Senate and the Senate leadership for the work done over the summer, as well as the DOF office and CFA for a great informational session on promotion and reappointment.

He also welcomed Jeff Wong, who is joining AU as the Vice Provost of Global and Immersive Studies.

Provost Starr reported on the following items:

- Enrollment: Large first-year class, exceeding AU target by 371 students, undergraduate enrollment is up 4.6%, and graduate enrollment is up 8.4%. SPA has an increase in master's students, as well as SIS.
- Retention: It is always a concern, at 90.8%, but this is an increase in numbers in comparison to retention rates from other institutions. Dean of Undergraduate Education Jessica Waters and her team have successfully managed to re-engage 46 students that we lost last year, and they have enrolled this year.
- Ranking: Our US News ranking is down from 76 to 79 this year. Work needs to be done with peer assessment, retention, and graduation rates, but good standing in regard to class sizing and student excellence.
- Faculty hiring and reappointment: More than half of our tenured-line vacancies have been authorized to be filled in the upcoming year. AU is able to come back to offer one-year appointments in the fall. We have also analyzed the number of multi-year appointments across schools and schools that are lagging will be able to offer these types of appointment in the future.
- Research awards: We were down in fiscal year 2020, but this year we are up 46% (almost 30 million). This does not include a recent award given to Environmental Science and other fields of 15 million dollars from NSF. This is a testament of our growth in research.
- Budget: No tuition increase this year. We need to continue to be careful about our budget.
- Guidelines from the Office of the Provost are forthcoming to address teaching responsibilities with care-giving challenges due to COVID. Specifically, how to teach if you are ill or your household is in quarantine.

### **Consent Agenda – Garret Martin**

Professor Martin explained that items in the consent agenda are items that may be considered minor or technical in nature, so they may not warrant full discussion. This is done to hopefully allow more time in the agenda for discussion of more substantive items. It is important to note that items in the consent agenda go through multiple steps of vetting. However, senators still have the opportunity to ask items to be moved out of the consent agenda and be considered a discussion item. If none of the items are moved from the consent agenda, senators are bulk voting for all the items in this category.

The agenda items presented are the following:

- Faculty Senate bylaws – title change for Jessica Waters: Update the bylaws with the correct title.
- CFA/DOF Instructions language change/postponing of Teaching Portfolios: Change of fact. The CFA would like to amend the DOF/CFA memo on Faculty Actions to reflect the new Senate-leaders and Dean of Faculty approved policy to postpone teaching portfolios to AY 2022-23.
- Honors Advisory Interim Director: The proposal that senators are consenting to or not is whether we agree with the plan to have an interim director while the current director Patrick Jackson goes on sabbatical.

After a discussion, the Senate **VOTED (21-1-1)** in favor.

**Action Item: Board of Trustees Campus Representatives and Faculty Senate Bylaws – Garret Martin**

Professor Martin explained that starting this year, items in the meeting agenda will be labeled as “consent agenda” as described previously, “action items,” for proposals that may require discussion and voting, and “presentations,” for items that are presented at the Senate for information purposes. This item regarding campus representatives is an action item.

Professor Martin informed the Senate that this proposal is an attempt to address discrepancies between the Faculty Senate bylaws and the Board of Trustees bylaws. In addition, as matter of consistency, Faculty Senate campus representatives to the Board of Trustees committees should be subject to term limits, since this is the case for all Senators. Professor Martin added that we received many volunteers to fill campus representative positions at the Board of Trustees for the upcoming year. He also mentioned that at the last Board of Trustees Fall retreat meeting the theme of discussion was “the future of work” from the perspectives of the employers and the AU community. After a discussion and clarification of the new language in the bylaws, the Senate **VOTED (22-0-1)** in favor.

**Action Item: University Faculty Awards and Faculty Senate Bylaws – Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, Sara Biggs**

Professor Baeza-Mendoza and Sara Biggs (Director, Strategic Initiatives and Communication, Office of the Provost) presented a proposal to add the University Faculty Awards committee to the Faculty Senate bylaws. They explained that this committee has existed in practice and functioned for two consecutive years, but currently it is not included as a special and advisory committee in the Faculty Senate bylaws.

After a presentation on the committee’s charge, composition, and continuity, the Senate **VOTED (20-1-0)** in favor.

**Presentation: Athletics Report for AY 2020-2021 – Josephine Harrington**

Professor Martin mentioned that we are delighted to return to normal after the pandemic and be able to have an athletic report again since this was not possible last year.

Josephine Harrington (Deputy Director of Athletics) presented an annual athletic report, and she also covered some of the elements of the pandemic last year that affected athletics at AU. The report covered statistics on student-athlete academic performance, team academic honors and awards, school-athlete ratios, and athletics COVID-19 operations.

**Discussion: Briefing on Revising the Process for University Faculty Awards– Lilian Baeza-Mendoza and Sara Biggs.**

Professor Baeza-Mendoza, Sara Biggs, and Garret Martin continued the conversation on the work of the University Faculty Awards Committee by sharing with the Senate their efforts over the summer to explore ways to streamline the selection process for both the nominators and the committee members that will be reviewing candidate’s files. The presenters and the Senate explored various areas of potential improvement, such as the number of awards, the time frame for review, standardization of supporting documents, SET’s and teaching portfolios, and DEI in selection rubrics and selection of awardees.

**Discussion: Faculty Survey Briefings for AY 2019-2021 – Karen Froslid Jones**

Karen Froslid Jones (Office of the Provost) presented an overview of the results derived from the faculty, staff, and student surveys in AY 2019-2021. The presentation also included findings from the 2020 COVID faculty survey. This presentation aimed at informing the Senate and the AU community of these results, as well as exploring how these results can guide future actions at the Senate and other stakeholders. The presentation covered areas related to survey background, survey working groups, and survey content and breakouts. Karen welcomed any suggestions or questions related to the results of these surveys.

**Discussion: Fall 2021 Teaching Experience Discussion – Garret Martin**

Professor Martin mentioned that it was important to create a space in the meeting agenda to discuss faculty's experiences and concerns in the classroom now that we are back on campus to teach face-to-face. The Senate then engaged in an open discussion that touched upon many key concerns, such as the use or lack of use of mask in the classroom, classroom size, social distancing in buses, etc. After the discussion, senators were encouraged to touch base with their units for additional feedback.

**For the Good of the Order**

Professor Martin shared with the Senate that Matt Bennett (Vice President of Communication), Courtney Surls (Vice President of Development), and Diana Burley (Vice Provost for Research) have been invited to the Senate meeting in October to talk about the role of faculty research in the capital campaign. He also mentioned that AU is offering seasonal flu shots for the AU community.

**Professor Martin adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.**