

*Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
May 11, 2016*

***** The complete recording for this meeting can be found at <http://www.american.edu./facultysenate/agendas-minutes.cfm>**

Present: Professors: Larry Engel, Todd Eisenstadt, Lacey Wootton, Karen Baehler, Kyle Brannon, Rachel Borchardt, Maria Gomez, Olivia Ivey, Kelly Joyner, Iris Krasnow, Gwanhoo Lee, Mike Limarzi, Jun Lu, Mary Mintz, John Nolan, Steve Silvia, Chris Simpson, Kate Wilson, Brian Yates, Provost Scott Bass, DAA Mary Clark.

Professor Engel called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM

Chair's Report – Larry Engel

Professor Engel discussed the following topics:

- Changing the dates for some Senate committee membership transition from June 15 to early fall. Discussion was had specifically in regards to the curriculum committees that are year-round committees. Professor Engel stated that he will bring language changes for the Senate by-laws forward in the fall.
- Setting up a Twitter account for the Senate was suggested by Librarian Ivey. The Senate discussed the option and stated it would be an additional form of communication but email will remain the primary form of communication.
- During the pilot of the Input on Teaching by Students (ITS), an oversight occurred with the 400/600 level classes and those that had fewer than 6 students were not included. Options to handle this situation are being addressed. Additional concerns arose with the narratives and insuring that they are only being sent to the faculty. This issue is being addressed.

Provost's Report – Scott Bass

- Undergraduate commencement was a success. WCL's commencement is upcoming and the BOT will be meeting this week.
- Undergraduate enrollment is strong. The admit rate is 26% and the yield is 35%. The GPA for the incoming class is 3.67 and SAT average is 1244. For the special programs 5 students were admitted and accepted in the FDDS program, 24 in the honors program including FDDS. It is too early to evaluate Graduate enrollment but it is running behind from last year at this time. More will be reported in the fall.

Financial State of the University – CFO Doug Kudravetz

CFO Kudravetz thanked the Senate for the invitation to speak on the financial state of the university. He presented the overall credit ratings of the university and went over the current progress of the endowment and operating budget.

CFO Kudravetz stated that the East Campus is behind schedule with a hopeful date of late August for two dorms to open. Spring Valley is under renovation and it is projected to be ready for people to move in by the end of the summer. He also stated that the university has gone “online” with the solar program. AU has formed a partnership with George Washington University Hospital allowing us to receive 50% of our electricity from solar energy coming from three solar farms in North Carolina. Additionally, the second floor of Butler Pavilion currently housing the lower floor of the bookstore will now be sharing space for the University Club and Student Life.

Ad-Hoc Term Faculty Committee: Faculty Manual Language Update – Sherburne Laughlin

Professor Laughlin thanked the senators for the opportunity to present. She stated that the charge given to the committee was to revise the language in the *Faculty Manual* for Term Faculty particularly on ranks and promotion. The committee began its work from the Term Faculty report from 2011 that was accepted by the Senate in 2011. There was language proposed in the report that was never put into the *Faculty Manual*. Professor Laughlin stated the committee is working on:

- The Professorial Lecturer track to clarify the current language, specifically the Term Professor track ranks addressing the promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor
- Movement between paths and how to address them
- In-Residence faculty and how they can move within the ranks.

Professor Laughlin informed the Senate that the committee is leaning towards the units developing guidelines to address criteria for each of these issues including support with scholarship. The committee will be working over the summer and will be returning a report to the Senate in the fall that they hope will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the November meeting.

Grade Inflation Update – Stina Oakes & Christine Dulaney

Professor Dulaney thanked the Senate for the invitation to the meeting. She stated that the committee was given a four-point charge as follows:

- 1) to define grade inflation
- 2) to review literature
- 3) to collect data and determine how grade inflation is affecting AU
- 4) to make recommendations.

Professor Dulaney stated the following:

- Grade inflation has three primary areas. Granting of higher grades for the same quality of work over a period of time, grade compression and grade inequality.
- The committee reviewed a large body of literature addressing how other universities have dealt with this issue. The policy’s generally fell into three broad categories.

- 1) grade targeting by following a bell curve

- 2) defining grade in context – providing a definition/explanation of what the grade means, usually reported on the transcript
- 3) Encourage departments or individual schools to develop policies in a way that suits a discipline
- During the committee’s research members did not find one approach that was definitive and affective.

Professor Oakes stated the following;

- AU is right in line with the national trend but within the college and schools there is deviation.
- With information provided from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, high grades are not as much a deciding factor on teaching evaluations as thought.
- Two departments at AU are known for having lower grades. Literature has a rubric that is used in the entire department and Accounting has a common syllabus and exam that is given at the same time to all students. These examples show that there is not a “one size fits all” approach.
- Some recommendations include informing first year students of this grading culture, add language on syllabi about grading expectations for more transparency, have faculty talk more about grades among themselves, look at how grades are being used in the evaluation process. and have ways to address students concerns when asking for a higher grade.

Professor Oakes expressed that this would be a very extensive project for the university to take on. She also informed the Senate that the final report will be finalized soon. The committee does support moving forward with this topic.

Faculty Conduct Guidelines – Lydia Fettig

Professor Fettig stated that the guidelines document has been seen several times by the Senate body. Additionally, it was reviewed at two town halls, by the registrar and by the deans. She informed the Senate that she has received some great feedback that it has been implemented into the current version.

Professor Fettig informed the Senate that major changes were made to make parts of the document firmer and to add expectations. This is also reflected in the new title change, “Expectations and Guidelines for Faculty Conduct at American University.” Further discussion was had among the senators. The Senate requested that this document be returned in the fall for further review.

Athletics Update for NCAA Compliance – Josephine Harrington

Senior Associate Athletic Director Josephine Harrington stated that the Athletic Department had a very successful year. She stated the following stats in her recap:

- The Department GPA was 3.38 and the cumulative GPA was a 3.34.
- All of the teams had a GPA of a 3.0 or higher and the woman’s field hockey team held the highest team GPA at a 3.65

- 23% of the athletes earned Deans List, 80.8% earned a 3.0 or higher and 46.6% earned a 3.5 GPA or higher.

Director Harrington presented several more statistics on the overall achievements of the AU athletes and stated that the support of the faculty and administration had made all these achievements possible.

The senators gave special thanks to Professor Larry Engel for his role as the 2015-2016 Faculty Senate Chair, and to Professor Lacey Wootton for her 5 years of service, 2 years as a senator and three years in leadership.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM