

*Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
May 4, 2022*

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, Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, Rebecca Hazen, David Haaga, Britta Peterson, Laura Beers, Robert Hauswald, Sarah Irvine Belson, Randall Blair, Mirjana Morosini, Alan Levine, Benjamin Leff, Shawn Bates, Jim Quirk, Richard Sha, Kelly Joyner, Mike Cabot, Rhonda Zaharna, Cathy Schaeff, Gabriel Mathy, Mauro Tiso, Olivia Ivey, Elissa Margolin, Carolyn Parker, Provost Peter Starr, DOF Monica Jackson

Chair's Report – Garret Martin

The Chair of the Faculty Senate, Professor Martin (SIS), started the meeting promptly, opening the floor for discussion or proposed edits to the Faculty Senate meeting minutes for April 2022. The senate **VOTED** 14-0-0 in favor. He later shared the following:

- He welcomed new senators for the next academic year: Professors: María Gomez (CAS), Dan Abraham (CAS), Yijiang Zhao (KSB), Sarah Irvine Belson (SOE), Heather Hughes (WCL), Katie Holton (CAS, At-Large), Bryan Fantie (CAS, At-Large), Jennifer Axe (CAS, Chair of COLA), Dario Bernardini (SOC, Chair of UCC), Alan Isaac (CIS Chair), and Robert Kelley (CTFA). He also acknowledged upcoming Senate committee members.
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee nominated two additional senators to be part of this committee: Professor Katie Holton (CAS) and Professor Randall Blair (SOC). Senators voted for both candidates separately.
- Middle States: The VP for the Middle States accreditation will visit AU. The Middle States Open Meeting with Dr. Bob Bonfiglio will take place virtually on May 17 at 12:30. Faculty are invited to attend.
- Emergency Waiver: A committee consisting of past chairs, Andrea Pearson, Todd Eisenstadt, and John Heywood, are tasked with exploring a set of options to decide if it is useful to have “emergency waivers” available for the Senate. Due to time constraints, this committee will present its findings next semester.
- Campus Representatives for the Board of Trustees: Professors Kelly Joiner and Raychelle Burks from CAS, and Professor Valentina Bruno from the Department of Finance and Real State are the new campus representatives for the next academic year. Professor Martin thanked campus representatives that are circling off: Professors Donald Williamson, Leonard Steinhorn, and Leigh Riddick.
- Senate positions: There are some Senate vacancies in some committees. It is important to have a full roster next year so faculty are encouraged to volunteer to serve in these positions.
- Brunches with Bronté: Two of these events were scheduled this semester, and more are planned for the future. We thank Bronté’s time and effort to help us work on our budget literacy and engage our community.

Provost's Report – Peter Starr

Provost Peter Starr reported on the following items:

- Dean searches: Linda Aldoory will join AU as the new Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Provost Starr thanked Professor David Haaga for serving as the search committee chair and he thanked all the committee members for their hard work during the process. We are in final negotiations for the SIS dean, and we are in the semi-finalists round in the search for the dean of Kogod.
- Budget: We had the last of our budget forums (2 for faculty, 2 for staff). The Provost Office and the CFO office will continue planning events to inform the community about budget decisions. There are plans to extend the University Budget Committee's work and make it a standing committee. CFO Bronté Burleigh-Jones plans to take the Space Management Committee and make it a sub-committee of the UBC.
- Provost Open Forums: We had several events this academic year, covering themes such as research, supporting term-faculty, the future of work, issues around service, and the return to the new normal at AU. Ideas are welcomed for future open forum events.
- Provost Starr thanked Regina Curran and Tom Merrill for co-chairing FEWG, and Carolyn Parker for chairing the term-faculty task force. Special thanks to the Senate leadership, the parting members of the Senate and Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Karen and the Middle States team, and Cindy Bair Van Dam for her contributions to the AU Core.

Presentation: Softphone Project – Buddhi Abeysekera & Steve Munson

Buddhi Abeysekera (Director of Network Operations) and Steve Munson (Vice President and Chief Information Officer) briefed the Faculty Senate on the University's plan to replace the physical phones in offices with soft phones. Soft phones are software that allow AU employees to make phone calls over the internet via a computer or smart phone. The objective of this initiative is to gain support to minimize the use of physical handsets and to gather feedback on phone system platform options (Cisco VoIP, Zoom phone).

Action Item: Draft Policy of Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and Statement of Values – Regina Curran and Thomas Merrill

Regina Curran (Interim Assistant Vice President, Student Engagement), and Tom Merrill (Associate Professor, SPA) visited the Faculty Senate to share draft versions of the Policy of Freedom of Expression and Dissent, and AU's Statement of values. Their working group was charged with reviewing AU's freedom of expression policies and provide recommendations to Provost Peter Starr and VP of Campus Life Fanta Aw. They stated that these documents give account of why and in what ways we protect freedom of expression. The Senate **VOTED** 17-4-1 in favor.

The Policy of Freedom of Expression and Dissent is a formal AU policy, and as such, the Senate approval is not a formal or required step. Rather, the Faculty Senate is asked to provide thoughts and the document is presented as an agenda item to assess the sense of the Senate. It is not intended to be an actionable policy, but it tries to articulate how AU's feel about freedom of expression. On the contrary, the Statement of Values is a document that requires formal Senate approval.

After comments, the discussion about the Policy of Freedom of Expression and Dissent was **tabled** so senators have more time to seek feedback from their units so we can assess the sense of the Senate more accurately. The Statement of Values was submitted for a vote. There will be future conversations on what to do with the Statement of Values from 2015.

Action Item: Term-Faculty Reappointment Task Force Report – Carolyn Parker

The Chair of the Term-Faculty Task Force, Professor Carolyn Parker, thanked all the members of the task force: Terry Bryant, Parthiban David, Derrick Jefferson, Robert Kelley, Elizabeth Keith, Mieke Meurs, Candice Nelson, Lauren Pav, and Abby Puskar. The report developed some high-impact recommendations such as using the preceding year's file prepared for merit for reappointment and the standardizing the sequence of reappointment contracts across all units. It also provided procedural recommendations related to communication, content, and process. The report is supported by rich qualitative data that can be a starting point for further initiatives related to term-faculty issues. The Senate **VOTED** 14-0-2 in favor.

Action Items: AU Policy on Provost Searches, and AU Policy on Senior Administrator Searches – Garret Martin and Peter Starr

Professor Martin and Provost Starr presented two drafts: An AU Policy on Provost Searches, and an AU Policy on Senior Administrator Searches. They commented that these documents have been subject to multiple revisions and negotiations, and a tremendous effort has been made to make these policies more accessible and clearer. Originally, there was only one document from 2011 around Deans and Vice Provost searches, but now there will be two distinctive documents to separate the process for Dean and Vice Provost searches that is controlled by the Office of the Provost, and Provost searches, that are controlled by the Office of the President.

The Faculty Senate engaged in discussions related to the definition of exceptions to the process, as well as the composition of the search committees and its size. Provost Starr welcomes future feedback for both documents. The Senate **VOTED** to support the provost search policy 13-4-3 in favor and the Dean and Vice Provost search procedures 14-3-1 in favor.

Action Item: CFA Course Release Proposal – Rhonda Zaharna

Professor and CFA Chair Rhonda Zaharna presented a proposal to the Senate related to course releases in the Committee of Faculty Actions. The request proposes a one course release per three-year term for members of the CFA to acknowledge the heavy load related to the Committee's work, and to reward committee members for their important contributions to faculty affairs. Typically, CFA reviews an average of 14 pre-tenure files, 15 tenure files, 10 full professor files, and around 4 term-faculty cases. The CFA is also in the process of reviewing the guidelines for reappointment and promotion for all tenure-line and term faculty for all of the academic units. The Senate **VOTED** 17-2-1 in favor.

Action Item: Academic Regulation Change for 4.1.1.a – Department of Athletics Excused Absences – Jessica Waters, Ashley Rozendaal, and Andrew Smith

Dean Waters, Ashley Rozendaal, and Andrew Smith requested an academic regulation change related to student excused absences. The proposal asks to codify the reasons for which a student, approved by the Department of Athletics, is excused under academic regulation 4.1.1.a. The new language would include excused absences for approved championships athletic team competition, preparation, and travel for eligible Division I varsity student-athletes, spirit team members, and managers. The Senate **VOTED** 21-0-0 in favor.

Action Item: Academic Regulation Change for 5.7.4.b, 5.7.4.c, and 5.7.4.d – Varsity Student Athlete Academic Probation – Jessica Waters, Ashley Rozendaal, and Andrew Smith

Dean Waters, Ashley Rozendaal, and Andrew Smith requested an academic regulation changed pertinent to academic probation, requesting to codify that AU does not exclude Division I varsity student-athletes from intercollegiate competitions after only one full-time semester due to academic probation status. The recommendation is based on discussions focused on issues of equity and holistic student wellness. The Senate **VOTED** 20-0-0 in favor.

Action Item: Proposed Senate Bylaws Change: Adding OGPS and OGIS Seats to Senate Committees – Beverly Peters and John Calabrese

Professors Beverly Peters (OGPS) and John Calabrese (OGIS) proposed to amend the Faculty Senate bylaws to include OGPS and OGIS representation on certain Senate committees. Since these are new academic units consisting of a small number of faculty members, they are prioritizing representation where their interests as units have synergy with relevant committee work. For now, OGPS requests participation in the Graduate Curriculum Committee and in the Committee of Term-Faculty Affairs. OGIS faculty would like to serve in the following committees: COLA, CAAB, COS, TFAC, and in the Honors Advisory Committee. The Senate **VOTED** 14-0-0 in favor.

For the Good of the Order and Changing of the Gavel Ceremony – Garret Martin, Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, John Heywood

Professor Martin closed the final Faculty Senate of the academic year by thanking senators, guests, and the AU community for their incredible commitment to AU, and for the honor of serving as the Faculty Senate Chair this year. He later officially passed the virtual gavel to Vice Chair Lilian Baeza-Mendoza. Professor Baeza-Mendoza then adjourned the meeting.