

Faculty Senate Minutes – February 16, 2021

Senators present: Jon Serra, Ryan McCullough, Anna Stephan-Robinson, Gregory Chase, David Hanna, Kenneth Sexton, Darrick Brake, Brian Fitzpatrick, Kimberly Underwood, Fuhua Chen, Zachary Loughman, Brian Nichols, Mark Pissos, Jeffrey Grubbs, Steve Richards

Absent members: Diana Barber

Administrators, Representatives, and Honored Guests: Dr. W. Franklin Evans (President), Dr. Brian Crawford (Provost), Rich Lucas (Board of Governors President), Dr. Sylvia Senften (ACF Representative), Dr. Linda Cowen (Board of Governors Representative)

Senate was called to order by the Senate Chair, Dr. Jon Serra, at 3:32 p.m. via video conference Zoom.

Minutes – Chair Serra asked if there were any revisions or corrections to minutes from the January 2021 Senate meeting. No corrections were submitted.

Rich Lucas – Board of Governor Chair, update:

1. Faculty is invited to forward any concerns to Rich Lucas and he will handle, or appropriate, concerns you have for the Board of Governors.
2. The BOG conducted an extensive WLU Presidential search throughout the pandemic. The wait was well worth it. We have a wonderful new President at WLU. Nothing but great feedback has been received about Dr. Evans from all parties who have communicated with the Board.
3. The BOG meetings are all public- all are welcome. There is a very formal process at the BOG meetings, but the Board welcomes all input.
 - a. Contact MaryAnn Edwards to get on agenda, if needed.
4. *Questions from: Dr. Serra*
5. The Board is focused on handling matters related to the University and the pandemic this year (continuing from last year). The Board is 100% behind the President and the administration in handling the pandemic on campus.
6. The State has been patient with higher ed in WV by allowing time to figure out how to absorb cuts in budgets if/when they may arise. [This is related to the topic of how WLU could survive if the WV State income tax is removed and the budget is lower after that reduction at the State level.]

Dr. W. Franklin Evans – WLU President, update:

1. Dr. Evans is focused on vitality of faculty and making sure we are going strong. Faculty are the backbone and make a huge difference on campus; he considers himself a faculty member, always, so he understands the everyday challenges of faculty.
2. We are handling matters, like the budget, well at WLU but we are not out of the woods yet in terms of budgetary concerns and also the pandemic. We will try our best to get as close to what it used to be as possible, but it might not get back to the old “normal” again.

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3. We need to revisit the University's Strategic plan and continue to focus on it moving forward. We need to use it as a road map as we chart out the next few years at the University. We will use this to center our focus moving forward.
4. Dr. Evans would like to continue to focus on all the positive work and trends happening on campus through media. He is excited to continue to engage with students, athletics, etc.
5. He sees how much good work everyone is doing in terms of faculty teaching online and remotely, and he applauds our efforts and everyone's work to make it work while we need to have those tools in place. He wants to convey his support for faculty, again, and to note that when faculty look good and perform well, that reflects well on him and the rest of the University.
 - a. He looks forward to conversations with faculty and departments, such as the upcoming conversation with the College of Liberal Arts, and Arts and Communication, about a potential merger of Colleges.
6. We have major renovations happening in Main Hall, and other locations, on campus soon and Dr. Evans will be looking into raising additional funds for those efforts.
7. *Questions from: Professor McCullough, Dr. Cowan*
8. The Governor has indicated to Dr. Evans that there is not an emphasis on cutting funds from higher ed, but Dr. Evans knows priorities and budget cuts can change as time goes on, so he will keep tabs on that conversation as it progresses.
9. The President's preferred mode of communication? Email or set up a meeting. He welcomes conversations, though please be sure to follow the chain of command in terms of contacting a Chair, Dean, Provost, etc. before you bring up a "new" issue with him. Bring your issue up with the proper people first, then proceed further.

Dr. Crawford – Provost, update:

1. New academic programs:
 - a. There was an HLC site visit via Zoom for the MS in Speech Language Pathology program and the MA in Art Therapy in Counseling.
 - b. There was a panel that review the MS in Exercise Physiology. They have recommended approval for that program. Should know by sometime in March if HEPC will approve it.
 - c. Also, there was approval of the BA in Music program; going out for final approval.
2. There were updates made to Procedure 115 and Policy 247.
 - a. Both were related to weather closures. Many questions have arisen among faculty directed at the Provost.
 - b. Professors can use the online management system or other teaching tools to offer instruction while the University is closed due to weather.
 - c. Provost suggests an added syllabus statement about how the professor will/may use alternative tools to hold class during inclement weather days, etc.

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3. Main Hall update:
 - a. Faculty will want to look for alternative locations on campus while renovations are taking place over the Summer if you are in Main Hall.
 - b. If you need help, contact Dr. Crawford's Office.
 - c. IT may be able to stay where they are without moving, but an update will be made on that front at a later time.
4. Moving forward, he knows faculty and students are interested in being able to utilize Zoom while teaching.
 - a. The University/the Provost will continue to discuss these possibilities as we move forward. Faculty will certainly be contacted and asked for input given that faculty are at the center of the topic at hand.
5. *Questions from: Dr. Serra, Professor McCullough, Dr. Brake, Dr. Loughman*
6. Question: Will there be some form of HLC input on using Zoom for teaching and possibly something like Quality Matters (QM) and HOLI training associated with the use of this tool in teaching?
 - a. Dr. Crawford response: If using Zoom to continue synchronous learning, it is then not an "online" course, so additional HOLI training, meeting QM standards, etc. would not be needed. Distance Ed. may provide a "best practices" sort of document to help provide guidance for faculty continuing to use Zoom for synchronous meetings.
7. We do not know what the Fall semester will look like in terms of continuing on similar to what we have since the pandemic began or if we will be able to get back to some semblance of the "old normal."
8. Question: In terms of faculty development, many webinars, etc. that used to be free of charge are oftentimes coming with a fee now that everything has moved online. Is there a way for faculty to get funding to cover those kinds of costs?
 - a. Dr. Crawford response: his recommendation would be to use the travel fund, run it through the travel form channel to reach the Provost, and if it has the approval of the Chair/Program Director/Dean, it will be approved as much as is possible.
9. Question: Anything new the Provost can articulate about the new watermarks for the tenure and promotion process?
 - a. Faculty should keep everything updated in their files- CV, evidence of work completed in different areas (teaching, service, etc.), so that the new process works well moving forward. Information should be forthcoming from the Provost's Office soon about details concerning this topic.
10. Question: Graduation commencement happening in person or not?
 - a. Dr. Evans response: It is too soon to call. There are consistent conversations taking place about this topic. There are different options being considered by the Commencement Committee; many external Colleges and Universities are offering different options that WLU could also consider.

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- b. Dr. Evans is allowing the Commencement Committee to discuss and make a recommendation to him.
11. Comment: There have been rave alert issues in terms of a lack of consistency with what “can and should be held” still.
- a. Dr. Crawford response: There have been modifications made to the specific rave alert language that is being used. We hope it is clear moving forward.
 - b. Some students may continue to have connectivity issues when faculty decide to “move” an in-person class to a Zoom meeting. In that case, it is recommended/helpful for faculty to record the Zoom meeting, post it on TopperStation, and give students the opportunity to catch up on that recorded discussion (before having an upcoming exam, quiz, etc.).
 - c. It is helpful for faculty to convey to students, asap via Sakai Announcements, what they plan to do for the class period during the snow day.

Dr. Senften - ACF update:

1. Senate Bill 125 and House Bill 2211 (removal of income tax bill)- Governor Justice outlined that the state would have a “no growth budget” for the next 3 years under this plan if it moves forward.
 - a. The income tax revenue would be gone but other funds would replace all/most of those funds.
2. Two additional bills worth noting: One is Senate Bill 2002:
 - a. Concerns issues of access to broadband.
 - b. This bill would help move us in the right direction
3. The second bill is Senate Bill 246: a bill that comes up each year concerning campus carrying of a weapon.
 - a. This particular rendition of the bill would exclude the opportunity for individual campus Board of Governors from voting against this matter.
 - b. This does not appear to be a bill that would get any immediate attention.
 - c. The legislative session ends April 10, but there are bills being presented every day in the Senate and House.
3. *Questions from: Dr. Serra*
4. Question: How pro-active should we be if the income tax budget disappears and other funds do not cover the missing parts of the budget?
 - a. Dr. Senften: She feels a budget shortfall seems inevitable if the income tax is done away with in the State. Dr. Justice indicated he may use funds from the State’s surplus over the past couple of years to help offset issues with the budget that may occur in the next couple of years as transitions take place.
 - b. Dr. Senften always encourages people to interact with their legislators if it is deemed fitting given a certain topic.

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5. If you would like additional insight about the implications of the potential elimination of the WV State income tax, please visit the West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy: <https://wvpolicy.org/>
6. If you wish to contact State representatives about questions or comments concerning any upcoming potential bills, here is a list of reps by county:

Senate District - 01

William Ihlenfeld (D - Ohio)

Ryan Weld (R - Brooke)

House District - 03

Shawn Fluharty (D - Ohio)

Erikka Storch (R - Ohio)

House District - 02

Phillip Diserio (D - Brooke)

Dr. Cowan – Board of Governors Representative, update:

There was a recent BoG meeting and the update about that meeting will be sent to faculty soon.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Dr. Eveldora Wheeler, Finance Committee Chair, update:

1. We will be meeting as a committee soon with Diana Harto to discuss required training and how to allot time appropriately to each module.

Dr. Barber, Policies Committee Chair, update: No update at this time.

Dr. Kimberly Underwood, Space-Utilization Chair, update:

1. Committee will have a Zoom meeting soon to discuss plans to collect data on classroom spaces at the end of the semester. Additional Senate members have volunteered to assist with collecting data.
2. Dr. Serra input: Joe Rodella would like to get faculty input on use of OWLS, insights about their experiences with them, etc. Committee can create an online survey and report that data.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Details provided by Dr. Grubbs about the use of intranet services to organize and manage documents across campus. We can/should compile information so that if

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faculty leave, transition to different positions, etc. documentation can be stored and shared appropriately.

2. Dr. Crawford: Joe Rodella has been working on moving the University toward this outcome. Share Point is the name of the program/organizational tool. Using Google Drive is not ideal.
3. Dr. Serra: We will create an ad hoc committee to help Dr. Crawford and Joe Rodella with this process. Intranet, Share Point, One Drive, Active Directory, etc. are all related. Meet with Joe Rodella to see what faculty input can help with concerning this move forward.
4. Professor McCullough: There are suggestions for terms used by the committee: Organizational Communication (Org. Comm.). During HLPC on-site review, they mentioned this should be addressed.

Faculty Forum: Discussion ensued.

DRAFT