

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes 11/16/21

Senators Attending: Sean Ryan, Kimberly Underwood, Robert Gall, Darrin Cox, Jeffrey Grubbs, David Hanna, Diana Barber, Zac Loughman, Brian Nichols, Eveldora Wheeler, Brian Fitzpatrick, Anna Stephan-Robinson, Fuha Chen, Vishakha Maskey, Stephen Richards, Cory Reigel, Kenneth Sexton, Courtney Huffman

Senators absent: Kenneth Sexton

Meeting was called to order at 3:32pm.

Chair Ryan update:

1. Approval of September 2021 Senate meeting minutes: Dr. Zac Loughman motioned to approve minutes, Dr. Vishakha Maskey seconded minutes being approved. a. Vote to approve minutes: 13 approve
2. The meeting with the President brought some insights:
 - a. There exists a difference of views on shared governance between the faculty and President. Dr. Ryan made it clear that the faculty do not always expect to get its way, but we do expect to get input and when it comes to participation he has the Senate and Chairs Committee as sources.
 - b. He commented that he thought the Chairs Committee was no longer active. I subsequently started a paper on shared governance and will re-engage the President on that topic.
 - c. The president also asked about Promotion and Tenure policy reviews.
 - d. He then asked about rubrics for P&T and post tenure reviews.

Comment from Dr. Cox: Please ask the President to respect WLU traditions such as including the Senate Chair to sit in those committees that involve high level searches like President and/or Provost. Regarding mid-point reviews, we are already doing reviews and be careful about introducing more demands on an already cumbersome system.

Comment from Dr. Wheeler to Dr. Cox: Are you saying that promotion and tenure occur at the same time?

Response from Dr. Cox: No. While not everyone follows the same process, Dr. Cox laid out that typically a faculty member will work for a few years, address promotion, work and then be considered for tenure, and then work and face full promotion—so, there are already multiple stages and reviews.

Dr. Wheeler's response: I have no problem with mid-term reviews.

President W. Franklin Evans, update –

1. He met with Dr Ryan and Dr Barber last week, but will leave those updates to those Senators.
2. President Evans explained that he wanted to clear up misconceptions about his leadership style. He explained that he is not a micromanager and wished to empower those in leadership positions.

3. When he receives inquiries about job openings, he will refer those inquiring to the WLU website or the appropriate Dean or Chair. He emphasized that he will not pull strings to get his friends hired.
4. Fall Commencement will be held on December 11th and outlined the rationale for the pilot for completing final grades and other requirements in order to provide diplomas at Commencement.
5. President Evans highlighted that the mission statement needs to be periodically reviewed for HLC review and emphasized that the Deans expressed concern about the mission statement and the administration is looking at pulling together a task force to recommend revisions.
6. Enrollment decrease was 148 students or about 6% decrease. WLU has a plan for the current \$2.7M deficit, but needs to seek a way to grow our way out of this deficit rather than cut our way out if possible. Dr. Mumford held an offsite meeting with deans to discuss ways to boost graduate enrollment.
7. The Highlands Center has a new executive director, Mr. Phil Carl, tasked with re-envisioning how the Highlands center will be used to increase our return on that investment (about \$300K annually).

Provost Dr. Bonnie Suderman, update –

1. Deans have been working together for a grant to bring students to campus over the summer.
2. Mr. Cook will send out an updated list of visiting students.
3. Still working on the mid-term accreditation document.
4. Dean's and CFO will meet with Provost on budget on November 30th. Submit questions to your Deans.
5. Provost will work on documenting a formal process to document faculty meeting minimal qualifications in areas outside of degree work.
6. Provost is asking to reactivate procedure 238, Guidelines for honorary degrees and recognition.

Question from: Chair Ryan- What is procedure 238?

Dr. Suderman's response: Guidelines for honorary degrees and recognition.

Question from Dr Gall: Why are we planning to issue diplomas?

Dr. Suderman's response: This is a pilot so we are working through the entire process to deliver diplomas.

Question from Dr Cox: Is the requirement for a cabinet-level requirement for travel a permanent or temporary procedure? Is it related to COVID and will it go away? Dr Ryan asked for clarification whether this focused on in-state or out of state travel. Dr Cox clarified that it is out of state focused.

Response from Dr. Suderman: We will need to get an answer.

Question from Dr. Underwood about academic utilization of the Highlands Center space.

Dr. Suderman's response: offered to have Jason Koegler contact Dr Underwood and Dr Ryan directly.

Question from Dr Anna Stephan-Robinson: What is the plan for students who do not meet academic requirements for graduating?

Response from Dr Suderman: That is Mr. Cook's territory and it is unclear what that procedure will be.

Faculty Representative to the Board of Governors, Dr. Jason Metz update—

1. The BOG is asking for input into the procedure on December 8th regarding the plan for the President. Please submit inputs to Dr. Metz.

Question from Dr. Cox: Has the request that was voted on in September asking for mandatory vaccinations been made to the BOG?

Response from Dr. Metz: That request was presented at a BOG meeting, but it may have been overshadowed by other events. Dr. Metz stated he would follow up.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Requests from faculty for the BOG rep to issue summaries of BOG meetings.

2. Most of the \$2.7M deficit this year is being covered by COVID relief funds.

Next year will present a significant shortfall without relief funds to mitigate the deficit.

Question from Dr. Cox: Wasn't the majority of the revenue shortfall due to housing? And, if so, won't we get that back?

Response from Dr. Metz: Housing is operating at about a 70% capacity, so that is about \$500K of the deficit.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Data from the administration lays out that 4-5 buildings are being leased off campus while over 300 rooms are vacant on campus. Additionally, simply moving classes from main campus to the Highland Center will not offset the \$340K being spent on the Highlands Center; so, we need to be thoughtful on how to utilize that space. Push your input to the Executive Committee so that Dr. Wheeler can take it forward.

Comment from Dr. Cox: There is additional value in our maintaining the Highlands Center. WLU's contract with the highlands center precludes them from leasing space to any other university, so that precludes WVU from entering that space.

ACF Representative Dr. Darrin Cox, update—

1. ACF met in the middle of October. It appears the legislators have an agenda to try to bring up a bill on campus carry and critical race theory, but the status is uncertain. An anti-tenure bill may also be raised as it has been a past discussion. Funding formulas are another emerging topic, but nothing solid is available right now.

2. The Governor is seeking input from HEPC on the internationalization initiative. An ACF member is seeking details on that information. There is also questions about what additional funding may be available to Higher Ed to support the internationalization initiative.

3. Tenure is being brought back at 2-year/technical colleges. Tenure was removed to increase flexibility, which has not been realized; tenure is now proposed at a 20% level for those schools. The transition back to tenure is an open issue.

4. Discussions at ACF led to a general opinion that West Liberty's President should resign over the plagiarism issue. If the BOG did not follow through on that issue, opinions amongst the ACF members suggested that a vote of no-confidence in the BOG may be in order. There is concern that this issue could spill over to other institutions in WV from a public relations and funding perspective.

5. The next ACF meeting is scheduled for December 3rd.

Questions from: Dr. Underwood, Dr. Stephan-Robinson, Dr. Richards
Dr. Cox's responses:

For any Colleges/Universities that struggle with retention or graduation rates, this could result in a decrease in funding for the institution. They are not using this information to potentially increase funding; they are using it to potentially decrease funding for institutions that are struggling.

Faculty Senate Policy Chair, Dr. Diana Barber update–

1. Policy 202. After being out for comment, the policy was changed with language not made available during the comment period. Dr. Barber engaged Attorney Hooper, and the policy language was reverted back to the language from May.
2. Policy reviews have not been done annually; Attorney Hooper is reformatting the policies and will post them in a portal where they can be shared with the policy committee who will bring in whomever else is appropriate.
3. Dr. Ryan, Dr. Barber, Dr Suderman met with Diana Harto and President Evans to discuss a committee way ahead for the Academic Integrity/Ethics policy. Manning is still being worked out; Dr. Nichols and Dr. Monterosso, a Chair, two alumni, and a staff member for a total of eight members will make up the committee.

Comment from Dr. Underwood: What is the policy number for Ethics?

Response from Dr. Barber: It is not a policy number, but rather a statement.

Comment from Dr. Gall: There is an ethics element in our research policy. A question about what automated mechanisms are considered for verifying office hours via Zoom.

Response from Dr. Barber: There are methods available to Chairs to confirm by popping in to faculty Zoom rooms. Apparently there is no easy technical means for monitoring Zoom office hours.

Reply to Dr. Gall: We should not modify policy unnecessarily.

Comment from Dr. Underwood: Using Zoom for office hours present some complexities that need to be considered.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Technology is not a substitute for management. Dr. Underwood agreed.

Finance Committee Chair Dr. Eveldora Wheeler, update – No update

File Sharing System Committee Chair Dr. Jeffery Grubbs, update – no update.

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Action Items:

- I. Nominations and vote for Chair of Space Utilization Committee. Dr. Brian Nichols volunteered. Dr Barber seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- II. Nominations and vote for Senate Secretary, effective December 11, 2022. No nomination or vote.
Comment from Dr. Cox: Secretary position comes with a course release.
- III. Form a committee to update bylaws.
Dr Ryan explained that the reallocation of Senators involved clarification from Human Resources regarding faces vs spaces. Previous faculty counts omitted open requisitions that could impact Senate seat allocations.
Question from Dr. Wheeler: Regarding Bylaws Article 3, secs 1-3, which address alternates filling vacant seats.

Response from Dr. Ryan: Filling vacant seats and apportionment are two of the issues that need to be addressed. Other issues include specific clarification of the roles and responsibilities of Senators.

Dr Wheeler then read Article 3, Sections 1-3.

Dr. Fitzpatrick, Dr. Wheeler, and Dr. Barber volunteered for this committee. Dr. Barber nominated Dr. Fitzpatrick for committee Chair; Dr. Underwood seconded the motion. Action passed unanimously.

IV. Form a committee/appoint a liaison to work directly with IT.

Dr. Ryan explained the issue as being needed to overcome poor communications between IT, staff and faculty. This position offers the potential to prevent the faculty from having software forced on it unknowingly.

Dr. Grubbs volunteered to expand the Sharepoint committee role.

Comment from Dr. Cox: No committee must be wholly filled by Senators.

Dr. Loughman made a motion to nominate Dr. Grubbs to chair this committee.

Dr. Underwood seconded. Action passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

1. Senate bylaws (Appendix A) reapportionment of Senators.

Dr. Cox provided a recommendation to consider apportioning Senate seats by department rather than College to ensure equitable representation in the larger colleges.

Comment by Dr. Barber: In some situations, such as exist in the College of Sciences, attending Senate meetings is problematic due to academic demands.

Comment by Dr. Underwood: Executive Committee has considered a change in schedules for Senate meetings which may remedy scheduling conflicts.

Comment by Dr. Ryan: for reference including the open requisitions (rather than filled positions) the numbers of faculty by college are:

College of Business: 16

College of Education and Human Performance: 20

College of Liberal and Creative Arts: 49

College of Sciences: 66

Comment by Dr. Ryan: He will get the updated faculty-by-department listing for the Committee:

Comment by Dr. Underwood: Dr. Deterding developed a straight 15% calculation for the allocations so that ByLaws updates are not required whenever programs grow.

Question from Dr. Wheeler: Agree that the Bylaws should be updated. Should we not be following the Bylaws as written now?

Response from Dr. Ryan: What Bylaws are we not following?

Reply from Dr. Wheeler: I just want to ensure that we are following the Bylaws about how we are filling vacancies. And I have a second point to make after we discuss this.

Response from Dr. Ryan: In working with COLCA, I can offer that they followed the Bylaws, but the alternates removed themselves from consideration. So, the issue may be one of school policy regarding faculty's ability to choose not to serve when called upon. To my knowledge, COLCA did follow the Bylaws. Dr. Ryan then invited other perspectives.

2. Date/time of Senate meetings beginning Fall 2022.

Dr. Ryan asked for comments on scheduling and pointed out that this can affect academic schedules.

Dr. Barber offered that if this is not a good time, then those individuals would not be present to offer opinions.

Comment from Dr. Gall: Years ago we did not have problems with this schedule; Nursing did provide senators. What other time can work without conflicts other than perhaps 4:00pm on Fridays.

Comment from Dr. Underwood: Executive Committee considered asking for hard program requirements to assess constraints. Dr. Gall concurred that starting with constraints made sense.

Comment from Dr. Cox: Deadlines for schedule submissions is getting earlier.

Dr. Underwood emphasized the need to collect data for each college's constraints.

3. Faculty Handbook update:

Dr. Ryan offered Dr. Barber's description of the current Handbook as little more than a compilation of WLU policies.

Comment from Dr. Cox: Dr. Crawford did away with the Faculty Handbook because it was nothing more than copies of the policies. Do we need a hardcopy handbook?

Question from Dr. Ryan: Do we need introduction online that lays out how to onboard faculty?

Comment from Dr. Cox: That could be a new procedure. There was onboarding procedures when he was onboarded.

Comment from Dr. Maskey: There was an onboarding this past Fall.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Whatever was done was not very effective based on new faculty experiences.

Comment from Dr. Cox: He was invited to present at new Faculty orientation both years he was the Senate Chair.

Comment from Dr. Barber: She may be the newest Senator. There was no Senate Chair presentation at her orientation. Her orientation was in the Fall after she had already worked a full semester. College-level indoctrination is fine, University-level orientation is lacking. Maybe what is needed is more of an updated onboarding/orientation procedure rather than a "handbook."

Comments from Drs. Maskey and Cox: We were onboarded at the same time and it was an all-day event and was effective.

Invitation from Dr. Ryan for additional discussion items.

Question from Dr Gall: When will Senate start to meet in person again?

Response from Dr. Ryan: Where historically did the Senate meet?

Reply from Dr. Gall: Wherever the Chair wants to meet.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: As long as we can space out for social distancing, there may be no reason not to meet in person? Are there any objections?

Comment from Dr. Barber: She believed that we would revisit in-person meetings in January for the Spring. If we are meeting in person, we cannot continue having 2.5-3 hour meetings (Dr. Gall concurred).

Comment from Dr. Underwood: Professor McCullough, as Chair, decided to meet via Zoom for the entire year do to the complexities of some Senators needing to Zoom in, people needing to isolate, etc.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Rooms are available, like Campbell Hall Room 104.

Comment from Dr. Barber: Let's discuss this in Executive Committee.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Executive Committee will discuss this and communicate it to the Senate.

Comment from Dr. Ryan: Remember Dr Metz request for input into the objectives for President Evans.

Motion to adjourn by Dr. Nichols. Dr. Loughman seconded. Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote.