

William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – September 10, 2019  
FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>

**PRESENT:** Aktan, Andreopoulos, Brillante, Crick, Diamond, B. Duffy, Ellis, Gazzillo Diaz, Griswold, Hack, Helldobler, Hill, Jurado, Kalaramadam, Kaur, Kearney, Kecojevic, Kollia, W. Liu (for Najarian), Marks, Natrajan, Nyaboga, O'Donnell, Orr, Potacco, Powers, Pozzi, Ramos, Ranjan, Rebe, Rosar, Shekari, Silva, Simon, Snyder, Spagna, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Vega, Verdicchio, Vishio, Wallace, Watad, Weisberg

**ABSENT:** Chung, Janos, B. Liu, Schwartz

**GUESTS:** Andrew, Astarita, Atte, Bannister, Bartle, Bolyai, Brenenson, Cammarata, Cannon, Christensen, Corso, Decker, DeDeo, B.J Duffy, Ferguson, Fuller-Stanley, Ginsberg, Goldstein, Gritsch, Harris, Hertzog, Hill, Liautaud, Lincoln, Malindretos, McLaughlin-Vignier, Noonan, Pinkston, Richardson, Rosenberg, Ross, Sharma, Torres, Vasquez, Walsh, Williams and two unintelligible

**PRELIMINARIES:** Chairperson Natrajan called the first meeting of the 2019-2020 Senate to order at 12:31pm. Aktan and Orr moved the Agenda which was approved unanimously. The Draft Minutes of the May 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, moved and seconded by Spagna and Kearney, were also approved unanimously.

Natrajan welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the Faculty Senate. All new members introduced themselves. Duffy and Brillante's nomination of Marks to be Parliamentarian was approved unanimously.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

1. A warm welcome to our Faculty Senate. A special welcome to new senators, our new Senate Exec Committee (continuity with change), our new parliamentarian Gary Marks, and our new Secretary Linda Ricupero. Welcome to our new Provost Josh Powers, the new Director of Compliance Regina Tindall, and the new Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Yolany Gonell. Welcome back President Helldobler and members of the administration. Wishing us all a very successful academic year.
2. As chair of the Senate, I inherit a long legacy of collective wisdom, much of which is in this room around the table. I will draw upon your sagacious presence while charting our path forward. Our Senate is in its 35<sup>th</sup> year. Depending on how you view thirtysomethings, it means that we could either be sensitive, introspective, generous and accommodative, or self-absorbed, demanding, at times, obdurate. Like everything else, it all depends on what the context demands. I am also pleased that the Senate Exec is able to work in concert with our AFT Union in these times of Working without a Contract.
3. So, who are we (the SENATE) & what do we do?
  - a. The Senate exists only when Shared governance is valued. Else it is an empty ritual. The welcome letter from Provost Josh and me is a story that we tell about ourselves to us as a reminder of who we are.

- b. Senate works by deliberation and dialog on the Egalitarian principle that we meet as equals, with no voice being excluded.
  - c. Can we do this while being Nimble in our process? Our 14 councils will need to work in synch with the Exec to give timely recommendations.
  - d. Nothing is achieved without Active participation. This requires regular attendance (Senators, please familiarize yourselves with the by-laws about ‘good standing’). It also means being good representatives by conferring with your departments / units and providing feedback to the Senate.
  - e. To shape policies of governance, we need Timely decisions from the Senate. This of course needs to be done without compromising our integrity. So, we would not like to be rushed even while we recognize deadlines.
  - f. Finally, a robust Senate is empowering to all members of the university, provided we actualize our participative potentials.
4. CHAIR REPORT → Over the summer the Exec Committee met with the President and Provost twice. We discussed the following issues – many of which will be part of the Senate’s agenda for discussion over the next few months:
- **Administrator Evaluations** → In May, we were asked to justify the practice of faculty evaluation of administrators. We conveyed to the P&P the historicity of this practice at WPU, the fact that it was approved by President Speert, and the importance of these evaluations. University legal counsel was present at our meeting; Questions were raised about the distribution to faculty. Since then, we have been informed of a breach in confidentiality. The matter is sub-judice. The SEC continues to defend the propriety of & need for these evaluations, and offered to institute further safeguards. We have been requested to wait until the inquiries are completed.
  - **ART** → The administration in consultation with the AFT is considering ‘priorities’ for awarding ART. The SEC elaborated on the importance of the ART for faculty research & the need to award any meritorious proposal.
  - **Academic Partnerships Initiative** → This partnership is underway as announced by the President. We brought up the fact that many faculty have raised concerns that remain unaddressed.
  - **Travel Funds Centralization** → A process has been established and will be shared in every College. Some questions still remain.
  - **Boyer Model** → Last Spring the model was introduced in the Senate by the interim Provost. The new Provost agreed that we need critical input from faculty. The President will put together a taskforce to work on this as a model for our RTP, and timeline for implementation.
  - **WP101** → We indicated the need to assess the new program, specifically about how block scheduling works with student work needs and hours.
  - The University and AFT also clarified some of the **rules for membership on any University Committee**. Sue Tardi spoke about the new rule of one person – one committee for any university committee.
  - **Academic Department Consolidation** → On the Consolidation issue, the SEC raised many questions, gave some preliminary recommendations, and underscored the

need to have a serious discussion in the Senate on this matter since shared governance is not simply about the SEC meeting with the President and Provost. It means we all get involved. The President agreed. And we now have until September 27 to send our recommendations over. We raised **questions** about the rationale for consolidation. Was it simply for financial savings? Were there intellectual or curricular justifications? What were implications of consolidation for the University's mission, goals, and core values? What are implications for faculty impacted? Was the process reversible? And some others. We made **3 recommendations**: that academic restructuring be based on their implications for the University's Mission, Goals, and Core Values, that departmental histories, identities, and value to the university be considered, and that the effort be renamed 'Consolidation without Merger'. We also recommended **implementational criteria**. The President had requested the Senate to propose three more criteria in addition to the three that he had suggested in March. Building upon the previous Senate discussions, the SEC recommended three additional criteria with metrics: Minors (2 minors = 1 major), UCC SCH (as a department's 'Service value'), and the additional financial revenue generated by a department.

**VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT:** Andreopoulos presented the 2019-2020 Senate council charges and the council rosters, which were approved unanimously. Duffy moved to amend the proposed council rosters by adding Imani Hardaway as the Library's representative to the Graduate Programs Council, and to omit Baron from the Adjunct slot on the UCC Council until her status is clarified. The amendment was approved unanimously as was the amended roster.

**PRESIDENT HELLDÖBLER:** Helldobler addressed four topics.

**Administrator Assessments:** He announced that they were sent to individuals outside the University, which might expose WPU to litigation. He said that former President Speert never formally approved the process, but conceded that he was powerless to stop it. It is not part of any negotiated process and is not part of any administrator's contract. He understands that the campus wants some sort of process, but he won't discuss the matter until the investigation into the breach is concluded.

Tardi noted that Speert never formally objected to the process. Faculty and staff were well aware that the administrator evaluations were not a part of any formal review, but we were never informed that the BOT did not even read them. Tardi further noted that if faculty are subject to evaluations by students, it is only reasonable that faculty and staff should have the right to express their opinions on the performance of administrators. We do not condone the breach of ethics, but there are ways to conduct the evaluations to protect the integrity of the process. Duffy added that we know that at least some Board members have read them in the past. He also briefly outlined the history of the evaluation process, which goes back about thirty years.

**Smoking Policy:** After consultation with the SGA and the AFT, he has accepted the Senate's recommendation. He agreed with the AFT that no one will lose his/her job for non-compliance. The new policy will begin to be implemented in the Fall 2020 semester.

**Academic Partnerships:** The University is moving forward with a 3 year contract (with the option for two one-year extensions, or a penalty to terminate without them).

**Reorganization:** He does not accept the Executive Committee's recommendation that 2 minors be considered equal to 1 major. He is open for further discussion. He expects the final Senate proposals by 9/27.

**PROVOST POWERS:** Josh Powers introduced himself as the new Provost, and said he takes his role as supervisor very seriously. He will also be examining ART in the near future to assure that support is optimally deployed. Budgetary considerations must be a factor in choosing among the pool of meritorious applications. The ART Workshop will be held on Thursday, October 3 in Raubinger 101.

#### **DISCUSSION ON DEPARTMENTAL RESTRUCTURING OR CONSOLIDATION:**

Natrajan argued for naming the actions underway as "Consolidation" rather than the administration's preferred term "Restructuring" noting that the former was a 'concept-near' term whereas the latter was a 'concept-far' term as per anthropologist Geertz' insights.

Andreopoulos asked if the minimum of 50 majors is flexible, to which Helldobler replied: No. He sees it as a logical dividing line.

When Tardi asked about smaller departments merging, Helldobler said that would be OK and the new structure would have to be evaluated.

Spagna urged that apart from UCC courses, other non-UCC service courses for other departments be also counted as part of the value of departments.

Natrajan noted a lack of clarity in this matter. Is it driven by cost? By a need for more efficiency? To stimulate more innovation? Helldobler said that all of those things are part of it, but also to foster more academic synergies among departments. To the President's urging that departments need to embrace innovation, Natrajan noted that many departments have already revised their curriculum as a response to acknowledging changes in the world. He gave the example of anthropology whose curriculum reflected 21<sup>st</sup> century needs and demands.

Steinhart asked how students are counted when various program and departments claim them. Brillante noted that Education students have a major and they have full education course loads.

Hack and Kecojevic asked about trends as opposed to just looking at things at an instant now.

Wallace expressed concern about the implications of consolidation on particular disciplines, and wondered if this was the beginning of the end of programs connected with social justice?

Ranjan and Natrajan asked how credit hours are calculated. Helldobler said that IPEDS data are used. Double majors are counted in both disciplines.

Hill asked about the long-term vision of the University when such consolidation takes place, and wondered if we could also imagine cutbacks in administration?

Helldobler noted that more administrative lines are being left vacant than academic lines. \$150,000 is the initial savings target. If this plan doesn't work, it can be undone.

Tardi suggested that \$150,000 a relatively small amount of savings to cause the uproar that the proposed reorganization has caused on campus.

Weisberg spoke of the needs of the non-traditional departments whose numbers may be small but whose costs are high. Will such programs and departments be saved? Helldobler said that the purpose is not to reduce faculty lines or eliminate programs. Some areas may gain faculty lines.

Ellis said that consolidation may give prospective students the wrong idea about WPU. They might choose to go to a college with all the right departments. Helldobler replied that transfer programs, the implementation of Academic Partnerships and equalizing in and out of state tuition should balance things out.

Natrajan noted that some departments have already revised their curriculum. He asked what if two smaller departments joined, but still failed to meet all of his criteria? Helldobler said that if they had moved the needle, they would be given consideration.

When Ranjan described the process as scary, Helldobler said that it will not be easy.

Discussion was suspended at 1:46 when the Senate recessed. The topic will be on the Agenda again at the September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Senate adjourned at 1:46pm.

The next meeting of the Faculty Senate, will be held on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 12:30PM in Ballroom C.

Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

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[www.wpunj.edu/senate](http://www.wpunj.edu/senate)