

Minutes
West Virginia University Faculty Senate
Monday, June 7, 2021

1. Nathalie Singh-Corcoran, Faculty Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. The Senate met by videoconference.

Members Present:

Anderson, K.	Cottrell, L.	Geldenhuys, W.	Li, H.	Rogers, T.
Angeline, M.	Crichlow, S.	Gilleland, D.	Marra, A.	Ryan, E.
Bastress, R.	Cui, A.	Grushecky, S.	Martucci, A.	Samuels, H.
Benedito, V.	Davari, A.	Hamrick, A.	McCombie, R.	Scaife, B.
Bernardes, E.	Davis, D.	Hardy, S.	McCrory, J.	Schaefer, G.
Bernstein, M.	DiBartolomeo, L.	Harmon, I.	McCusker, B.	Schimmel, C.
Bhandari, R.	Dilcher, B.	Hatipoglu, K.	McGinnis, R.	Singh-Corcoran, N.
Billings, H.	Donley, D.	Hauser, D.	Miltenberger, M.	Squire, D.
Bonner, D.	Dotson, S.	Hibbert, A.	Morgan, J.	Steele, J.
Bragg, R.	Downes, M.	Hileman, S.	Mucino, V.	Swager, L.
Bravo, G.	Elliott, E.	Hodge, J.	Murphy, E.	Tack, F.
Bresock, K.	Ellison, M.	Holbein, M.	Myers, S.	ter Haseborg, H.
Bryner, R.	Elswick, D.	Honaker, L.	Nguyen, Y.	Toppe, M.
Burnside, J.	Evans, J.	Hudgins, C.	Nix, A.	Tu, S.
Casey, R.	Evans, K.	Jaczynski, J.	Nutter, R.	Vanderhoff, J.
Celikbas, E.	Famouri, P.	John, C.	Ogden, L.	Vercelli, M.
Chantler, P.	Feaster, K.	Kelly, K.	Olson, K.	Wayne, S.
Chisholm, S.	Fleming, S.	Kitchen, S.	Peckens, S.	Willard, M.
Cohen, S.	Fullen, M.	Kupec, J.	Perhinschi, M.	Williams, D.
Corio, E.	Funk, A.	Law, K.	Reddy, R.	Woloshuk, J.
Costas, M.	Galvez, M.	Leary, M.	Reece, R.	Woods, S.

Members Excused:

Arthurs, J.	Hessl, A.	Orr, E.	Soccorsi, A.	Watson, J.
Butina, M.	Mallow, J.	Sabolsky, E.	Valentine, K.	Young, S.
Cronin, A.	Momen, J.	Sand-Jecklin, K.		

Members Absent:

Burt, A.	Germana, M.	Hutson, Z.	Phillips, T.	Sedney, C.
Clemmer, M.	Goodykoontz, E.	Klein, A.	Rakes, P.	Shrader, C.
Eades, D.	Graziani, G.	Morris, T.	Renzelli-Cain, R.	Sims, J.
Eubank, T.	Gross, J.	Olfert, M.	Rice, T.	Welsh, A.
Galvan-Turner, V.	Hornsby, G.	Petrone, A.	Sealey, V.	Zegre, N.

Faculty Senate Officers Present:

Hauser, D.	Hileman, S.	Martucci, A.	Nutter, R.	Singh-Corcoran, N.
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2. Chair Singh-Corcoran presented for approval the minutes from the Monday, May 10, 2021 meeting. Motion carried by unanimous consent.
3. President Gordon Gee reported the following:
 - This has been a tumultuous year, and he applauded everyone for their diligence and the good work they have done.

- He recognized Dr. Singh-Corcoran for the excellent job she has done this year as chair of the Faculty Senate. She did not come to this position with any knowledge of the fact that she was going to have to help transition our university through a pandemic.
- He recognized Roy Nutter, who is serving for the last time as Faculty Representative to State Government. Dr. Nutter has been active as a member of our faculty leadership team for 40 years.
- We continue to work on the transition and transformation of the university. We are going to be able to pivot again to take a look at the culture of our university. Work will also continue on big projects such as the hyperloop.
- The state government is in special session, and we are working to make certain that we increase or sustain funding for the institution.
- We are going to revive the Country Roads Tour to give faculty members the opportunity to see the beauty of our state and its people.
- He intends to commence his county tours. Each summer he tries to visit every county in the state to meet with community members, including legislative leaders, in their home communities.
- COVID-19 infections are dropping dramatically. The incentives we have tried to institute at the state level and within the university seem to have had a positive impact.

4. Provost Maryanne Reed reported the following:

- We wrapped up the school year with our first live commencement in one and a half years. Nearly 4500 graduates marched in four separate ceremonies at Mountaineer Field. Our graduates and their parents seemed to be very happy to be able to come to campus for commencement.
- We are beginning the third week of the first summer session. We have a mix of on-campus and online instruction. Enrollment is down about 5% from last year.
- Our first Maymester went very well. We had 442 students enrolled in 27 classes and the early feedback has been good. The shorter terms seem to be of high interest to our students.
- Evan Widders provided an update on the summer bridge initiative being piloted this summer. Initial spots will be offered to first-time freshman from West Virginia counties that had a retention rate lower than the university's average. Courses will begin on July 19. The idea for this initiative originated with the Faculty Senate.
- Our plans for the fall return to campus have not changed since the last Faculty Senate meeting, but the Health and Safety Planning Group is going to start taking a serious look at things like vaccines and the masking requirements. An email will be going out to staff on June 8 outlining expectations and support systems that will be in place for those working remotely in the fall.
- The program portfolio process has identified more than thirty degree programs for further review. These are programs that appear to be struggling in some way. We also identified programs that had growth potential but may need some additional investment to increase capacity. The data and analysis was shared with the deans at the beginning of May. They have been meeting with their chairs, who will presumably meet with the faculty in their units. Additional data and information for each of these units will be due on September first. Once we analyze the additional data we will make preliminary recommendations, which the units can appeal through a formal appeal process that is outlined in our BOG rules. Not all

academic majors and programs identified for further review will be reduced or sunset. In fact, it may be that these programs are already addressing these concerns and will have an improvement plan to share; in other cases, they may be asked to provide an improvement plan.

- Two weeks ago we announced the merger of the College of Education and Human Services with the College of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences. While this is a pretty significant change for the university, the pairing of such units is fairly common according to our national benchmarking research. And we believe it will be beneficial in the long run, not just because of potential cost savings, but also because it brings together the unique strengths of each unit and it creates a new platform for collaboration in high interest areas such as health and wellness education, youth development, and mental health counseling. While this decision may have seemed sudden to some, it has actually been a point of discussion for many years. Academic transformation accelerated our look at this and our decision to bring these two colleges together to form a powerful new college. Administrative teams from both colleges will begin to work together this summer to identify what the structure will look like. Then we anticipate that committees will be assigned in the fall to focus on the various aspects of the merger, including curriculum, student support services, promotion and tenure, and so on. There will be a great deal of opportunity for stakeholders, especially faculty and staff, to have a say about what this new college will look like and how it will operate. Ideally, we would like to conduct a search for the founding dean in early spring and to have the college established by fall of 2022. We recognize that many things, like promotion and tenure, are going to take more than a year to resolve.
- Also under the umbrella of academic transformation, this summer her team will begin working to identify a set of priorities for next year. An even more intense look at student success will be part of that.

5. Faculty Senate Chair Nathalie Singh-Corcoran reported the following:

- Faculty Senate Committee Chairs submitted their annual reports to the Executive Committee; those reports will be presented at the September Senate meeting.
- Prior to that September meeting, she, our incoming chair Ashley Martucci, and our chair-elect Scott Wayne will be hosting an introduction to Faculty Senate. The intended audience is primarily new Senators, although anyone is welcome to attend. We will discuss what the Senate is, its role at the institution, the Senate organizational structure, and Senator responsibilities. Watch your emails for dates and times, but typically we have held it 45 minutes to an hour before the first Faculty Senate meeting in September.
- Planning for the revived Country Roads Scholars Tour continues. If you expressed interest, you should expect an email invitation shortly.

6. Jen Steele, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, presented the following reports for approval.

Motion carried by a vote of 75-0.

Annex I, New Courses Report

Annex II, Course Changes Report

Annex III, Capstone Courses Report

Changes to the Computer Engineering Program at WVUIT

The following report was submitted for information. Report filed.

Changes to the Minor in Africana Studies

7. Lisa Di Bartolomeo, Chair of the General Education Foundations Committee, presented the following report for approval. Motion carried by a vote of 82-0.

Annex IV, GEF Actions

8. Jessica Vanderhoff, Chair of the Teaching and Assessment Committee, presented the following reports for approval. Motion carried by a vote of 78-0.

Annex V, Fall 2021 Early Semester Teaching Assessment Calendar

Annex VI, Recommendation to Modify eSEI Scale

The following reports were submitted for information. Reports filed.

Annex VII, Syllabus Upload into Libraries' Research Repository

Annex VIII, Spring 2021 Early Semester Teaching Assessment Summary

9. Roy Nutter, Faculty Representative to State Government, reported that the legislature is holding an interim session from June 6-8, 2021. They are allocating federal funds to next year's budget; he has not found any items of concern to higher education.
10. Stan Hileman, BOG Representative, reported that the Board of Governors held a special meeting on May 20, 2021. They approved changes regarding food options on campus. The next meeting is scheduled for June 25, 2021, at which time he and Emily Murphy will be presenting the faculty report.
11. Chair Singh-Corcoran presented Annex IX, Results of the Executive Committee Election. Report filed.
12. New Business

Marianne Downes, School of Medicine. presented the following open letter to the Faculty Senate.

Colleagues,

I recognize that this has been a difficult year and I thank the WVU community for doing their best to keep abreast of rapidly changing data and seeking to best serve our students and create an environment that was as inclusive as possible for a safe and productive learning environment for our students and supportive of faculty and student success.

I was both excited and concerned when I saw the eNews published on May 25, 2021; WVU updates mask wearing and out-of-state travel guidance for fully vaccinated individuals. I was elated to see the guidance changing and updating to meet current CDC guidance. However, I was very concerned by the statement: "However, fully-vaccinated individuals who are in groups of fewer than 10 indoors on campus may decide as a group to remove masks. Every individual must feel comfortable with that decision, otherwise everyone should continue to wear a mask in that setting." While allowing for normalcy and providing an incentive for individuals to be vaccinated, this can foreseeably create an environment where #1.

Individuals may feel pressured to reveal HIPPA protected personal health information and

incentivize individuals to lie or even falsify evidence of vaccination and #2. Create an environment where unvaccinated or uncomfortable people will feel ostracized or even be subjected to judgement, ridicule, derision, or discrimination.

In healthcare we train our students to regard every patient equally and treat patients with dignity, respect, and care regardless of diagnosis, status, identity, lifestyle, etc. At the same time we also consider each patient as potentially infectious and work with care to minimize the risk of accidental infectious disease transmission. This ideal may not be as apparent to those outside of the medical sphere. However, we are all familiar with treating each student with dignity, respect, and support. I sincerely hope that a faculty member would not disclose an individual student's need for accommodations nor ask for the reason that accommodations were granted for any individual. I respectfully request that all faculty members similarly consider that a student's or colleague's vaccination status is protected health information and should not be inquired about. Further, while there is space in the academic world to teach students how to find and evaluate data regarding vaccination safety, infectious disease, disease transmission, and community responsibility, there is also space to understand that there are barriers to vaccination including the presence of particular immunodeficiencies which may preclude vaccination, and the continued wearing of masks, regardless, of COVID-19 presence on campus provides greater protection to those vulnerable populations.

I respectfully urge all members of the WVU community to keep the above in mind when planning for the Fall semester, writing syllabi, and setting expectations for your classroom environment. I also remind you that the above listed exception is very limited in scope and that the current WVU mask policy states that masks are required in all indoor public spaces including classrooms, restrooms, elevators, and any indoor or outdoor area where interaction with others is likely.

Respectfully,

Marianne T. Downes* Ph.D. MLS (ASCP)CM (she/her/hers)
President American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science – Pennsylvania
Associate Professor, Division of Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics
WVU School of Medicine Pathology, Anatomy, and Laboratory Medicine Department

* The thoughts stated above are my own and are not representative of the WVU School of Medicine, PALM Dept. or Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics Division.

Frankie Tack, College of Education and Human Services, moved for approval of the following Optional SEI Concerns Statement for Inclusion in Narrative, Digital Measures, and/or other Evaluative Space. The motion was duly seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 68-0.

Option 1:

Members of BIPOC and underrepresented (UR) groups are organizing to speak out against the University's ongoing use of unverified, biased methods to evaluate teaching efficacy. We are electing to address concerns about the use of Student Evaluations of Instruction in our narratives. Student teaching evaluations have been shown to reflect only subjective reactions at the moment of collection (Lazos, 2012) which are frequently deindividualized, morally disengaged, and cruel (Lindahl & Unger, 2010). Furthermore, as a [Black person, woman, LGBTQ+ person, immigrant, minority, etc. – writer's choice], I would like all those who

review my file to be aware of the documented bias these instruments generate toward people of color, women, and other oppressed groups (MacNeill et al., 2014), with these groups consistently being rated more harshly for similar performance by white and male peers. I request that reviewers take this bias into account when issuing their final assessment of my teaching.

Option 2:

In solidarity with my black, brown, immigrant, female, and other minority colleagues, and given the University's on-going use of a questionable metric, the Student Evaluations of Instruction (SEI) to measure teaching efficacy, I am electing to address concerns about this instrument in this narrative. Student teaching evaluations have been shown to reflect only subjective reactions at the moment of collection (Lazos, 2012) which are frequently deindividualized, morally disengaged, and cruel (Lindahl & Unger, 2010). Furthermore, these instruments generate documented bias toward people of color, women, and other oppressed groups (MacNeill et al., 2014), with these groups consistently being rated more harshly for similar performance by white and male peers. I request that reviewers take this bias into account when issuing their final assessment of my teaching.

13. The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m. to reconvene on Monday, September 13, 2021.

Judy Hamilton
Office Administrator