

MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023, 3:15 P.M.

Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack brought the monthly meeting to order at 3:16 p.m. Members and guests participated in person at the WVU College of Law and via video conference.

Members Present:

Abraham, J.	Elliott, E.	Leary, B.	Sowards, A.
Angeline, M.	Faber, T.	Li, B.	Staniscia, S.
Armour-Gemmen, M.	Feaster, K.	Li, H.	Stueckle, J.
Ballard, D.	Fidelman, E.	Livengood, H.	Swager, L.
Barnes, E.	Field, J.	Lupo, J.	Szklarz, G.
Bhandari, R.	Floyd, K.	Martin, E.	Tack, F.
Bianco, C.	Gosden, S.	Martin, J.	Terry, D.
Bolyard, J.	Graves, C.	M'Bayo, T.	Thomay, A.
Bruyaka Collignon, O.	Haddox, C.	McCluskey, C.	Titolo, M.
Casey, R.	Hamrick, A.	Milans, K.	Totzkay, D.
Celikbas, E.	Hatipoglu, K.	Miltenberger, M.	Trickett Shockey, C.
Chapman, K.	Hauser, D.	Murphy, E.	Valenti, M.
Cohen, S.	Hedrick, J.	Nix, D.	Vance, B.
Corcoran, K.	Hileman, S.	Nolan, K.	Waggy, C.
Cottrell, L.	Huber, S.	Pena-Yewtukhiw, E.	Watson, K.
Crichlow, S.	Jaynes, M.	Phillips, T.	Wayne, S.
Dahle, G.	Johnson, D.	Rinehart, L.	Weislogel, A.
Davis, D.	Johnson Jr., K.	Rota, C.	Woloshuk, J.
Dey, K.	Kale, U.	Ruseski, J.	Woodberry, K.
Di Bartolomeo, L.	Kent, A.	Scaife, B.	Woods, S.
Dickman, B.	Kidd, K.	Scally, J.	Wuest, T.
Dilcher, B.	Labus, A.	Siekmeier, J.	Zeni, T.
Donley, D.	LaRue, R.	Smith, C.	
Eades, D.	Lastinger, A.	Sofka, S.	

Members Excused:

Adkins, B.	Hanif, A.	Palmer, A.	Sherlock, L.
Bardes, J.	Katz, J.	Prinzo, L.	
Bryner, R.	Kelly, C.	Reece, J.	
Galvez Peralta, M.	Knuckles, T.	Roberts, D.	

Members Absent:

Barghouthi, N.	Dionne, C.	Lucci, S.	Sakhuja, A.
Battistella, L.	Duenas, O.	Malarcher, J.	Scally, J.
Bogdansky, K.	Dumitrescu, C.	McGinnis, R.	Siekmeier, J.
Burt, A.	Ellis, E.	Moore, M.	Sims, J.
Carducci, H.	Elswick, D.	Murray, A.	Sizemore, J.
Cook, A.	Fullen, M.	Nguyen, J.	Smith, D.
Demarco, F.	Gosden Kitchen, S.	Nix, A.	Sokos, G.
Descoteaux, J.	Gross, J.	Olgers, F.	Stephan, K.
Dietz, P.	Hines, S.	Pyles, L.	Unger, K.
Dimachkie, Z.	Kearns, J.	Renzelli-Cain, R.	Vaddamani, V.

1. The minutes of the August 28, 2023, Faculty Senate Meeting were not available for approval and will be presented at the October 9, 2023, meeting.

2. Report from Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack

- a. Acknowledgment of the tragic shooting death of Dr. Zijie Yan at the University of North Carolina. Condolences of WVU faculty were conveyed to the chair of faculty at UNC, Dr. Beth Morocco.
- b. On September 6 the University Assembly met as petitioned by faculty to address two resolutions, one expressing no confidence in the leadership of President Gee, and one calling for an immediate freeze to academic transformation. Quorum was reached and the resolutions were addressed in standard order, resulting in a vote of no confidence in the leadership of President Gee with 797 in favor and 79 opposed, and a vote calling for a freeze of academic transformation with 747 in favor and 79 opposed.
 - i. Results were communicated on September 7 to WVU Board of Governors Chair Taunja Willis-Miller, President Gee, and Provost Read, all of whom have acknowledged receipt. Chair Willis-Miller subsequently transmitted the results to the other members of the Board.
- c. Appreciation given to the Senators and committee chairs who volunteered at the assembly, as well as the Faculty Senate leadership team and Corey Hunt in the Faculty Senate Office.
- d. The Board of Governors will be meeting on September 14 and 15. An extended public comment period will be conducted on the 14th.
- e. Seeking volunteers for the University Promotion and Tenure Advisory Board. Interested individuals may contact Chris Staples or Tracy Morris.

3. Report from President Gordon Gee

- a. Re-emphasis on the four pillars of education and growing opportunities within the state.
- b. Description of misrepresentations that have been circulating:
 - i. Aspired for 40,000 students when we were at around 33,000 students. That was an aspirational number and never affected brick and mortar decisions. No buildings or bonds were decided based on a theoretical number.
 - ii. WVU has consistently gained market share and is one of the few institutions gaining ground in retention and graduation rates.
 - iii. The pandemic did impact budgets, but the debt load did not increase by 55%.
 - iv. University maintains an AA- rating from Fitch, AA3 rating for Moody's, and an A rating from Sanders and Fours.
 - v. Multiple factors have contributed to the budget deficit: the pandemic, post-pandemic era, enrollment trends, and increasing costs for utilities.
 1. 500 non-academic positions have been eliminated over the past several years, saving \$21 million.
- c. Almost every program identified in academic transformation was told three years ago that they were going to be recommended for discontinuation because they were not operating at an optimum level and had declining enrollment. They had opportunities to bring forward viable options for change.
- d. The notion that changes will bar students from intellectual exploration or from a well-rounded education is false. WVU will continue to offer over 300 majors.
- e. Process is a means to set the university on a foundation of a modern land-grant R1 institution.

4. Report from Provost Maryanne Reed

- a. No additional information to provide from the Office of the Provost but asked other speakers to present on requested information.

Yields floor to Paul Kreider

- b. The appeal process governed by BOG Rule 2.2, and appeal committee was structured according to that rule.
- c. Two constant members in the appeals committee: vice provost as chair, which is Paul Kreider, and the associate provost for curriculum and assessment, Lou Slimak. There is also an associate provost for either undergraduate or graduate education, a member of Faculty Senate, a member from the dean staff of the appealing college, and two members of dean's staff from two other colleges. The Faculty Senate representatives were Scott Wayne and Diana Davis.
- d. 19 of 25 units delivered appeals, with some units appealing multiple decisions.
- e. 117 appealable actions in total, of which 66 were not appealed, 51 appealed.
- f. Of the 51 appealed actions, 30 appeals were granted in part or in whole, with 21 appeals not granted.
- g. The results of these appeals are:
 - i. 5 fewer programs being discontinued.
 - ii. Impact on faculty reduced by 22 positions.
 - iii. Total number of faculty reductions lessened to 147 from the previously recommended 169.

Yields floor to Stephanie Taylor and Tracy Morris

- h. [Presentation on Reduction in Force](#)
- i. If the BOG approves the final recommendation, the Office of the Provost, in consultation with the relevant dean and chair, will create a Reduction in Force plan. This plan will determine which faculty will be selected to remain and which will be subject to a reduction in force.
- j. The finalized RIF plan will be presented in accordance with rule 4.7.
- k. Faculty in affected units will receive a memo the week of Sept. 18
- l. Faculty must return affirmation forms by Sept. 30
- m. Oct. 1-15: RIF plans will be finalized and reviewed by the University RIF Committee.
- n. If an individual meeting cannot be scheduled by Oct 16th at 5:00 p.m., faculty will be informed of RIF decision via email. While not preferred, this is to expedite alerting faculty to the decisions.

Yields floor to Melissa Latimer

- o. Faculty and Staff Assistance Program has hired an additional counselor.
- p. Contract signed with Career Minds for outplacement services. Additional information will be provided over the next few weeks.

Maryanne Reed Reclaims floor

- q. Acknowledgement of the difficulty, stress, and disruption caused by the process.
- r. Reminder that this process has been mandated by the Board to address immediate budget issues that the institution faces. Those involved have WVU's best interest at heart and wish to see the institution in a better position to provide the resources that faculty need to be successful.

Member: Is the reduction of faculty based on centrally funded positions, or is it all positions? The number of reductions will vary depending on how that is handled.

Mark Gavin: The number we referred to is by centrally funded positions, either fully or partly, based on numbers as of July 1st.

Tracy Morris: All of the deans received the exact numbers for what we were working with and can clarify the counts of faculty that were referred to.

Member: Regarding the affirmation document, am I correct that the affirmation document is asking us to agree to the changes of the contract?

Stephanie Taylor: You are affirming if you would like to be in the RIF pool or not, and you are agreeing to any modified workloads if your department is subject to them.

Member: Tenured faculty have rights to due process in their employment protected by the 14th amendment. For people who opt to retire early to save jobs for others in the department, are they forgoing their right to due process that they would have by giving up their tenure status?

Taylor: Anyone choosing to retire is doing so voluntarily. If you choose to put in your notification to retire by September 30, you will still be eligible for the severance package.

Member: So if you someone is choosing to retire before Sept 30, they are giving up their rights to tenure?

Taylor: Correct.

Member: Why were we not given the chance to increase enrollment in programs cited for low enrollment?

Gavin: One example is Landscape Architecture. That program has experienced significant enrollment declines. If you look at the trends, then that number is going to decline. For that program to maintain accreditation, it must maintain 8 faculty positions. The program is a bit unique and they approached us with a plan that would deliver with reduced resources, and students didn't have a viable option, given the unique program. If that program doesn't address the enrollment concerns over the next couple of years, we will be having this same conversation again, meaning it will be evaluated again for enrollment plans.

Member: How is leadership going to address the devastated morale of faculty members?

Reed: That is a question I can't answer off the top of my head. We have to see this transition through, we are doing our best to support both faculty being impacted by this process and those that will remain, but I cannot wave a wand and make this go away. We know that morale is being highly impacted and will do everything we can to support and celebrate our faculty.

Member: Regarding enrollment targets for programs. Is the enrollment growth expected to be by absorbing students from programs that are being discontinued? Will those enrollment targets change if the overall enrollment of the university declines?

Reed: My understanding is that we didn't give targets and that, instead, gave units the direction to increase enrollment.

Member: How can faculty in a unit have a voice in determining the needs of a unit when it comes to cutting faculty positions?

Morris: Primarily, we have reached out to deans who have engaged chairs. Our responsibility is oversight of

this process and to make sure that these decisions are objective and verifiable as possible. The variables that are used come from the units, such as evaluations and longevity, and other criteria being used must be objectively verifiable. We are trying to keep subjective elements out as much as possible.

Member: Three programs in the Davis College of Design and Community Development were merged with the CCA-Reed unit. There is some rationale for that movement, which is unclear to me. The email exchanges I have had suggest to me that there is a rationale based on an incomplete understanding of the units role.

Reed: The focus was on creating structures where they made sense, where if there was already a stronger design program, then adding in additional design programs would create a stronger design focus for the institution, and that we felt those programs might be successful in the new college.

Kreider: I've had some conversations with some of our alumni in the CCA, and they are actually quite excited about what it could do to bring the design areas into the new college with a juxtaposition beside media. So much of what they do envelops all facets of media, design, and social media. We see this as a great opportunity to bring the units together and provide a well-rounded experience for our students to get them on the job market in the future. We are also hoping to create some efficiencies by bringing together faculty from across our campus that may not have been working together.

Member: The question is that we are concerned that you do not know what it is that we do in our department, and we would like to have a conversation about this merger.

Kreider: We will schedule a time to get everyone into the same room to talk about the merger and rationale.

Member: I wanted to remind everyone that we do have a new committee on Recruitment and Retention, which is intended to address the faculty role in enrollment.

Member: Regarding the option for deans to non-renew non-tenure track faculty. Being a contract employee, could someone explain what that means for us? Will we follow the same timeline, we will be a part of these papers (affirmation forms) that are going to come out?

Taylor: If a dean chooses to take reductions through the non-renewal of teaching track or service track faculty, they could do that on an expedited timeline, so happening before October 16. Those faculty would still be eligible for the severance package, would still be eligible to meet with human resources and outplacement services, etc.

Member: If someone is RIFed in October, and if someone were to leave in the spring semester, could someone be un-RIFed?

Taylor: That would depend on if they were going to backfill that position. The most likely answer is no.

Member: I'm stunned that TAPs and SAPs are not going to be considered in the global reduction plan for each unit. It said that they could carry the load of reduction and, if so, a RIF plan would not need to be submitted by the dean.

Taylor: Only if non-renewals is all that they are doing, which is a very rare circumstance. There are a couple of units that could just do their reductions by non-renewing a TAP or SAP, which they could do when their contracts end. For the vast majority of units, they will need to do a RIF plan and will look at all faculty

holistically.

Morris: Each year, some of our deans make a decision for non-renewal within their departments, and there is no reduction in force plan related to that.

Member: What are the enrollment numbers for fall 2023, and how do they compare to fall 2022?

Reed: You may email Evan Widders and he will provide that information. They are accessible, but you may not know where to find them.

Member: During the appeals process, hatch funding was discussed (Davis funding that supports faculty). There was a question on if that funding would follow the faculty to a new school.

Kreider: This discussion came up during the appeal hearing. We know that operational dollars funded from hatch can move with faculty to new units until those projects have expired. Salary dollars cannot follow faculty outside of Davis, so we will need to examine how we handle that funding moving forward.

Member: To clarify, faculty that are not RIFed and are nonrenewed, will they be eligible for the severance package?

Taylor: Yes.

Member: When you talk about looking at objective data for determining reduction in forced, what about those that haven't been here for three years?

Morris: For those that have been here for three years or more, we are using the most recent three years. For those that have been here less than three years, we are using the data available.

Member: As long as you are notified by the October date you will have access to the severance package, but not if you are notified after?

Taylor: Our goal is to do that as close as possible to the October 16 date to provide some finality to faculty. If a decision were to come later in the year, we could see if there is some severance package that can be provided.

Member: The FY23 budget data on the budget planning site that we had access to had enrollment data in it, but that information is no longer published on the website.

Reed: We don't control that, but we will look into it and get back to you.

Member: For those that haven't been here three or more years, from an equity perspective, what kind of processes will be in place to make sure the cuts are skewed toward new faculty or TAPs and SAPs?

Morris: I suspect that this is nothing I could say that would assuage all concerns. It is a very heavy, emotionally laden process that our team has taken very seriously, and to make sure that the biases that have been mentioned don't come into play. We are focusing on objective, verifiable data based on the unit operational needs, and are working hard to ensure other elements don't come into the process.

~~5. Report from Kayla Follmer, Graduate Student Ombudsperson~~

6. Curriculum Committee Report (Cindi Trickett Shockey)

- a. The committee will meet later this week.
 - b. Currently evaluating 64 courses, 1 program review, and 20 course deactivations.
7. General Education Foundations Committee Chair Mary Beth Angeline had no report.
 8. Teaching and Assessment Committee Chair Marina Galvez-Peralta had no report.
 9. Committee on Committees Chair Lesley Cottrell had no report.
 10. Faculty Representative to State Government Eloise Elliott had no report.
 11. Board of Governors Representative Stan Hileman no report.
 12. New Business

Member: Something to come out of this experience is that the performance rating wasn't created with this in mind. No faculty evaluation processes were created thinking that the department would go through a RIF. Maybe the Provost could consider expediting the process of reviewing departmental evaluation criteria for performance in 2024. Hopefully the current situation opens conversation on that topic.

13. Motion to adjourn. Seconded.

Faculty Senate chair Frankie Tack adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m. to reconvene on October 9, 2023.

Corey Hunt
Faculty Senate Office Administrator

Information on WVU Transformation, including updates, timeline, Campus Conversations, and FAQs can be found [here](#).

The Faculty Senate Transformation/Budget page can be found [here](#).