

MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023, 3:15 P.M.

Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack brought the special meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Members and guests participated in person at the WVU College of Law and via video conference.

Members Present:

Abraham, J.	Donley, D.	Lastinger, A.	Siekmeier, J.
Adkins, B.	Eades, D.	Leary, B.	Sims, J.
Angeline, M.	Elliott, E.	Li, B.	Sizemore, J.
Armour-Gemmen, M.	Elsewick, D.	Li, H.	Smith, C.
Ballard, D.	Faber, T.	Livengood, H.	Sofka, S.
Bardes, J.	Feaster, K.	Lupo, J.	Sowards, A.
Barghouthi, N.	Fidelman, e.	Malarcher, J.	Staniscia, S.
Barnes, E.	Floyd, K.	Martin, J.	Stueckle, J.
Bhandari, R.	Fullen, M.	Martin, E.	Swager, L.
Bolyard, J.	Gosden, S.	Martin, J.	Szklarz, G.
Bruyaka Collignon, O.	Graves, C.	M'Bayo, T.	Tack, F.
Bryner, R.	Gross, J.	McCluskey, C.	Terry, D.
Burt, A.	Haddox, C.	McGinnis, R.	Thomay, A.
Casey, R.	Hanif, A.	Milans, K.	Titolo, M.
Celikbas, E.	Hatipoglu, K.	Miltenberger, M.	Totzkay, D.
Chapman, K.	Hauser, D.	Moore, M.	Trickett Shockey, A.
Cohen, S.	Hedrick, J.	Murphy, E.	Valenti, M.
Cook, A.	Hileman, S.	Nguyen, J.	Vance, B.
Cottrell, L.	Huber, S.	Nolan, K.	Waggy, C.
Crichlow, S.	Jaynes, M.	Palmer, A.	Watson, K.
Dahle, G.	Johnson Jr., K.	Pena, E.	Wayne, S.
Davis, D.	Johnson, D.	Peralta, M.	Weislogel, A.
DeMarco, F.	Kale, U.	Phillips, T.	Woloshuk, J.
Descoteaux, J.	Katz, J.	Prinzo, L.	Woodberry, K.
Dey, K.	Kelly, C.	Reece, J.	Woods, S.
Di Bartolomeo, L.	Kent, A.	Rinehart, L.	Wuest, T.
Dickman, B.	Kidd, K.	Roberts, D.	Zeni, T.
Dilcher, B.	Knuckles, T.	Rota, C.	
Dionne, C.	LaRue, R.	Scally, J.	

Members Excused:

Sherlock, L.	Corcoran, K.	Ellis, E.	Ruseski, J
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Members Absent:

Battistella, L.	Dumitrescu, C.	Labus, A.	Sakhuja, A.
Bianco, C.	Ellis, E.	Lucci, S.	Sokos, G.
Bogdansky, K.	Field, J.	Murray, A.	Stephan, K.
Carducci, H.	Hamrick, A.	Nix, A.	Unger, K.
Dietz, P.	Hines, S.	Olgers, F.	Vaddamani, V.
Dimachkie, Z.	Kearns, J.	Pyles, L.	
Duenas, O.	Kerr, P.	Renzelli-Cain, R.	

1. For Approval – [Minutes](#) of the August 7, 2023, Faculty Senate meeting
Motion to approve carried by unanimous consent.
2. Report from Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack

- a. Marjorie McDiarmid, College of Law, will be serving as parliamentarian this year as Anne Lofaso has university obligations preventing her from serving. There is intent for Corey Hunt to become parliamentarian in the future.
- b. The new SGA administration has a strong interest in working with Faculty Senate this year.
- c. The university is seeking at least 14 faculty members to serve on the 2023-2024 Promotion and Tenure advisory panel. Interested individuals may email Chris Staples or Tracy Morris to volunteer.

For Information - University Promotion and Tenure Advisory Panel Call for Volunteers – [Annex I](#)

- d. Faculty Senate has secured commitments from upper administration to executive reviews and deliver individual reports, including data, metrics, positions, organizational decisions, and implementation timelines by October 30th for the following areas: Office of the President, Dean’s Offices, Strategic Initiatives, University Relations and Enrollment Management, Student Life, Research Office, Office of the General Counsel, and Athletics.
- e. A group is being formed to revise the WVU Code of Conduct. The initial group will be comprised of faculty, leadership, and the members of the Office of the General Council. Work is anticipated to be referred to the Faculty Welfare Committee for feedback and to seek broad faculty input.
- f. Reminder that there is a new Recruitment and Retention Committee this year, and that the Research Integrity Committee and Research and Scholarship Committee have been combined into a single Research Committee.
- g. Tack has been in communication with Cory Ferris concerning the Campus Safety Committee, which will be convened this year to address the implementation of campus carry at WVU. As faculty have expressed concern relating to this, Ferris has committed to the inclusion of faculty on that committee. Diana Davis will lead involvement from Faculty Senate and will likely recruit additional volunteers later this year.
- h. Carruth Center will hold the “Send Silence Packing” youth mental health awareness activity on the Woodburn Hall lawn on Tuesday, September 12.
- i. The Faculty Senate Office has received a petition to hold a special meeting of the University Assembly, which meets the minimum number of signatures, set at 5% of the assembly. The University Assembly will meet to consider a resolution of no confidence in the leadership of Gordon E. Gee, and a resolution to freeze the academic transformation process. This meeting will be held at the Clay Theatre in the Creative Arts Center on Wednesday, September 6, at noon. Additional information is available at <https://facultysenate.wvu.edu/university-assembly>

Member: Why is the University Assembly being held in person, and why are we not being provided a hybrid option? Especially given the idea that an assembly is to provide the largest possible participation.

Tack: The face-to-face format was selected for two reasons: first, the WVU Zoom is limited to 1,000 participants. With the broad faculty concern about the topics to be addressed as demonstrated through the petition and through numerous avenues of communication on the topic, we need to provide space large enough for the number of faculty we anticipate will attend, as well as non-faculty observers, including the media, who have also been invited into our process. So, we have reason to believe we could exceed 1,000.

Having the event at the Creative Arts Center will give us capacity for around 1,400. Second, we learned a lot of hard lessons through the P&T Draft assembly that was called and the biggest concern, or the biggest thing that we learned, is that it is difficult to maintain order with that many people online. We are bound by the constitution to follow Robert's Rules of Order, and we cannot do that with so many people online. We saw this most recently with our Faculty Senate meeting, where Faculty Senators were repeatedly asked to stop posting questions in the chat and Q&A, and to raise their hand to be recognized.

Member: Regarding the point of online Q&A and chat, is it possible to disable those entirely to control audience participation?

Tack: I'm willing to hear more from any Tech people, but my understanding is that for panelists to be able to raise hands and speak and be heard, we cannot disable those functions.

Member: Even if you are sacrificing the ability to speak, at least you could observe and participate. Otherwise, there is no option for people who have no ability to attend in person.

Tack: We cannot limit the speech of faculty in an assembly, so everyone must have the ability to speak. I appreciate the concern and the difficulty that an in-person assembly creates, but this is important business.

Member: I agree that this is important business, but I'm out of country and it is physically impossible for me to attend in person, and I know that I'm not the only person who will have something preventing physical attendance. Any opportunity for those in similar circumstances to still participate would be appreciated.

Member: The COVID University Assembly was online and appeared to run smoothly, so couldn't we do the same in this instance?

Tack: I can't speak to that, but if someone else has more knowledge they may pitch in. The last vote of no confidence in a president it took place at the CAC, so I feel that we have precedent. We have tried to consider as much as can and to arrange this so that faculty are able to attend. There is no intent to block faculty from attending.

Member: I helped run the COVID assembly. It was very hard for us to get, maintain, and track quorum throughout the meeting, and tracking the amendments online was extremely difficult. It was chaos behind the scenes, so I agree with Frankie regarding the difficulty of running an online assembly meeting.

Member: I would like to request that this meeting be moved to the evening to avoid existing University obligations.

Tack: There is no time where we wouldn't have contacts for some groups of people. I appreciate your concern.

3. Report from President Gordon Gee

- a. Noted that academic transformation is not a dismantling of the institution, but a process of disruption.
- b. Concur that universities should be places of exploration and discovery, but also believes it can be a place of job training and placement.

- c. Transformation process is focused on offering the programs, skills, and opportunities students need to find success.
- d. Upsetting the status quo is not easy and does interrupt people's lives, but leadership is trying to move quickly, provide as much notice as possible, and take feedback into account throughout the process.
- e. Reaching 40,000 students was a vision, not a strategy. We did not budget anticipating 40,000 students.
- f. Between 2012 and 2018 there were \$820 million worth of upgrades to facilities that benefit the University and its students. WVU itself did not invest \$820 million. Five of those projects were public-private partnerships where a private party or the county commission obtained debt and spent money for the construction of those projects. Two of those projects, University Place and University Park, have consistently run at 90% capacity. This year all our residence halls are 99-100% capacity. The public private partnerships were all initiated prior to Gee taking office.
- g. WVU is audited every year by external auditors. WVU has received a clean audit each year of Gee's presidency. WVU maintains a AA rating from Fitch, A/A3 rating from Moody, and an A rating from Standard and Poor's A rating.

4. Report from Provost Maryanne Reed

- a. Currently in the middle of program appeal hearings
- b. 19 out of 25 units have appealed preliminary recommendations for either program discontinuations or personnel reductions. The result of those appeals will be reflected in the Provost's Office final recommendations.
- c. Final recommendations will be voted on by the BOG on September 15.
- d. Academic Support Unit review has been delayed because of the program portfolio review process. Anticipate being able to share the recommendations at the BOG Sept 15 meeting. The BOG will not need to vote on those recommendations.
- e. Program portfolio review process for WVU Extension, Potomac State, and WVU IT will begin in January.
- f. Reaffirmation that the review and reduction process is relating to mandates handed down from the Board of Governors.

Yields floor to Melissa Latimer

- g. Faculty Staff Assistance program available to all employees and their dependents.
 - a. In the process of hiring another counselor for the program.
 - b. Virtual and in-person drop-in sessions are available through the fall semester.
- h. Chris Schimmel, Ombudsperson, is available for faculty members.
- i. Currently negotiating a contract with an outplacement service to assist faculty and staff who have lost their jobs either through non-renewal or through involuntary separation. This is being paid using Benedum finds.
 - a. Once a contract is signed, a website will be available with the resources.

Yields floor to Stephanie Taylor

- j. BOG approved an addition to the faculty severance schedule including clinical and librarian track faculty. If contracts end on May 9th, they will receive 12 weeks of severance pay. If their contract extends beyond May 9, the severance amount may be adjusted.
- k. Two opportunities are available to provide feedback to the Board of Governors: [Submit a written comment](#), and [sign up to speak](#) at the Sept 14 meeting. Sign-ups are requested at least two days in advance.
- l. There have been incorrect statements regarding the notice of reappointment letters and the WVU Code of Conduct as they currently stand. There has been focus on two partial clauses in the code of conduct that some claim undermine the right of free speech under the first amendment.
 - a. The notice of reemployment letters regarding code of conduct state: “all employees are expected to comply with the WVU values and code of conduct” and provides a link. This is not a new statement and has been in these letters since 2020.
 - b. The code of conduct has been in existence and unchanged since 2018, and commentators have ignored important aspects of the code of conduct relevant to the first amendment, which states “WVU promotes freedom of expression and open communication. The university supports and encourages everyone to express their thoughts and concerns in a respectful way.”
 - c. The clause “accept and encourage change that is for the greater good” is listed under the curiosity value, the clause “be an ambassador of WVU and avoid conflict that adversely affects the image of the University” is listed under the service value. These are not mandates, they are expectations.

Reed reclaims floor and ends report.

Member: Will there be additional cuts next year? And is there anything from this process that the institution can retain as institutional knowledge to avoid encountering this situation again in the future?

Reed: This process has taught us that there is additional data that we need to look at when evaluating programs beyond enrollment, and that we need to build that into our annual review process and make sure the data is available to everyone, particularly the chairs, who will be educated on how to use that data.

Alsop: From a budget perspective, we thought to provide realistic enrollment projects for enrollment for FY24 and FY25 so that we could aim towards a target that would allow us to go through something like this once. We will be looking at enrollment and tuition this fall and, once we have a solid idea of those numbers, will consider if there are any adjustments that are needed for FY 24? If so, that would change how we start to build the budget for FY25. We do plan to implement the new budget model in FY25 and we have staff working right now to gather all of the variables that are components of that. We help to engage with the campus this fall as we work through that new budget model. We have several goals we are trying to accomplish with the new budget model. One of those is a new level of transparency and accountability for everybody as we move forward and have a better understanding of what drives our revenues and what drives our expenses so that we are in a better position earlier to address our challenges going forward. Information provided to the board relating to the budget has increased dramatically, from roughly 8 pages to about 40. I’ve challenged my team to come up with a set of key performance metrics that can be used at regular intervals as a sort of financial health dashboard that campus can look at.

Member: What is the projected deficit following the current proposed cuts and reductions?

Alsop: We don't have a specific dollar amount; we have a range given faculty salaries. We reached \$21 million for FY24 and it is our goal to reach \$25 million for FY25, but that will come from a variety of sources. The total dollar amount achieved through the proposed reductions will vary depending on a number of factors.

Member: What is the estimated percentage of faculty that you anticipate exiting the university willingly?

Alsop: I don't know the answer to that question, but we are monitoring it. We have asked faculty, staff, and other administrative positions, when someone leaves a position, can we mine those savings going forward? We normally have around 4-5% turnover of employees each year. I don't know what that figure is estimated to be this year.

Member: Why did we only hear about this structural deficit in late March?

Gee: We have been talking about budgetary deficits for some time, but we started identifying it profoundly at that time because of the enrollment that we had. We had a thousand students that we anticipated would return that did not.

Member: Regarding the process of appeals, is there reasoning behind limiting access of faculty or making it public?

Reed: The composition of the committee is established in Board Rules for the review process. We haven't opened those up to the public, as we feel that people need to weigh the information carefully. It is a highly professional process and we have never opened them up to the public. We haven't received a lot of requests to open them to the public.

Member: Why are we only allowed to have one representative at the appeals?

Reed: You may have one dissenter and one presenter. The chair may appoint an additional individual to attend that hearing.

Member: The Wall Street Journal quoted you as saying that we are not in a financial crisis. Can you please explain that position?

Gee: I said that if we didn't take corrective actions now that we would be in a financial crisis, in that we would have a \$75-100 million deficit. This is a structural crisis, and if we don't get rid of it, it will grow and grow. From a higher education standpoint, this isn't unprecedented. We are pruning to plant. We have programs that have overextended themselves and we can no longer sustain those programs. That is not a financial exigency. It is a reality that we have to deal with.

Member: You were quoted as saying you could take the \$5.8 million from World Languages and reinvest it into a program like Forensics. How does reallocation of funds impact the deficit?

Gee: My intent was to say that we could eventually reinvest it somewhere. If I didn't use the word eventually, please know that was the intent. The point is that we will be able to start taking dollars that we have saved and start putting them into growth opportunities, and we intend on doing that.

Member: I feel that the message that these cuts are impacting 2% of students is disingenuous. When we cut languages and other things, we are impacting a lot of students and their opportunities.

Gee: I agree with you. If you look at the residual impact, absolutely. When we say the impact, we are talking about those directly in those programs. Our intent in the decisions we are making is to impact the least number of students and the least number of faculty possible.

Member: At what point are we pruning to grow? My department has almost no money for professional development. I've been asked to redesign my courses and offer them to twice as many students. I feel that we are going to damage our program.

Gee: We are doing what we are doing now so that we can start growing. It is short-term issues versus long-term issues. We are trying to look at the long-term. The future of the university requires us to have a much longer view than the immediate.

Member: What are you going to do to increase faculty confidence and morale in those that remain here after the cuts?

Reed: There will be some unintended consequences of our work, and I think we have to acknowledge that. But we do have a challenging budget environment and we have to make choices, and none of these choices will be perfect. But our goal is to get to a better place so that we can be a stronger institution and continue to attract good students and faculty.

5. Curriculum Committee Report (Cindi Trickett Shockey)

- a. The committee met for the first time on August 24.
- b. Given the changes happening to the institution, committee workload may be high. Faculty are asked to review the submission [dates and deadlines](#) to be certain courses will be included in the spring and fall catalog.

6. General Education Foundations Committee Report (Mary Beth Angeline)

- a. Committee has not yet met.
- b. Continuing progress from last year, including the review of general education curriculum at other universities and colleges and working with the OUR to review courses in terms of availability and frequency of being offered.
- c. GEF definition and rubric approved in spring 2023 by Faculty Senate

7. Teaching and Assessment Committee Report (Marina Galvez-Peralta)

- a. Mission for TACO this year is to keep empowering faculty and help document/report the teaching and impact that the teaching is doing. We will find alternative ways to demonstrate and document the impact of teaching.

8. Committee on Committees Report (Lesley Cottrell)

- a. Many rosters have been updated and changed over the course of the summer.

- b. Committee works by a document that was developed through the bylaws which states the composition for all of our committees.

For Approval – Committee Rosters – [Annex II](#)

Motion to approve carried by unanimous consent.

9. Report from Faculty Representative to State Government (Eloise Elliott)

- a. Elliott elected aa chair of the Advisory Council of Faculty.

10. Board of Governors Report (Stan Hileman)

- a. Representatives pushed for inclusion of clinical and library faculty in the severance package. After a discussion of that and making sure that the Dean of Libraries was comfortable with what was proposed, it was passed.
- b. Board endorsed the combining of Davis and Extension into one college.

11. For Information – 2022-2023 Committee Annual Reports and 2023-2024 Goals

Academic Technology Committee – [Annex III](#)

Committee of Retired Faculty – [Annex IV](#)

Committee on Committees, Memberships and Constituencies – [Annex V](#)

Curriculum Committee – [Annex VI](#)

Faculty Welfare Committee – [Annex VII](#)

General Education Foundations Committee – [Annex VIII](#)

Library Committee – [Annex IX](#)

Research and Scholarship Committee – [Annex X](#)

Service Committee – [Annex XI](#)

Sustainability Committee – [Annex XI](#)

Teaching and Assessment Committee – [Annex XIII](#)

12. For Approval – Resolution to renew the Committee on Collaboration as a Special Committee – [Annex XIV](#)

Motion to approve. Seconded.

Motion carried by voice vote.

13. For Approval – Resolution to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution to Change the Term of Service for the Faculty Senate Representative to State Government to Two Years – [Annex XV](#)

Motion to approve. Seconded.

Motion carried by voice vote.

The item will be forwarded to the University Assembly for approval.

14. New Business

- a. Motion to request the University Assembly be moved to a hybrid format on a case-by-case basis for faculty that cannot attend an in-person meeting due to University sponsored or scheduled responsibilities. Seconded.
Motion carried by voice vote.

- b. Member: Could I request clarification regarding the deficit? Rob Alsop said that the cuts this year has an overall goal of \$24 million, but the deficit for the budget was noted as \$45 million. Where will that extra money come from?
Alsop: We cut \$21 million for FY24 and we intend to cut \$24 million for FY25, which is how we will reach the \$45 million figure. That \$24 million figure for FY25 isn't entirely from academic reductions, so it is not entirely reliant on academic transformation. Monies will be taken from non-academic parts of the university to help reach the total. Depending on the outcomes of the program appeals, we may need to propose additional cuts or enhancements elsewhere in the university.

15. Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Carried.

Faculty Senate Chair Frankie Tack adjourned the meeting at 5:19 p.m. to reconvene on September 11, 2023.

Corey Hunt
Faculty Senate Office Administrator

*You may access program proposals at <https://futurecatalog.wvu.edu/programadmin/> by using your login credentials. Search for programs using the 3- or 4-digit key provided above.