

Fairmont State University Faculty Senate

Amended Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2020

Members Present: Chuck Shields (Social Sciences, President), Donna Long (Humanities, Vice President), Jason Noland (SoE, Secretary), Tom Cuchta (Comp. Sci. & Math, Webmaster), Todd Clark (NSI, Ex. Comm.), Jim Davis (Business, Ex Comm.), Paul Reneau (HHP, Ex. Comm.), Denice Kirchoff (Nursing), Gina Fantasia (BoG), Tim Oxley (Academic Affairs), Dan Eichenbaum (Performing Arts), Janet Floyd (Business), Josh Smallridge (Social Sciences), Molly Barra (Library), Musat Crihalmeanu (Eng. Tech), Nathaniel Myers (Humanities), Nina Slota (Behavioral Sciences), Rachel Cook (Natural Sciences), Robert Niichel (Comp. Sci. & Math), Steven Roof (Academic Affairs), Tabitha Lafferre (Engineering Tech.), Victoria Nichols (SGA)

Guests Present: Deb Hemler, Jon Dodds, Mirta Martin, Rick Harvey, Rick Stephens, Amanda Metcalf, Cindy Curry, Jan Kiger, Julie Reneau, Pam Pittman, Rebecca Luketic, Mike Ransom

I. Minutes

Reading & Approval of the minutes from the August 18, 2020 meeting

Motion to approve minutes Reneau/Cuchta. Passed.

II. Announcements/Information/Discussion

President Martin

Appreciates the invite to join today. Regrets not being able to join last time, was on the COVID line. After 9 days, all faculty, staff, and students have been tested. A few residual students have not been, but they have been contacted due to it being in violation with the code of conduct.

Created a platform that gives faculty the knowledge if their students have been tested or not. One thing that came about that I thought was interesting was that some students are telling faculty they have been excused from being tested and/or wearing a mask. Let me make sure it is clear - no student has been granted exemption from wearing a mask at FSU, and all student who are on campus have been required to test. No one has been exempted from testing. Students can participate virtually, but cannot be on campus until tested.

The purpose of my visit today is to say thank you to all of you and your peers. We have entered a milestone, next week, in the history of FSU in that we will be 1/3 toward our goal of finishing out the semester face to face. I know the semester started differently, being able to adjust to the new technology for some has been different. But, each of you and the faculty have risen to the occasion and the semester has gone beautifully so far.

We are continually appraised of contact tracing, positives, etc. We continue to send a plethora of email and communication to our students. Urging them to please social distance, wear a mask, etc., so far it seems to be working. Our return to play for athletics is the one thing that is in flux, which is not because of us but because of NCAA and MEC. We don't know if winter sports will play on time or will also be delayed like fall sports. We will pivot accordingly. The one thing we have learned to do is pivot well. Appreciate everything you all are doing.

With the joining of Dr. Stephens, and the senate being an academic endeavor going forward, he will be communicating with you going forward. He will be point. I look forward to great things this semester.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this group, and appreciate the work that is being done.

Interim Provost Stephens

Here in the fourth week, there has been some normalization of my day and what I am engaged in. I don't have large details to report, but a few things I am working on. Appreciate the efforts everyone has been making regarding our language usage around online. The number of phone calls I have been receiving suggesting they are getting less than what they were expecting has dwindled down to nothing. Tag onto that and indicate that even as I walked into an informal conversation on campus, students continue to present to us certain perceptions or imagined realities about themselves, like permission not to wear a mask, and attend all classes virtually on their own. Student need to be challenged a little bit when they come up with these things and stretch our intentions. There is a normalization that is happening

Working with Deans council to make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to calendaring for program reviews as well as P&T. As soon as we get that calendaring done, I will share it with Chuck who will share it with you to make sure we are all working from the same spreadsheet as far as the calendar. One thing we are trying to make sure we do is not hit the BoG during their last meeting of the year with these items. Looking more into the February meeting.

Will be meeting with recruitment and admissions looking to the Deans and faculty on efforts of enrollment management, and targeted recruitment. There are always programs flush with students, and others not so much. Trying to make sure we can communicate clearly inside and outside the institution how our programs are supported by student enrollment, both new and major change students. One key thing that WV has imposed is the idea we need students to declare a major at about 30 hours of credit. There is a little bit of "fig leaf" of how we look at data. The largest percentage of incoming students are undeclared or undecided. How we go about working with those students, and distinguish ourselves as an institution who hosts well with these students is important. Will be working with everyone on this.

Finally met with the Handbook Committee. Appreciate being invited by Dr. Baker. Had some productive conversations and looking forward to more of that as we go forward. Part of the role that I want to identify as a Provost is, often is a traffic cop for communication. I am pretty good at running to the ground whatever the issue is and making sure we get it out. Latest was how centralized/available are travel documents available to faculty for any purpose (when it comes back). Travel is not a big issue, just using it as an example of where there are multiple pots that this has landed. Finding ways to streamline the information and facilitate the work of the handbook committee.

BoG Representative, Gina Fantasia

Academic Affairs committee presented Grad studies report. All attachments were forwarded to you all. Bylaws committee approved the policy GA04 Freedom of Expression. Repealed 3 policies that are under revision: Policy 20, 29, and 39 because they are under revision. Policy 19 on Freedom of Information Act was approved to put out for public comment. I have received some comments from faculty, certainly

you all should weigh in on any concerns. I am happy to get those comments to make sure they are addressed by the board.

Board heard reports on enrollment and housing, as well as financial reports. No finalized numbers at the time, I have sent to you all the reports that were included in the board book. I am happy to answer any questions, or if there are particular things you are happy about or have concerns about speak up here or call/email me.

Question: you sent a notice of a special meeting, has it occurred?

Answer: it occurs Thursday. What is in front of the board is considerations for policy changes on sexual harassment, etc. I haven't seen any drafts. You have seen as much as I have at this point. The only thing on the agenda is the considerations of the revisions for that policy.

Question: Out of my own ignorance, can you explain what it means to repeal a policy because it's under revision and what that means about what happens about open meetings if there is no policy? I don't understand.

Response: My understanding is simply what it says. Now there is no policy, it is being revised but in the interim it is my understanding that there is not one in effect in regard to Open Meetings. As a practical matter, we revert to whatever the statute says as far as the state. State law has a statute as clear as any statute is and sets out what is required of any public entity and FSU would be expected to comply whether we have a policy in place or not.

Comment: Many of you probably know, the statutory provisions regarding open meetings are interpreted by the WV ethics commission and the interpretations can be found on their website.

Comment: Dan notes he did not receive the emails.

Response: Gina says there are a few faculty groups that she gets a bounce back. She has reached out to IT to get that corrected. She will check again on that. Was hoping it was an anomaly.

ACF Representative, Jim Matthews

Cannot attend today. Nothing to report because the ACF has not done anything. There is a meeting this week so he should have a report for the next meeting.

Student Government

Victoria Nichols will be a new rep, additional rep will be selected. Nothing has happened yet, should have a report next meeting.

December 2020 Commencement

We have been hearing rumors; Rick, can you discuss this?

Rick: We are planning for both an in-person and a virtual commencement. Just to have both plans in place. The idea that under the conditions of the pandemic that we would expect 180+ full time faculty and hundreds more part time faculty to show up together won't happen, even if there is a plan for that. I would just say, people need to be at peace about this as best they can. I will stick my neck out and say we won't have or require 180 some full time and part time faculty to attend under conditions of COVID.

I don't expect the conditions to be miraculously gone by the end of November. My guess is we will be doing some sort of virtual commencement, may have some students in a largely empty gym, camera focused on stage, camera on them as they go across the stage. Minimal in that regard. That's the best I can say at the moment.

COVID Committee Report

Todd (Chair): The provisional, not authorized by senate, COVID 19 response committee (ad hoc) has met. 14 people volunteered for this committee within 48 hours. The committee consists of 13 faculty. We initially decided to put together a mission statement as to why we exist. Have heard a lot of conspiracy theories from various corners - there is no secret agenda. If there are concerns about this, speak to me directly. Second, we agreed to meet weekly because there are issues that come up, tactical issues, that faculty encounter whether they are virtual or face-to-face. The Administration couldn't envision these problems. I wanted to thank Rick, who offered to be at the meetings and act as a conduit with the ELT, we really appreciate that. Next meeting is Thursday.

Reading the mission statement:

We, the Faculty Senate, recommend the creation of an ad hoc body within the Senate to investigate and to represent faculty concerns to the University administration. The Committee's interrelated goals are to improve communication between faculty and the administration on COVID-19 issues and to advance faculty involvement in policies that directly affect our academic responsibilities, primarily instruction, during this pandemic. Toward these objectives, the committee will catalog faculty concerns related to teaching and other responsibilities; discuss and share best practices for more effective instruction during the pandemic; improve communication with the University administration on COVID-19 issues; and contribute meaningfully to the University administration's development of COVID-related policies.

We went ahead and went forward with the committee to serve as a clearinghouse for faculty concerns. Up until this point people were writing Chuck with their concerns. He is just one person, and it's too much. The idea was a committee to serve as a focal point for sharing best practices as we go. In one meeting I took down 3 positive suggestions on teaching in a split environment, and how to split your attention. We want to be part of the solution, not the problem. We also are looking to provide meaningful faculty input on things that effect us. There are immense talents that we have among faculty that can assist administration to create the best response possible and how we handle it from an academic affairs point of view.

Question: would it be possible for the SGA or a member of the SGA to be present? I think student participation would be helpful in the conversation.

Answer: Mr. President, I don't think there would be an issue with that unless there is some institutional bar to that. I would willingly invite a member of the SGA to participate in the activities.

Answer: I think the answer is yes, that the SGA senate reps could participate. They are there as reps to the senate, and participation from the viewpoint of students.

Moving forward, roger that. Copy all. SGA will send Todd the contact information.

Clarification: This committee was created by vote of the senate during the last meeting.

Winter Term Committee/Discussion

Dr. Stephens: You continue to get a blizzard of Memos from the Provost. As we try to do anything, there are usually good ideas that pop up, and some things that I miss. The essential thing is that I appreciate the committee's desire to have a "Gatekeeping function for quality" in online teaching – this was the intent regarding the QM intro course we were expecting people to have taken, at minimum. In my earlier Memo on this I did include the possibility there are other ways to demonstrate their capacity/expertise in online teaching and that we would allow Deans to weigh in on that, in some cases weight of experience, while in other cases actual certifications. We have about 75 faculty who have taken some level of QM coursework over the last few years, which is a good number. The big however is that while the U will cover the cost of QM coursework faculty may do, the intro course was not included for the grant we have. Because of that, we had to back up a little bit. My default position was that Deans are in the hot seat for qualifying faculty to teach this winter term. It will be case-by-case. I trust the Deans and the faculty. I am not trying to squeeze something in where there isn't [anything nefarious]. Trying to abide by the committee's desire to have some quality control. I would say for faculty who have not done any kind of dedicated training associated with teaching online, but have just put a lot of effort in over the last few months that the University will still cover QM coursework as was described. There are 4 other courses that may be taken. They require a lot more time commitment – close to 20 hours rather than 6 hours. There is an option to take these at the cost of the University. That was the latest juggling we were doing administratively to make sure faculty had a pathway to teach if they were so inclined.

I have begun receiving, from the Registrar and Deans, lists of courses they are interested in having submitted for winter term. Literally today I received this. We will be putting this together, trying to get them organized in ways to try to get them back out. The marketing and promotion of this needs enough time to generate student interest. Ultimately, the courses we list for Winter Term will be generated by faculty interest to teach, as well as student market demand. As students learn about this, they will look through a roster of courses and say, "Why isn't course A,B, C being offered?". We want to track that as much as possible because that is an important data point as we try to right size what we do. Let me be clear, no faculty member will be required to teach in this. There is a however in that. However, there may be an interest in a course to be taught, where there is no faculty interested in teaching. In that case, it may be that I reach out to a Dean to find an online qualified adjunct for a course for which we have substantial demand. There is overall institutional benefit for having such a course taught on occasion, and give us data points on how to organize the roster going forward in the future.

I do want to say something to the Senate generally. When I asked for a rapid response committee, I didn't think I would get one. But, you all came together with a committee, we came together on a Friday and I said I needed work from them over the weekend to get info out over the weekend. They did that. Pam Pittman dedicated the time and got the work done and was communicating with me over that weekend.

Comment: Last time we talked about using winter term to reduce load for faculty. I don't think that is happening for this term. The biggest question we have is the quality control aspect. I think the committee would have liked to see something of a requirement to take QM.

Rick: I would like to address the load shifts. I would fully anticipate that it will take a year or two for us to determine on a case by case basis that an individual faculty member's load could be shifted in a way that one of the courses assigned would be assigned to winter term as a substitute. Of course that would not be compensated additionally. I do want to explain the fiscal issue associated with that. It is better for the Institution to teach a low enrollment course during winter term for which we have dedicated supplemental revenue. To teach this during the fall or spring semester and calculate 1/8 of a faculty member's salary gets that course that has low enrollment makes it expensive to teach in any sort of enduring way for a full time faculty member. I have talked with some students who have not complained to me, but explained on occasions that courses, because of low enrollment, are offered infrequently and because of the timing of their major declaration they find the courses difficult to take. Being able to put those into winter term is a solution we can work on, but not this time around.

III. Unfinished Business

Senate Resolution in Support of Music & Theater Programs (second reading)

This was presented the last time and was passed on first reading with corrections based on the conversations we had at the last meeting.

Motion to approve Eichenbaum/Long

Comment: Could it not be alumni of the programs instead of alumnus?

Amend the motion to approve with edits Eichenbaum/Long. Passed

How do we disseminate this resolution? There is no place to announce something on the webpage.

Send to Gina and she will share.

IV. New Business

Major Items

Academic Forgiveness Policy (first reading)

This was sent to me from the Admissions & Credits committee. Do we have anyone on this committee present?

I don't know much more except what was sent. It came to me from the Registrar, with input potentially from Susan Ross and others.

Rick H: Is Susan in the meeting? She is the content expert on this, I worked on it some last year.

Question: If this is a Policy, is the intent also to go to the BoG?

Stephens: I might suggest that there may be a technicality with first reading. It doesn't seem that there is enough understanding of this to constitute it so formally. I learned about it the same way most of you have. While I believe there are good intentions and smart people behind it, I would benefit from knowing more about what is generating this.

Comment: I don't disagree. That would, I think, entail tabling.

Motion to table: Reneau/Niichel. Passed.

Susan joined

Motion to take it off the table. Cuchta

Susan Lost Connection

Motion Rescinded.

Minor Items

COVID-19 Committee charge

Sent this out, I don't think the charge was available until later, but was read to us earlier. What is the will of the group?

Motion to approve the charge as read Long/ Eichenbaum

I will say there is some discussion that is going on in the email about some change in the language, though I don't think everyone is included on that.

Todd: If I can chime in, it was the Provost who suggested changing the language.

Stephens: I wasn't sure how to sneak that in, so I sent it to Chuck and Todd. A few things that gave it a little more of an Academic Affairs focus and a pathway on how the committee through Faculty Senate can communicate concerns. They are welcome to bring it up, I don't have a big urge one way or the other.

Comment: The first sentence is confusing to me. We have already created the committee. I'm not sure I understand the need for this sentence.

Comment: I don't think we created the committee yet, this charge will create the committee formally.

Comment: because there was no charge, that's why this language was created to remain above board.

Comment: I am unclear, this is a minor item so it's only going to have one reading. If suggestions to the language have been made but we can't see them then we can't vote on them.

Comment: Suggestions have not been made by faculty senate.

Comment: Suggestions were made by the Provost.

Comment: The minutes say we had a motion as outlined.

Comment: Yes, the committee was formed and Todd accepted the chairmanship, but there was not a charge. There was discussion about why there was a need, but there was not a formal charge. If we want to strike the first sentence, I don't have a problem with that. I do have a problem if there are other suggestions to the language that we are not privy to, voting to pass it if revisions will still be made.

Comment: I believe the bylaws of the senate that items of business are designated major or minor by the Executive Committee, it also says the president or chair can change the designation at the meeting. Does anybody disagree with that? Point being, I would change it to be a major item so we could look at

it the first time around then discuss it the next time if we are talking about changing the language of the charge.

Comment: I propose we use the language as presented.

Comment: It's section 4, you can change the classification based on a vote of the senators.

Comment: This could be a friendly amendment, particularly since these issues are pressing right now.

Comment: What we are voting on is the statement in the chat. If there is alternate language, it needs to be presented.

Comment: Yes, this is the language that we are currently voting on, what Gina is saying is that we could do a friendly amendment, like removing or changing the first sentence. Or, we can move forward and vote as presented.

Comment: There is actually something else here, If what we are talking about is the first sentence, I don't have a problem making that amendment. My understanding is that Dr. Stephens sent corrections to the language.

Comment: I have sent those suggestions to the membership. I would like the committee to consider the language before bringing them to the membership.

Comment: The committee made the language, so the changes should be presented to the committee. The way out is to go ahead and approve it, even with removing the first sentence, as written and then allow the committee to have the discussion and see if they want to make changes, then bring those back to the senate. Those changes are minor not substantive, and update the language at a later meeting.

Comment: the question before the senate is does this charge as written accurately exemplify what the senate tried to do last time it met - in my mind it does. I don't know what the proposed changes are, but it is within the senate's purview to decide what the charge of the committee is. It's not the committee's charge.

Comment: It is the committee's job to make recommendations of what the charge would be, the motion on the floor is to approve the language as presented. If this committee wants to make suggested changes and make suggestions, they can bring it to the floor during the next meeting. The motion on the floor is to accept this language.

Comment: You can pass this and do the friendly amendment because it is my recollection is that the committee has been created, so the first sentence is not consistent with the history of the committee. So, you could do a friendly amendment eliminating the first sentence, or amending the language showing the committee has been created. Then the committee can consider other changes for amending the charge later.

Motion to amend the resolution to strike the first sentence.

I recommend this: motion to approve the existence of the committee, hammer out the final language with what the Provost recommended.

I don't want to wordsmith, the committee has been created. We don't need that motion. The friendly amendment is the language as is, simply striking the first sentence.

Comment: I would like to add, we would like to consider the language presented by the provost at the meeting Thursday. Would that be considered for the next meeting?

Yes

V. Open Forum

Comment: I received an email from Joy Hatch, she would like to work with the Senate Technology Committee. Is that a standing committee?

Comment: Yes, Josh is the chair.

Comment: Would you contact Joy?

Comment: Yes

Comment: It's clear that we need an accurate list of senators, as far as I know this has never been compiled, so I want to take it upon myself to make this list. If you are a senator, email me. No one has ever told me who is and who isn't.

Question: On Curriculum Committee suddenly there were additional representatives from Business because now SoB has divisions they didn't have before. Nursing now will have 2 people on Curriculum. I wasn't sure what that meant for Senate representation in terms of numbers of faculty. Unless someone has a clear answer on that, that might be something we need to talk about as well.

Comment: I think some of those are people who are willing to serve regardless of where they are from. Some are elected, whereas FS is based on how many faculty numbers they have. That's my initial thought.

Comment: Curriculum is elected; it shouldn't be a free for all.

Comment: Donna, that is correct, but with the reorganization, schools across campus were departments.

Comment: I don't think those changes have been communicated to Senate.

Comment: That's right, Article 5 Section 10 outlines academic units, it doesn't parallel what we have now. This is something for the bylaws committee to look at.

Comment: Susan: The reason for this, my interpretation the bylaws was that there must be a representative from each department for the Curriculum Committee. The reason for this is communication, for what happens in CC to communicate that back to the departments. The best way we can do that is to have a rep from each department on the committee. That's the reason for the composition that went into the CC. In reference to Nursing, Nursing does currently have one member. They don't have specific departments, but they do have 2 programs. The question is, do we let the Dean decide what the best communication pattern to get the information to the faculty with ASN and BSN? That one is unclear if they should have 1 or 2. Other than that, that is the reason for the composition thus far.

Comment: I don't have any problem with them having more than one rep, but the bylaws have to reflect what the representation is. The bylaws don't present that. We need to address that for the bylaws. It's not up to a Dean to determine that, it's up to the bylaws.

Chuck: Obviously there needs to be some work on the bylaws to update to the representation. Donna and I are the only ones that have been working on this. We would appreciate help and any suggestions on how to solicit help.

Comment: For Nursing, we have two on senate. 16 faculty. One from the ASN and one on the BSN.

Comment: Donna and I will work on that. What is the problem with Curriculum Committee?

Susan: My interpretation of the Senate bylaws when deciding membership, it was my understanding that there needed to be one rep from each department on committees of the senate. So, this semester I sent out an email to make sure we had representation from each department.

Comment: I think the bylaws say academic unit, and units are not defined as the Institution is currently organized, which needs to change. The other issue is that you sent that out to ask, how were they chosen?

Comment: Yes, they were elected as it has been done in the past.

Comment: I will say this, there is reference in the bylaws throughout to the associate provost. It's my understanding those duties have been subsumed into what you are currently doing. Is that correct?

Comment: Yes.

Comment: You aren't called the associate provost. We no longer have that but you are undertaking those duties.

Comment: Yes, what Jack Kirby's role was previously with the exception of student conduct.

Comment: I think we're safe if there are references in the bylaws to the Associate Provost in considering that to be Susan. What do you think?

Comment: Yea, I think in the drafting of the revision we have replaced that with the "Executive Director" of whatever... sorry, Susan.

Question: Anything else in Open Forum?

Comment: We had a discussion last time about the tenure process or provisional faculty, temporary faculty. Is there a plan for further action on that?

Comment: I think it was pushed to the Handbook Committee.

Comment: Yea, I think they are addressing that issue. I think you'll see some language in the handbook to address the issue of term. It seems the way this has happened with term faculty is an administrative decision, I don't know senate can do anything except say we don't like that or we do like that. I don't know that we have the authority to change how that happens. But, I could be wrong. If when we present the handbook and it's adopted, then the concept of a term faculty member will be recognized and there will be some language there.

Comment: The minutes from last time say “this is an ongoing discussion we need to have...and may need to follow up on”.

Comment: I will say, the Handbook Committee has addressed that particular issue and there is language that is going into the handbook. I do know that, but, that committee has not presented that language or the proposals to the senate or faculty.

Question: Does the EC have intention to follow up on that before the senate meeting?

Comment: I don’t remember exactly what the minutes say about that. Dr. Stephens’ suggestion was the Handbook Committee would look at that and create language so we wouldn’t have vague contract language. The Handbook Committee is where it will be, I don’t know if it is there yet, there was not a motion. I think Chuck is right, this is somewhat out of our purview. But, it is important enough that we continue to talk about it as a senate, I intend to not let it rest until we have better treatment of our term faculty. That’s my position anyway.

Comment: Yea, I’m confident the EC is interested and invested in the question.

Comment: Maybe we should have the Handbook Committee talk about it at the next meeting, if they have language as Chuck suggested.

Gina: That is a good mechanism, it’s sort of a shared governance issue and the FS working through the Faculty Handbook Committee with the Provost and taking it to the BoG is a good mechanism to address those concerns. You’ve got the provost interacting with the Faculty Handbook Committee, and ultimately the board decides. It’s a good place rather than creating a new committee. You are looking at a committee looking in a global way at matters pertaining to the faculty. It’s a good place to let it rest.

Comment: I know the EC will continue to talk about this, but, any action the Senate takes is a different issue and how we take the action. Keeping the discussion and lines of communication open is certainly something we can do. There is no item of business that the Senate has considered or will be considering by the next meeting. My hesitation about asking the Handbook Committee to come speak is that there is a plan to present the documents to the faculty and senate, but, I don’t know that next month is the time they plan to do that. The EC will follow up on that.

Comment: Will put those on the EC agenda.

Comment: Last month we passed a charge for EC to meet with BoG to talk about program closures, did something come of that?

Comment: Not yet, we will work with our BoG rep to see what we can do to be involved in that process.

Comment: Technology Committee, when I started in that last year we didn’t really do much. To my understanding what that committee did at the time was send out a survey once a year. I think that could be a bigger role now, but, that would require drafting some information about it. There currently isn’t a description of the committee on the website. Does anyone know what the original charge was?

Comment: I don’t know the answer to this, that’s not in the bylaws?

Comment: Not as far as I can tell.

Response: Josh, I don't know. We'd have to do a search of the minutes to find out the charge of that. I do remember there was some discussion, but I don't know what it is.

Comment: The committee can draft a new charge and bring it up to the Senate to approve.

Motion to adjourn Niichel. Cuchta.