

Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting

October 5, 2016 found at

**** The complete recording for this meeting can be found at <http://www.american.edu/facultysenate/agendas-minutes.cfm>*

Present: Professors Todd Eisenstadt, Larry Engel, Andrea Pearson, Karen Baehler, Kyle Brannon, David Banks, Kyle Brannon, Rachel Borchardt, Tim Doud, John Douglass, Chris Edelson, Bryan Fantie, Maria Gomez, John Heywood, Olivia Ivey, Kelly Joyner, Ken Knight, Iris Krasnow, Emily Lindsey, Jun Lu, Cathy Schaeff, Steve Silvia, Kate Wilson, Zehra Peynircioglu, Shalini Venturelli, Provost Scott Bass, DAA Mary L. Clark.

Diversity and Campus Climate Discussions – Student Leaders and Members of the Community

Professor Eisenstadt opened the meeting with a discussion on Diversity and Campus Climate. He stated that there are several student groups that had been invited and are present to speak.

Student Isiah Young stated he was representing the Black Student Alliance. He stated he noticed the lack of color around the table of the Senate, especially that of “black people.”

Student Ma’at Sargeant, the President of the Black Alliance stated that People of Color, (POC) are uncomfortable in every aspect of being on this campus. There are fears in and out of the classroom and in the dorms. She expressed that students feel that faculty do not understand the depth of race, be it historical or micro aggressions. Ma’at expressed that POC’s are tired of having to teach about these issues. It is very stressful sitting in a classroom that faculty are not prepared to address problematic issues.

Student German Figueroa from the Student Workers Alliance said that American University is a great platform to make change. He expressed that he “loves his school” but does not feel he has received that love back. He also stated that his organization has started working with the athletics department to address similar things that are happening across the country. Yesterday they had a moment of silence for all the recent victims of violence. He asked that the faculty take time to get to know at least one student that is of a different ethnicity than themselves and learning about who they are will help them learn how to teach to that ethnicity. This will give faculty a better understanding of their students.

Student Government President Devontae Torriente thanked the Senate for the invitation to come speak. He continued to say that black students wear two different hats here at AU. The hat of a student and the hat of an educator. Often the burden is pushed on black students to educate their peers and the faculty. It is demoralizing and humiliating for faculty to use students of color to be a teaching tool in the classroom. He also expressed that the mental health aspect of these issues is largely being ignored. Trigger warnings (TW) are a fundamental component of mental health.

Devonte expressed that he feels that TW would help with all the various mental health stressors in the classroom and insure students are able to be just students.

Further comments from students included lack of role models of the same color in the classrooms. There are more people that look like the POC's in the dining halls. Unfair treatment is on this campus for the workers of color, the students and probably the few professors of color. Concern was expressed on mental health needing to be affordable and accessible.

Professor and chair of the President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) Caleen Jennings stated that one of the committee's first initiatives that is being worked on is to gather a group of faculty who will go into the resident halls and hold a series of chats and listening sessions to allow the students to see the faculty of color and allies here at AU and to give students the opportunity to interact with the faculty outside of the classroom. Professor Jennings closed by saying that they hear the students concerns and are looking forward to hearing more as they get this committee up and running.

Professor Engel asked the students to elaborate on the issue of stress and mental health and why do they feel that it is expensive and hard to access support through campus life?

Student Ma'at Sargeant stated that she has spoken with many students, and not only students of color, and has been told that it is hard to get counseling appointments in a timely manner. She also mentioned that she has been told that there is not any representation of color in the counseling center and students find it hard to speak to those not of color about the issues they are dealing with. Also, emergencies can expedite visits but who determines what someone's emergency is? Ma'at also said that the cost is \$90 dollars after a certain amount of visits and that is not affordable for college students.

Further discussions continued amongst the students and faculty on other examples of the issues that POC's are experiencing, student counseling, educating faculty and more representation of faculty of color at the university.

Provost Bass stated that the faculty of color is lower than the university would like it to be as well as it is a national issue. The schools and college are working hard to bring more people of color to the faculty across campus as well as to the administration but it does take time and effort. He also stated that it is a high priority.

Dean of Academic Affairs Mary L. Clark followed with some statistics of where this initiative is at this time with the AU faculty. She also stated that she continues to look at the candidate pools and those that are interviewed and will be something she will continue to do.

Librarian Jefferson and chair of the Faculty Diversity Working Group (FDWG) stated that he was very troubled by the issues that have been happening on campus. Additionally, the FDWG will be working with the PCDI so that together they can address and find solutions to the many

issues that are being expressed here today. He also stated that he feels his “blackness” every day on the AU campus and truly does understand how students are feeling.

Professor Enchautegui De Jesus also stated that the FDWG is working on the connection and relationships with students and faculty and how to strengthen those relationships. The group will be collecting information to share with the community as a way to help address the very concerning issues that are being expressed.

Chair’s Report – Todd Eisenstadt

Professional Eisenstadt asked the Senators if there was any discussion or comments on the September 14, 2016 minutes. There was not discussion so the Senate **VOTED** 21-0-0 in favor.

Provost’s Report – Scott Bass

Provost Bass stated the following items;

- The racial climate on campus is challenging. There are deep issues and we will continue to work to address them and make students feel more welcome. These are all issues that are being addressed as part of the RiSE initiative. Student evaluations and the written evaluations provided by students need to be addressed as well especially on how to access them in order to respond to the concerns that the students are sharing.
- The retreat is approaching and will be another opportunity to address these concerns and find many work on ways to address them.
- Airlee House is now a part of the University and a place that can be used for many events. Units might consider visiting and planning conferences there.

Committee on Faculty Grievances Faculty Manual Change – Larry Engel

This issue will not be addressed at this meeting and will be brought back at a later time.

Senate Standing and Committee’s Annual Reports

Committee on Faculty Grievances (CFG) – Larry Engel for Co- Chairs Stacey Marien and Don Williamson

The Committee report stated that one case was reviewed. Current Faculty Manual language regarding conflict of interest is being edited and the hope will be that it is brought back to the Senate in November.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) – Maria Gomez

Professor Gomez stated that the UCC evaluated 24 new courses over the academic year and that the majority were from CAS. In May the committee received 53 new courses. One course was not approved at the VPUG review stage which occurs before it is sent to the committee.

Graduate Curriculum Committee – Jun Lu

Professor Lu stated that his committee has managed to meet the two week turn around unless there were changes that needed to be made. During the last academic year the committee reviewed 9 program proposals, 39 course proposals which included 4 online proposals and 24 online course proposals. Over the summer 20 plus proposals were submitted for review.

Committee on Academic Budget and Benefits – Olivia Ivey

Librarian Ivey stated that the committee did not meet as much last year as it was an off budget cycle year. The committee has two sides which include the benefits side and the budget side. On the budget side the committee meets with HR to review changes to health insurance and evaluate costs and the new retirement plan. The budget side included follow up on previous recommendations that were made which included the status of the Term Faculty salary initiative, technology updates, Gen Ed changes, the Ombuds position proposal and the committee began setting new budget items for the coming year.

Committee on Faculty Actions – Steve Silvia

Professor Silvia stated the committee reviewed 54 files of all types. The committee also continues its work on reviewing the unit guidelines which 5 did not complete the year before. There is one are remaining and will be completed in 2016. Professor Silvia also stated that he has been working with on the Ad-Hoc Term Faculty Faculty Manual Committee to address the concerns of promotion and tenure.

Committee on Learning Assessment – David Banks

Professor Banks stated that the committee received 77 reports and were missing 32. 11 courses had no reports at all. The committee is working with communication with the departments to help make it clear on how to prepare the reports. Workshops and training is being planned to help make the process more understanding for everyone.

University Budget – Todd Eisenstadt

Professor Eisenstadt stated that there are three resolution drafts that have been prepared to address the during the budget process. Discussion by the Senators was had and editorial changes were made within the resolutions. After completion of discussion it was decided to move the resolutions forward to be presented for the upcoming budget negotiations consideration.

Resolution 1

*Given that the annual faculty and staff merit increase (as a percentage of increase in base pay) has averaged only 0.75 percent per year over the last two years, whereas the cost of living during that two-year period is projected at twice that amount, and given that the increases during the prior decade (from FY06 to FY16) was over four times that rate, or 3.17 percent, the Faculty Senate resolves to ask the University Budget Committee and Board of Trustees to offer a faculty and staff merit increase, in base salaries, during each of the two years of the budget, sufficient to offset inflation and overcome the salary stagnation of the last two years. While we understand that merit raises are not related to the cost of living, we do fear that failure to offer meaningful raises as part of a comprehensive budget will hurt the university's competitive hiring and retention. The Senate **VOTED** and the resolution was passed 20-0-2 in favor.*

Resolution 2

*To maintain and improve levels of academic programming and service, the Faculty Senate recognizes the need for a tuition increase as part of the FY2017-19 American University budget. The Senate **VOTED** and the resolution was passed 16-0-4 in favor.*

Resolution 3

*American University's doctoral stipends are traditionally low compared to our peer institutions and competitors. Given the need to successfully recruit doctoral students to maintain the university's hard fought status as a strong research university, the Faculty Senate advocates giving priority consideration to this matter in planning for the FY2017-19 American University budget. The Senate **VOTED** and the resolution passed 16-0-2 in favor.*