

## WCU Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 2.9.2024

**Time:** 3:00-5:00 pm

**Location:** Science and  
Engineering Commons  
Room 101A

**Facilitator:** Israel Sanz-Sánchez, President

**Note Taker:** Selen Razon, Recording Secretary

**Type of Meeting:** Scheduled meeting

### Attendees

#### Senators

❖ Benedict, Kristopher	Present	❖ Metz, Stacie	Absent
❖ Bolton, David	Present	❖ Mishra, Vipanchi	Present
❖ Brenner, Jim	Present	❖ Mraz, Megan	Present
❖ Chen, Tianran	Present	❖ Panagiotidou, Eirini	Present
❖ Cherry, Dan	Present	❖ Panichelli, Meg	Present
❖ Childs, Gary	Present	❖ Park, Innhwa	Present
❖ Cooke, Laquana	Absent	❖ Pierlott, Matt	Present
❖ Daltry, Rachel	Present	❖ Razon, Selen	Present
❖ Du, Wei	Absent	❖ Ruchti, Simon	Present
❖ Forbes, Dan	Present	❖ Sanz-Sánchez, Israel	Present
❖ Garthwait, Clayton	Present	❖ Sawyer, William	Absent
❖ Grasseti, Stevie	Absent	❖ Schugar, Heather	Present
❖ Guerriero, Tara	Present	❖ Selvarathinam, Priya	Present
❖ Hill, Erin	Present	❖ Smidt, Esther	Present
❖ Hodes, Jackie	Present	❖ Stokes, Jordan	Present
❖ Houser, Mary	Present	❖ Tennille, Julie	Present
❖ Junius, Premalatha	Present	❖ Wade, Michelle	Present
❖ Kolasinski, Kurt	Present	❖ Watkins, Karen	Present
❖ Lawton, Bessie	Absent	❖ Wiest, Julie	Present
❖ Lightner, Sarah	Present	❖ Wilbur, Veronica	Present

#### Representatives

❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Bill Sawyer	Absent
❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Priya Selvarathinam	Present
❖ APSCUF Representative: Bessie Lawton (Alternate: Julie Wiest )	Absent
❖ Student Government Association Representative: Caleb Winters	Present
❖ Graduate Student Association Representative: Amah Ensume	Absent
❖ ROTC Representative: Salamatu Dumbuya	Absent

#### **Senate Proxies**

❖ Edelblute, Heather	Not present
❖ Howard, Rick	Present, proxy for Wei Du
❖ Kaulback, Michelle	Present, not proxying
❖ Mohajeri, Orkideh	Present, proxy for Bessie Lawton
❖ O'Brien, Lia	Not present
❖ Owens, Jackie	Present, no proxying
❖ Patriarca, Ashley	Not present
❖ Tully, Greg	Not present
❖ Van Liew, Maria	Not present
❖ Whidden, Melissa	Not present
❖ Matthew Kruger-Ross	Not present

#### **Guests In Attendance**

**Margaret Ervin:** President APSCUF

**Kelly Goodman:** Instructor

#### **Invited Guests In Attendance**

**Jen Bacon:** Arts and Humanities, Dean

**Jill Dixon:** University Libraries, Dean

**Christopher Hanning:** Wells School of Music, Dean

**Scott Heinerichs:** Health Sciences, Dean

**Evan Leach:** Business and Public Management, Dean

**Jessica O'Shaughnessy:** Sciences and Mathematics, Dean

**Desha Williams:** Education and Social Work, Dean

#### **Agenda**

Welcome to Senators, Proxies, and Guests

#### **Guest #1: Dean's Panel**

Dean Bacon kicked off the discussion by providing an overview statement on **how the deans operate**. Dean Bacon emphasized the importance of transparency and open communication among the deans, highlighting their collaborative efforts to share information and insights. She touched upon the processes and rituals established within the deans' group, focusing on the structured approach they take to discuss and address operational matters. Dean Bacon mentioned the significance of chunking information and sharing specific details during their meetings to ensure clarity and understanding among the deans. She also elaborated on the decision-making processes within the colleges and how the deans work together to handle overload effectively. Dean Bacon emphasized the need for clear communication channels and collaboration with faculty members and chairs to ensure a balanced workload distribution and maintain instructional quality.

Furthermore, Dean Bacon discussed the collaborative nature of decision-making within the deans' group, highlighting the inclusive approach they take in involving faculty members in shaping policies and initiatives. Dean Bacon's speech underscored the commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, where shared governance and active participation from all stakeholders play a vital role in driving the university's success.

Next, Dean Heinerichs provided insights into the discussions held around managing workload, and class sizes effectively, highlighting the challenges and considerations involved in making decisions related to course sections and instructional resources. Dean Heinerichs emphasized the importance of addressing **overload issues** and ensuring a balance between workload distribution and instructional quality within the College of Health Sciences. Specifically, Dean Heinerichs outlined the different types of overloads, credit course overload and prep overload, to provide clarity on the challenges and considerations involved in exceeding credit limits for a given semester.

Dean Heinerichs explained the nuances of credit course overload and prep overload, highlighting the eligibility criteria and decision-making processes involved in managing overload situations within the college. Dean Heinerichs emphasized the need for faculty members to be willing to take on overload assignments and discussed the factors that influence the allocation of overload opportunities, such as specialized accreditation requirements or expertise within the department. He touched upon the implications of overload on faculty workload and compensation, mentioning the process of load leveling and credit distribution for faculty members experiencing overload situations. Dean Heinerichs also addressed the importance of balancing faculty workload through strategic decision-making and resource allocation to maintain instructional quality and operational efficiency within the College of Health Sciences.

Dean Heinerichs also mentioned specific events and listening sessions scheduled within the college, inviting participation from faculty members and stakeholders to engage in discussions and provide feedback. Dean Heinerichs touched upon the upcoming sessions geared towards faculty and the opportunities for participation either via Zoom or in person. Finally, he expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts and support from colleagues, acknowledging the benefits of sharing best practices and insights with other institutions. Dean Heinerichs emphasized the value of learning from different perspectives and approaches to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness within the college.

Next, Dean Leach focused on the topic of **class size** within the academic context. Dean Leach initiated the conversation by addressing the critical issue of class size and its impact on the quality of education. Dean Leach highlighted the importance of maintaining appropriate class sizes to ensure effective teaching and learning experiences for both students and faculty members. Then, Dean Leach delved into the challenges associated with class size, particularly in the context of graduate classes specifically within the College of Business. Dean Leach mentioned that some graduate classes were running high in terms of enrollment, leading to potential constraints on the learning environment and faculty-student interaction.

Dean Leach discussed the proactive measures taken to address the issue of high class sizes in graduate classes. Dean Leach mentioned that a concerted effort was made to adjust the class sizes by collaborating with faculty, department chairs, and other stakeholders to optimize the learning experience for students while maintaining pedagogical standards. He emphasized the importance of collaborative and strategic conversations between deans, chairs, and faculty members when addressing class size issues. Dean Leach highlighted the need for transparent communication, data-driven decision-making, and collective efforts to ensure that class sizes align with educational objectives and student needs. He also underscored the significance of optimizing class sizes to create conducive learning environments that promote student engagement, participation, and academic success. Dean Leach discussed the positive outcomes of adjusting class sizes based on data analysis and feedback from stakeholders to enhance the overall educational experience.

Dean Leach concluded by emphasizing the value of continuous improvement in monitoring and adjusting class sizes based on evolving requirements and feedback. Dean Leach reiterated the commitment to ongoing evaluation and refinement of class size policies to support effective teaching practices and student-centered learning approaches.

Next, Dean Hanning covered the topic of **professional development** within the academic setting. Dean Hanning highlighted the significance of professional development for faculty members within the college. Dean Hanning emphasized the role of ongoing professional growth in enhancing teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and overall academic excellence. Additionally, he delved into various initiatives and programs aimed at promoting

professional development among faculty members. Dean Hanning mentioned workshops, seminars, conferences, and other opportunities designed to support faculty in advancing their skills, knowledge, and expertise in their respective fields. Next, he elaborated on the importance of taking a strategic approach to professional development, aligning individual faculty goals with institutional objectives and priorities. Dean Hanning discussed the need for tailored professional development plans that cater to the diverse needs and aspirations of faculty members across different disciplines. He also highlighted the value of collaborative learning and networking in fostering professional development. Dean Hanning emphasized the benefits of engaging in interdisciplinary collaborations, sharing best practices, and building a community of scholars dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation. He touched upon the allocation of resources and support for professional development initiatives. Dean Hanning discussed the availability of funding, grants, and institutional support to facilitate faculty participation in professional development activities, ensuring that faculty have access to the necessary resources to enhance their academic growth. He connected professional development efforts to student success outcomes. Dean Hanning emphasized that faculty members' continuous growth and development directly contribute to the quality of education and support provided to students, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience and academic achievement.

Dean Hanning concluded by emphasizing the importance of feedback and evaluation mechanisms in assessing the effectiveness of professional development programs. Dean Hanning encouraged faculty members to provide feedback on the existing initiatives and suggested avenues for improvement to ensure that professional development efforts align with the evolving needs of the academic community.

Next, Dean Williams addressed the allocation of **AWAs** (Additional Work Assignments) and their connection to the CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement). She elaborated on the allocation of AWAs within the academic unit, emphasizing that different colleges have varying accreditation requirements and specific needs that impact the distribution of AWAs. Dean Williams mentioned that some AWAs are designated for administrators such as assistant chairs, accreditation tasks, and graduate coordination. Additionally, Dean Williams highlighted the discretionary use of AWAs for specific purposes within the college.

Then, Dean Williams discussed the collaborative process undertaken to reallocate AWAs based on the unique needs of each college. Dean Williams mentioned working in collaboration with other deans to determine the allocation of AWAs and ensure that they are utilized effectively to support various administrative functions and responsibilities within the academic unit. She touched upon the challenge of allocating AWAs funded by grants, as the number of grants awarded can vary, leading to uncertainty in budgeting for AWAs. Dean Williams mentioned potential strategies to separate grant-funded AWA dollars from the overall allocation, allowing for more flexibility in incorporating AWAs into grant proposals and budgets.

Then, Dean Williams addressed the potential implications of incorporating AWA-related provisions into the CBA. Dean Williams discussed the possibility of certain AWA-related tasks currently covered by discretionary AWAs becoming part of the contractual obligations in the future. Dean Williams added that this shift could impact the overall pool of AWAs available and the way they are allocated within the academic unit. Finally, she highlighted the importance of balancing budgets and financial resources to accommodate AWA allocations, particularly in light of potential changes resulting from the CBA negotiations. Dean Williams emphasized the need to strategically plan for funding new AWAs, especially those designated for assistant chairs, and ensuring that financial resources are allocated appropriately to support these positions.

Dean Dixon focused on the topic of the **student planning process and the importance of gathering feedback** from faculty and staff to enhance student engagement and academic success. Dean Dixon introduced the concept of the student planning process within the university setting. Dean Dixon highlighted the significance of proactive planning and engagement to support students in their academic journey and ensure a positive learning experience. To that end, Dean Dixon emphasized the collaborative efforts undertaken with the library faculty and staff to initiate the student planning process. She stressed the importance of involving faculty members and staff in the decision-making process to gather diverse perspectives and insights that contribute to the development of effective student planning strategies.

Dean Dixon mentioned the organization of listening sessions aimed at gathering feedback and input from faculty members regarding the student planning process. Dean Dixon added that these sessions were designed to create opportunities for open dialogue, idea exchange, and active participation from faculty members to shape the planning process in alignment with educational goals and student needs. She further informed the Senate about an upcoming faculty session scheduled

for February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9 am to further engage faculty members in the student planning process. Dean Dixon encouraged participation either via Zoom or in person, emphasizing the value of faculty input and collaboration in shaping student-centric planning initiatives.

Dean Dixon also underscored the inclusive and collaborative nature of the student planning process, highlighting the importance of involving faculty members, staff, and other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive feedback and diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making. Dean Dixon emphasized the collective responsibility of the university community to enhance student experiences through effective planning and engagement efforts. She concluded by expressing the university's commitment to continuous improvement and ongoing engagement with faculty and staff in the student planning process. Dean Dixon reiterated the importance of fostering a participatory culture where feedback, ideas, and recommendations from all stakeholders are valued and integrated into planning strategies to support student success and academic excellence.

Next, Dean O'Shaughnessy acknowledged position as a new dean within the university. Dean O'Shaughnessy expressed enthusiasm and commitment to contributing positively to the department and collaborating with faculty and staff to enhance academic initiatives and student experiences. She provided an overview of recent or upcoming programs within the university including The BS in physical education moving from Health to Education as well as several new BS: in supply chain management, business analytics, as well as a new neurobiology minor that is in progress.

At this point, Dean Bacon stepped in and emphasized the need for collaboration and strategic thinking, particularly as the university's enrollment has leveled off. The Dean highlighted the importance of working together as a faculty to serve the students effectively rather than competing for enrollment. One key aspect discussed was the concept of "moonshot block scheduling," which refers to a strategic scheduling approach aimed at achieving ambitious goals.

Regarding AWAs, Dean Bacon mentioned a significant shift in thinking, which stemmed from insights gained by observing the practices of others. The Dean credited Dean Heinerichs for this shift, suggesting that exposure to different approaches may lead to new possibilities. The Dean explained that traditionally, AWA funding was often embedded within grants, which posed challenges due to uncertainty about grant funding levels and allocation. The Dean described the difficulties in planning AWA resources when they were contingent on grant success and how this impacted faculty workload and project planning. The Dean added that there is now an initiative to separate grant-funded AWA allocations from the main grant budget. This change is expected to offer more flexibility for faculty to incorporate AWA into grant proposals without the constraints of uncertain funding allocations. This development is viewed as positive, providing opportunities for faculty to pursue research projects without the added pressure of figuring out how to accommodate AWA requirements within grant budgets.

Finally, Dean Bacon mentioned the establishment of college-level liaisons within the Office of Research to assist faculty in identifying grant opportunities. The Dean added that the university has also partnered with external organizations such as McAllister & Quinn, to identify federal grant opportunities. These initiatives aim to support faculty research endeavors and supplement professional development efforts.

During the Q&A session, senators raised concerns about the drop in class sizes and its impact on different departments across the university, seeking clarification on whether this drop in class sizes was uniform across all colleges or varied depending on the department.

Dean Leach responded by explaining that while class averages have decreased slightly over the past decade, it is not a consistent trend across all departments or colleges. He provided insights from his college, stating that in some departments, class sizes have decreased compared to the previous year, while in others, they have increased. Dean Leach emphasized that these fluctuations are part of strategic decisions made in collaboration with faculty and the dean's office. Dean Leach cited an example from his college where the economics and finance department opted for larger lecture classes, driving their numbers up, while another department received relief by lowering the capstone course size.

Senators further inquired about how decisions are made regarding which departments experience changes in class sizes. Dean Heinerichs responded, explaining that class size averages are determined annually based on the number of enrolled students and the credit hours produced. Dean Heinerichs emphasized the importance of maintaining consistent class size

averages across colleges without compromising pedagogy, which involves collaborative efforts between deans and department chairs. Dean Heinerichs provided an example from the nursing department, where changes in class sizes were influenced by clinical requirements and the introduction of new programs. Dean Leach added that the introduction of new programs also affects class size distribution. He explained how specialized courses in newly introduced programs initially have low enrollments, but over time, they contribute to changes in class size averages.

At this point, senators expressed concerns about departments struggling to retain students due to insufficient course offerings and highlighted the challenges faced by the philosophy department and the impact of rising class sizes on their ability to sustain enrollment.

Dean Bacon intervened to provide additional context, stating that the university's overall class size ratio is determined at the chancellor's level. Dean Bacon explained the institution's sustainability measures and the target class size ratio, which has remained consistent over the past decade. Dean Bacon acknowledged the importance of addressing disparities in class sizes between departments and the ongoing efforts to balance pedagogical consistency across disciplines.

In the following Q&A exchange between Senate President Israel Sanz-Sánchez and Dean Bacon, Israel initiated the discussion by acknowledging the ongoing negotiations for the contract and the uncertainty regarding its details. Israel expressed curiosity about potential changes in the allocation of AWAs if certain aspects currently covered by discretionary AWAs were to become embedded in the contract.

Dean Bacon responded to Israel's inquiry, indicating that Jeff Osgood had discussed this matter extensively. Dean Bacon added that AWAs would likely still be included in the new contract if ratified, particularly for roles like assistant chairs, which might not have been covered before. However, Dean Bacon suggested that the overall pool of AWAs at WCU might not change significantly for the next year unless there were drastic alterations to the budget. She also highlighted that while the university would likely maintain a similar AWA budget, internal decisions could still be made regarding priorities and resource allocation. The Dean emphasized that AWAs, along with other factors like class sizes, professional development, and grant opportunities, are considerations for managing within the available funds. Additionally, Dean Bacon added that if more AWAs were included in the contract, there might be fewer discretionary ones available, but anticipated that the overall impact might not be significant.

Following, a senator raised a question concerning the process for managing maternity leave in conjunction with AWAs. The senator mentioned a colleague who was due to have a baby at the end of the summer and was unsure about available options for managing the latter part of the semester following the FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) coverage.

Dean Williams responded, detailing the process to determine the allocation of AWAs for faculty members on maternity leave. Dean Williams explained that the calculation involved assessing the number of weeks the faculty member would be on leave and converting it into AWA hours. These AWAs were then utilized for special projects, particularly those related to accreditation, ensuring that faculty members on leave remained engaged in academic activities. Regarding the process for initiating discussions about maternity leave and AWAs, Dean Williams suggested that faculty members should begin by consulting with their department chair. This initial conversation would involve expressing the intention to return to work and exploring available options. The Dean emphasized the importance of proactive communication to ensure smooth transitions for students and faculty alike.

Dean Bacon added to the discussion, highlighting the pedagogical considerations involved in managing maternity leave and AWAs. The Dean reinforced the notion of starting the conversation with the department chair and dean's office, emphasizing consistency in approach across different departments.

Several discussions and Q&As followed :

Discussion on AWAs and Budget Allocation: A senator requested clarification from Dean Bacon regarding the budget implications of potential changes in AWAs due to the ratified contract. They asked whether if assistant chairs were included in the contract, the funding would come from PASSHE or the university. Dean Bacon explained that when a new contract is ratified, PASSHE doesn't allocate additional funds to the university based on the contract's terms. Instead, it's

the university's responsibility to manage the implementation of the contract with existing funds. Dean Bacon emphasized that despite the university's prudent financial management, any new AWAs mandated by the contract would require funding adjustments within the university's budget. Additionally, Dean Bacon highlighted that if the contract mandates AWAs for assistant chairs, it might not significantly impact the university's AWA pool as many departments already allocate AWAs to assistant chairs. Dean Bacon acknowledged the possibility of decreased discretion in AWA allocation if the contract introduces new mandates, but assured transparency in decision-making.

Funding Sources for AWAs and Classroom Ratios: Dean Heinerichs elaborated on the funding sources for AWAs and clarified that PASSHE determines ratios based on enrollment, which influences budget allocation. Dean Heinerichs explained that AWAs funded by grants would be separated from operational funds, preventing PASSHE from considering them in instructional cost calculations. Other deans also emphasized the limitation on tuition increases as a funding mechanism, highlighting the importance of fundraising. Dean Bacon and Dean Heinerichs underscored the involvement of deans in fundraising efforts and the need for strategic approval of fundraising projects.

Enhancing Transparency and Communication: There was a proposal for improving transparency by making information more accessible, possibly through a centralized website or FAQ section. Senators suggested data visualization tools for better understanding, which Dean Bacon agreed were feasible and beneficial. Discussions also touched upon the challenges of keeping information current and accessible while maintaining confidentiality. Ideas included utilizing a digital platform like D2L for information dissemination and establishing protocols for fundraising initiatives.

Enrollment Management and Demographic Trends: Dean Bacon expressed confidence in enrollment management strategies, citing increased applications and first-year enrollments post-COVID. Dean Heinerichs highlighted the sophisticated projection models used to anticipate enrollment trends and the importance of retention efforts. Both deans emphasized the significance of strategic enrollment management and continuous monitoring of enrollment metrics.

Response to Proposed Higher Education Reorganization: Regarding the proposed reorganization of public higher education in Pennsylvania, Dean Bacon mentioned the establishment of a task force to address the issue, indicating representation from PASSHE and various stakeholders. Dean Bacon emphasized the importance of partnership and collaboration in navigating potential changes, while awaiting further details. Margaret Ervin from the APSCUF perspective highlighted the need for solidarity among unions in response to the proposed reorganization. The Deans then left the room.

At this point, Israel opened the floor for reactions to the deans' presentation.

Senators expressed thoughts regarding the presence of new deans and whether their relatively recent appointments might affect the dynamic within the administration. They were particularly interested in understanding if the new deans conform to the existing structure or if they bring fresh perspectives. Others chimed in, acknowledging the challenge of posing such questions effectively without causing discomfort or putting the new deans on the spot. Israel acknowledged this point and suggested that individual conversations might elicit different responses compared to a group setting.

Shifting focus, some senators expressed confusion regarding the allocation of AWAs and suggest that providing concrete examples could help clarify the process. Israel expanded on this point by discussing the issue of overload and how decisions are made regarding task assignments. Israel highlighted the importance of transparency and clear criteria for making such decisions.

Senators raised concerns about transparency, suggesting that overly positive presentations might obscure underlying issues and pointing out that the use of jargon and passive voice in communications can hinder understanding and create a perception of secrecy. Other senators echoed concerns about transparency and communication within the university.

The distinction between faculty members and librarians is brought up, with some Senators asserting that librarians should be considered as faculty and treated accordingly. Israel acknowledged the importance of the discussion and encouraged Senators to funnel their feedback through him for transmission to the administration.

## **Senate Business and Announcements**

1. Approval of minutes from Faculty Senate meeting on 12.08.2023.

Minutes approved.

2. Meeting updates:

Meeting with Interim Provost Osgood and Interim Deputy Provost Bacon: Monday, January 29, 10:00-11:00 am, in person.

Meeting with President Fiorentino: Monday, January 29, 3:00-4:00 pm, on Zoom.

### **1. Spring 24 enrollment and faculty ratio updates**

The Provost/Deputy Provost reported that the spring 2024 enrollment exceeded the target, reaching about 205,000 SCH (student credit hours). Despite a slightly lower enrollment compared to the fall semester, which is typical, the overall outlook is positive. The faculty/student ratio stands at about 25, with no distinction made between regular and adjunct faculty ratios. Section planning for the spring semester has improved significantly compared to the previous year, thanks to a more conservative scheduling approach by deans and a streamlined process for adding sections only if necessary. Regarding housing, the university aims for transparency and is exploring modular housing options for the M1 parking lot, aligning with the new facilities master plan.

The President expressed satisfaction with the spring enrollment and stability. For Fall 2024, the goal is to stabilize close to the levels seen in Fall 2019. Retention rates are also positive, contributing to overall enrollment stability.

### **2. PASSHE updates and reactions to announcement by Governor Shapiro**

The Provost/Deputy Provost provided insights into the ongoing discussions about the restructuring of PASSHE (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education) and the potential merger with community colleges. While there's no public reaction from the university, there's a working group tasked with providing input into the system's redesign. An allocations committee is being formed to develop a new funding formula based on graduation rates and performance measures, with the aim of full implementation by July 2025. The uncertainty lies in legislative approval and the source of increased funding.

The President expressed a mixture of optimism and concern regarding the restructuring plan. While increased funding is welcomed, questions remain about its distribution and the implications of structural changes. He emphasized the importance of maintaining autonomy and ensuring the best interests of the university.

### **3. Reactions to tentative agreement between PASSHE and APSCUF**

The Provost/Deputy Provost acknowledged the tentative agreement and expressed satisfaction with the progress.

The President is pleased with the tentative agreement and awaits the union members' vote.

### **4. Status of campus facilities master plan taskforce**

The Provost/Deputy Provost mentioned that updates on the facilities master plan task force are provided, highlighting Ewing Cole's involvement in exploring housing options. The steering committee and working groups are actively engaged, aiming to produce recommendations by May 2024. The President added that the process will be extensive, with a focus on both new facilities and addressing deferred maintenance.

The President underscored the importance of constituency representatives' input in the facilities planning process and mentions the complexity of housing planning, expected to extend into the next year.

## **5. Updates re: ASA Center**

The Provost/Deputy Provost mentioned that feedback received in January is acknowledged, appreciating the Committee for Advising Excellence's work. There's recognition of the need for clarity regarding non-faculty involvement in the program.

## **6. Status of search for VP of Student Affairs**

The President provided updates on the search committee's progress in selecting a new VP of Student Affairs.

## **7. Update on PETAL program for new faculty**

The Provost/Deputy Provost mentioned that positive feedback is shared about the PETAL program, highlighting its role in supporting new faculty with pedagogy.

## **8. Plan for transition for Laurie's cabinet**

The Provost/Deputy Provost mentioned that plans for Laurie's cabinet transition involve her active participation in key decisions, including the VP for Student Affairs position. A transition committee will be formed to assess needs and priorities.

The President assured readiness to assist with Laurie's transition if needed.

## **9. Status of revision to strategic plan draft**

The President mentioned that the strategic plan draft is nearing completion after incorporating input from various stakeholders, ready for discussion at the upcoming cabinet meeting

Some of the points made during Israel's presentation included:

Margaret Ervin shared insights about the governor's stance on the regional campuses and emphasized the importance of having a strong voice in the ongoing discussions. Margaret suggested that the underlying issue driving the proposed changes is the governor's personal agenda to advance his career rather than a genuine commitment to education. The senators acknowledged Margaret's points and express concern about the rapid timelines associated with the proposed changes. Israel clarified that the proposed changes are focused on performance-based funding rather than simply rewarding universities with higher enrollments. Israel explained that metrics such as graduation rates will play a significant role in determining funding allocations.

Israel also expressed concern about smaller universities potentially struggling to compete under the new performance-based funding model, particularly in comparison to state-related universities, which may have an advantage due to their selectivity and different missions.

Margaret Ervin added to the discussion by highlighting the emphasis on certain fields in the proposed funding model and suggests that it reflects a heavy-handed approach from the governor. The senators discussed the additional metric of tracking where students go after graduation and express uncertainty about how well their institution currently tracks such data. Israel acknowledged concerns about potential savings and clarified that the proposed changes are not solely focused on structural changes but also include considerations about funding allocations.

Israel provided an update on the campus facilities master plan, explaining the role of the steering committee in providing feedback to the planning company, Ewing Cole. Israel mentioned the complexity of the housing component and the involvement of the incoming university president, Laurie.

Senators raised concerns about the size of lecture halls and suggested the need for larger spaces to accommodate certain classes effectively. Israel reiterated the extensive nature of the planning process and emphasized the intention to address various needs across the campus effectively.

Margaret Ervin confirmed that the draft language of the new contract provides more clarity, which is helpful for delineating responsibilities between faculty and non-faculty staff. Margaret Ervin also expressed concerns about the potential impact of the governor's plans on regional campuses, emphasizing the political nature of the decision-making process.

There was discussion about the proposed changes in funding allocation based on performance metrics like graduation rates rather than total enrollment. Israel highlighted concerns about competition with state-related universities under a performance-based funding model. Margaret Ervin brought up additional metrics proposed by the governor, such as tracking students' career paths post-graduation, further complicating the funding model.

To Israel's update on the progress of the campus facilities master plan, explaining the role of the steering committee and working groups in its development, concerns were raised about classroom sizes and the need for larger lecture halls to accommodate growing student numbers.

To PETAL program and faculty development updates, Senator Daltry mentioned that the participation of four individuals from the counseling center and library in the PETAL program, highlighting the need for adjustments to make the program more inclusive for non-classroom faculty members.

Discussion also revolved around plans for the presidential transition and Jeff's remaining as interim provost for the first year of the new president. Concerns were raised about the condition of Tanglewood and the need for renovations, reflecting on Laurie's intention to lead by example.

### 3. Additional announcements and items:

Israel announced the establishment of a liaison with the External Relations office. Michelle Wade volunteers to serve as the liaison with External Relations, which is welcomed by the Senate.

Orkideh Mohajeri is selected as the Senate representative for the new round of search committee for the Vice President of Student Affairs.

Committee chairs/co-chairs are reminded to send questions/items for the attention of university administration to the executive committee for inclusion in Senate agendas.

These was a discussion on the upcoming elections for expiring terms on the Senator roster. The importance of considering re-running if one's term is expiring and encourages colleagues to run for a seat was emphasized. Plans were discussed with regards to reach out to faculty whose terms are expiring in 2024 to encourage them to run for re-election.

A suggestion was made to intentionally market the elections and reach out to potential candidates across the university to ensure enough candidates for the available seats. The importance of having extra candidates on the list was highlighted to address any vacancies that may arise during the term. Plans were also made to invite potential candidates to the next meeting and walk them through the election process. The timeline for the election process, including the call for nominations, was discussed.

#### Other Announcements:

An update from the facility master plan regarding the construction of temporary student housing was shared. The housing will be constructed in the M1 lot, behind the Matlack garage, dispelling potential confusion about its location.

Office of Research and sponsored programs will hold workshops on March 4th and 5th in room 409 of the FHG library, as well as on March 20th via Zoom in the evening. Refreshments will be provided during the live events.

Israel reminded senators about the upcoming open forum with administration scheduled for Monday, February 26th. Israel mentioned that the event will be held on Zoom from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Israel encouraged Senators to share any questions or concerns they may have for administration during the forum.

Israel also reminded about the next Senate meeting and future meetings, which will be conducted on Zoom. Israel also mentioned that the remaining meetings are scheduled for March 29th and April 26th.

In closing remarks, committee chairs are encouraged to stay in touch with committee members and share any items for administration's attention.

Details about the next official Senate meeting, and an open forum with administration, were reiterated.

Israel adjourned the meeting thanking everyone.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Membership & Elections** (*Dan Forbes*)

Elections for Faculty Senate seats with terms ending this academic year will be coming up soon, and will be administered by APSCUF. We will be contacting Senators whose terms are ending to remind them to nominate themselves for the election if they are interested in continuing to serve (we hope you will!). Proxies who would like the opportunity to serve as Senators are also encouraged to nominate themselves for the election. Watch your email for the announcement of the opening of nominations. Senators who would like a reminder of when their current terms end can find this information on our website:

<https://www.wcupa.edu/FACSTAFF/facultySenate/senators.aspx>

### **Communications** (*Julie Tennille*)

No report

### **Faculty Welfare** (*Eirini Panagiotidou, Ronnie Wilbur*)

Plans to query the faculty for issues of concern through a Qualtrics survey

### **Student Welfare** (*Dan Cherry*)

We have reached out to the student leaders of the Period Project and expressed our interest in supporting their work. Megan Harth responded with an update on their continued efforts and promised to reach out if they needed further assistance. Meetings with the leaders of the various student associations on campus are in the planning stages.

### **Research & Creative Activity** (*Gary Childs, Sarah Lightner, Stevie Grassetti*)

- Grant Forward (new system for finding external grants) is launched! Training to occur in person on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> from 12pm-1pm in Room 409 of the FHG Library and via Zoom on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 7:30pm -8:30pm. [Register here.](#)
- Research mentor directory is almost ready to pilot. This group will be piloting in February/March
- [Summer undergraduate research institute \(SURI\) applications are due 2/20](#)
- RCAD is coming up on April 17. ORSP is looking for faculty to judge student posters and presentations. ORSP is also piloting a faculty panel presentation this year.

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## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **ADA Committee** – Sen. Matt Pierlott

Nothing new to report since last semester.

### **ADA Digital Accessibility Committee** – Sen. Dan Forbes

This committee has been dissolved.

**Alumni Association – Sen. Bill Sawyer**

No report

**APSCUF Exec Representative – Sen. Bessie Lawton (alternate: Sen. Julie Wiest)**

1. APSCUF is reviewing a chart that lists the requirements for tenure and promotion.
2. There were some concerns regarding clarity in policies and procedures of the Global Engagement Office in terms of funding support for faculty professional development.
3. APSCUF has requested a review of the policy and procedure for grade appeals.
4. APSCUF raised concern that the transition to Ramportal is not being communicated effectively.
5. There are concerns regarding difficulty in getting proctoring hours in the evening for students enrolled in classes outside of regular OEA hours, as well as difficulty in getting proctoring appointments during finals week.
6. APSCUF raised a concern that there should be more clarity regarding what deficiencies interim evaluations are supposed to address, and that the process should be formative with the aim of helping the faculty member correct any deficiencies raised.

**Budget Review Committee – Sen. Kurt Kolasinski**

No meeting held. Nothing to report.

**Campus Climate Intervention Team – Sen. Simon Ruchti**

No meetings. Not sure what's going on.

**Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence – Sen. Ronnie Wilbur**

No new information - a meeting is yet to be scheduled for this semester

**External relations - Sen. Michelle Wade**

I met with Julie in External Affairs in January to establish first contact as liaison.

**Faculty Mentoring Committee – Sen. Innhwa Park**

FMC with PETAL will host an end-of-year celebration on Friday, May 3, 12pm in PAL. This will be a 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for FMC.

**IS&T and LMS Advisory Committees – Sen. Dan Forbes**

No report–IS&T Advisory Committee has not yet met this semester. LMS Advisory Committee has not met in several years.

**LGBTQIA+ University Caucus – Sen. Julie Tennille**

Spring meetings scheduled for 2/13, 3/20, 4/19, and 5/12. The Caucus promoted the “Banned Books Read-in at FHG Library” on 2/6/2024. The Education Librarian, Katie Manwiller, cited that PA had the third most banned books in the country, behind only Texas and Florida. LGBTQIA+ content comprised 41% of the books banned during the school year 2021-2022.

**Military Veterans Coordinating Committee – Megan Mraz**

No meetings for this academic year. Planning for spring meeting.

**Multicultural Faculty Commission – Sen. Innhwa Park**

No report

**Philadelphia Campus – Sen. Meg Panichelli**

No report

**President's Commission on the Status of Women – Sen. Michelle Wade**

The next Women's Commission meeting will be on February 20. Committees have been established and will report back about their projects for the year at this meeting. One of the committees has placed and funded two undergraduate students into internships with local nonprofits that serve predominantly women.

**SIS Advisory Board – Sens. Sarah Lightner and Simon Ruchti**

From Simon: As of the January 4th meeting (last one I could attend): They plan to roll out some key components, see how that goes, fix what needs fixing, and roll out more. They are still working out how to get some of the functionality we liked from MyWCU to work in Ram Portal. You will not see some of those things at first, but this won't be permanent. They will find comparable solutions. They had a problem with the first run at moving information from MyWCU to Ram Portal that caused things to crash and they had to reupload everything over Christmas. That has put things behind schedule. They have been running training sessions for using Ram Portal. I would like to hear how faculty feel about those sessions.

From Sarah: I have also not been able to attend any of the meetings because they are scheduled during my class time. I have been reviewing the presentations from the meetings and from those I have gathered that:

- Summer Registration will be the last term that myWCU is used
  - Summer schedule is visible to students Feb. 5th
  - There are no advisor holds for summer registration
  - Students should register for summer classes by March 8th so that they can register more easily for fall classes for which the summer courses are prerequisites.
- Students will register in Banner in March for their fall classes (registration window is March 27th - April 12th)
- As Simon noted, there will be additional elements that will make the tool more user friendly that will need to be layered in over time - rollout is an iterative process that will take time post initial go-live.
- Students & Faculty will still be able to submit requests (i.e. petitions, change of grade, change of major) during the conversion.

Faculty can receive updated information on the website: <https://wcupa.edu/ramportal>

#### **Sustainability Advisory Council – Sen. Kurt Kolasinski**

Spring program for the Sustainability Research & Practice Seminar Series is out. Details on in person talk in Sykes 255A/B and zoom option can be found at this link

<https://www.wcupa.edu/Sustainability/documents/5807%20Sustainability%20program%20Spring%202024.pdf>

On Friday, February 2nd a ceremony was held to celebrate the LEED Gold Certification of the Sciences & Engineering Center and the Commons (SECC) building.

Dr. Jacqueline Alnes will hold a book reading and signing on Tuesday, February 13th at 6pm in Philips Autograph Library. Dr. Alnes is the author of The Fruit Cure: The Story of Extreme Wellness Turned Sour.

The third annual WCU Social Innovation Competition is open and accepting submissions from WCU undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Learn more at <https://www.wcusic.com/>

Do you love gardening or want to learn more? The Campus Garden is hiring interns to work for the Spring 2024 semester and throughout the summer months. Learn more and apply on Handshake below.

<https://app.joinhandshake.com/login>

#### **Student liaisons:**

##### **Student Government Association – Caleb Winters**

No report

##### **Graduate Student Association: Amah (Ensume) Dunor**

No report

##### **ROTC: Salamatu Dumbuya**

No report

#### **Ad-hoc liaisons:**

##### **Vice President for Student Affairs search – Sen. Proxy Orkideh Mohajeri**

No report

##### **Facilities Master Plan Steering Committee - Sen. Julie Wiest**

The first meeting was held Jan. 24, and architect Conrad Tally from EwingCole (a Philadelphia-based planning, architectural, and engineering firm) gave a presentation about what they have done so far, what they're doing now, and what's next. Tally said they are in the second of five stages in developing the plan (stage one was talking and listening to campus "stakeholders"). He called stage two the "discovery phase" and said that they are taking a good look at every aspect of the campus facilities (e.g., he described going through every campus building with a long checklist to get a full understanding of the current conditions of each). EwingCole is also working with six subcontractors and a financial consultant in this process, apparently because each of the companies has a useful specialty (e.g., dining services, multi-unit housing, etc.).

The master plan will be delivered in two parts, with student housing being the priority. The housing plan is expected to be ready by April 2024, and they are targeting October 2024 for the complete master plan. Temporary housing will be constructed over the summer in the M1 lot (that's the smaller lot near M lot and directly behind the Matlack parking garage), and they are exploring additional options for both permanent housing and possibly more temporary housing (with South Campus appearing to be the focus). Committee meetings are expected to be held every 5-7 weeks, and we are being encouraged to bring lots of ideas, suggestions, and questions to the table – please send yours to [jwiest@wcupa.edu](mailto:jwiest@wcupa.edu).

#### Faculty Senate Executive Committee

- ❖ President – Senator Israel Sanz-Sánchez
- ❖ Vice President – Senator Dan Forbes
- ❖ Recording Secretary – Senator Selen Razon
- ❖ Corresponding Secretary – Senator Julie Tenille
- ❖ At-Large Members – Senators Rachel Daltry and Vipanchi Mishra
- ❖ Immediate Past President – Senator Julie Wiest
- ❖ Past Presidents – Senators Bessie Lawton, Jim Brenner, and Heather Schugar

### Senate Meetings 2023-2024

#### **Fall 2023**

Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Sept. 8 (in person, SECC101A)

Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Oct. 13 (on Zoom)

Open Forum with administrators: 2-3 pm. Tuesday, Oct. 31 (Zoom webinar, link will be shared)

Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Dec. 8 (on Zoom)

#### **Spring 2024:**

Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9 (in person, SECC101A)

Open Forum with administrators: 3-4 pm. Monday, Feb. 26 (Zoom webinar, link will be shared)

Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, March 29 (on Zoom)

Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, April 26 (on Zoom)