

*Minutes  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
February 1, 2023*

*The complete Recording for this meeting can be found at:*

*<https://myau.american.edu/groups/Committee/fs/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>*

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**Present: Professors:** Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, Thomas Merrill, Garret Martin, Maria Gomez, Mauro Tiso, Dan Abraham, Laura Beers, Yijiang Zhao, Sarah Irvine Belson, Randall Blair, Mirjana Morosini, Alan Levine, Nikhat Ghouse, Ken Anderson, Shawn Bates, Jim Quirk, Katie Holton, Bryan Fantie, Kelly Joyner, Jennifer Axe, Rhonda Zaharna, Dario Bernardini, Jennifer Poole, Alan Isaac, William Ryan, Mieke Meurs, Robert Kelley, Jennifer Steele, Provost Peter Starr, Dean of Faculty, Monica Jackson

**Chair's Report—Lilian Baeza-Mendoza**

The Chair of the Faculty Senate, Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, opened the meeting promptly. She made several announcements as part of the Chair's Report.

- The minutes of the December 7, 2022, meeting were **VOTED** on and approved 20-0-0 .
- In this session the Senate piloted a hybrid Senate modality, with some Senators and members of the community present in person and others participating by Zoom.
- Lilian Baeza-Mendoza and the Senate leadership is holding meeting with Senate committee chairs and holding Senate office hours. Any Senator interested in talking privately is welcome to drop in.
- Robert Shand will replace Sarah Ervin Belson as the Senate representative from SOE.
- Steve Silvia will replace Mirjana Morosini as the Senate representative from SIS.
- The senate has decided not to use a general election to choose members of dean's search committees again. The senate will discuss the method it will use to choose such members at a future date.
- The university awards process has begun with President Burwell's call for nominees for university awards. Luckily, we have many community members willing to serve on the University Awards committee, including good representation from the Senate DEI committee. The committee, which Tom Merrill is chairing, will meet for the first time at the end of February.
- The Service Task Force has started its work. Garret Martin (SIS) and Taryn Morrisey (SPA) are the co-chairs.
- The Senate is searching for its next Vice-Chair. This year we are looking for a term faculty for this position. Those interested in this position should reach out to the senate leadership.

## **Provost's Report—Peter Starr**

- Provost Starr and several members of the senior administration team are in Miami for a Change Can't Wait event.
- The development office is starting to ramp up its total annual giving as compared to previous years. Provost Starr says the university will prioritize named faculty chairs.
- Provost Starr and others are focused on retention. They are especially looking at academic pathways and experiential learning. Other members of the senior leadership team are rethinking AUx; trying to revamp our data collection efforts; and trying get rid of obstacles to students transferring from one school to another.
- Wendy Boland is reviewing our small Master's programs.
- The Provost is hosting several Provost's open forums, including one on Academic Integrity (including Chat GPT); one of the Boyar Report on undergraduate education; and one on experiential learning.

## **Presentation: Update on Middle States Accreditation Review—Karen Froslid Jones and Sheila Bedford**

Karen Froslid Jones (OIRA) and Sheila Bedford (KSB) gave the community an update on the upcoming Middle States Accreditation Review. The team hopes to have a complete draft of the report in fall 2023 and will seek feedback from the community in preparation for the campus visit from the Middle States team early in 2024. The Middle States is offering new standards for universities, including standards with an increased place for DEI work.

## **Action Item: Undergraduate Reg. Change: Policy on Incompletes—Jessica Waters**

Dean Jessica Waters presented a proposal to revise the undergraduate regulations on incompletes. The proposal, which was first presented at the last faculty meeting, clarifies the regulations as to what it means for a student to be “otherwise passing” a class. Dean Waters emphasized that this change clarifies under what conditions a faculty member can grant an incomplete, but that it does not take away the faculty member's discretion to grant or not grant an incomplete. The Senate discussed and **VOTED** 21-0-0 in favor.

## **Discussion Item: Faculty Manual Changes Related to Continuing Appointment—Peter Starr, Monica Jackson, and Rob Kelley**

The Senate discussed the proposal to replace the current system of term faculty contracts with a Continuing Appointment arrangement. The Senate expects to vote on the proposal at the March Senate meeting. Deputy Provost and Dean of Faculty Jackson made a presentation on these changes. The PowerPoint presentation and the proposed changes to the Faculty Manual were circulated to the community in the email from the Senate announcing this meeting. Deputy Provost Jackson and Provost Starr then took questions on this topic from the community. Community members raised questions about whether continuing faculty contracts will eventually replace all multiyear contracts; whether continuing appointment faculty will be able to serve on review committees; how the continuing appointment proposal will affect the university's hiring of tenure line faculty; and what avenues for grievance for continuing appointment or term faculty who think

they have been treated unfairly. Community members also noted that the continuing appointment proposal is an “up or out” decision in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Others noted that the proposal mentions conditions under which a continuing appointment faculty could be terminated and asked whether there were sufficient protections for those faculty from unfairness. Provost Starr and Deputy Provost Jackson mentioned that, if the proposal passes, term faculty who have been at AU for more than 10 years and term faculty who have been here for 6 years and whose contracts are ending will be eligible to apply for continuing appointment next year. Lilian Baeza-Mendoza encouraged all Senators to reach out to their home units to hear what faculty think about the continuing appointment and to especially make space for community members who might not want to comment in public.

### **For the Good of the Order—Lilian Baeza-Mendoza**

Lilian Baeza-Mendoza asked senators to weigh in on whether they liked the hybrid modality or not. She also reminded them that luncheon to learn about the budget process with Bronte Burleigh-Jones is coming up on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at noon.