

*Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
September 7, 2022*

The complete Recording for this meeting can be found at:

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

Present: Professors: Lilian Baeza-Mendoza, Thomas Merrill, Garret Martin, Maria Gomez, 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 this meeting promptly. She acknowledged that many members of the community were troubled by the events around the staff strike and the community will need to engage in further dialogue on these issues.

She had several announcements:

- The minutes of the faculty senate meeting of May 4th, 2022, are available and were shared via email. The senate **VOTED** and approved the minutes 16-0-4
- Reports from the senate committees are available and were shared via email.
- The Committee on Faculty Actions was able to find faculty members to serve as the SIS representative (Daniel Bernhofen) and the at-large term representative (Mahmud Yesuf).
- The newly elected campus representatives have been named to the remaining vacant committees of the Board of Trustees:
 - Raychelle Burks—Alumni Affairs
 - Patrick Kelly Joyner—Communications
 - Valentina Bruno—Finance and Investment
 - Mieke Meurs—Diversity and Inclusion
- The questions of representation for the new units, the Office of Global and Immersive Studies and the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, on the faculty senate and on the Committee on Information Services are unresolved but will be voted on at the October meeting.
- The Senate leadership and the Provost's office have agreed to sponsor a working group to address issues around service this year.
- President Burwell will visit the senate during the October senate meeting.

Action Item (Consent agenda): OGIS Representation on the Faculty Committee on Diversity and Inclusion—Lilian Baeza-Mendoza

Lilian Baeza-Mendoza reported that the Faculty Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has agreed to allow a representative from OGIS to sit on the committee. The Senate **VOTED** 14-2-5 in favor. There was further debate among faculty members on the general issue of OGIS and OGPS representation on the senate.

Provost's Report—Peter Starr

Provost Starr reported on these items:

- Faculty are reporting that students are particularly engaged and excited about being back in the classroom.
- The university raised \$48 million dollars in external funds last year—very good compared to previous years. As of Sept. 4th, the university has raised \$18 million in a single quarter, about as much as we raised in a single year in past years. Thanks to Diana Burley and others.
- The new continuing appointment proposal for term faculty is good news.
- The university will reassess the mandatory masking in classrooms in the next few weeks and the Provost encouraged community members to report their experiences with masking in order to inform the university's decision.
- The university's budget last year was strong because of large undergraduate classes and large MA classes. But neither of these is true this year—in part because the university is balancing the very large first year class last year. The university has seen a decline from last year's (historically high) first year retention rate, which weakens our budget position.
- The university is working on retention matters. The academy does not take a sufficiently wholistic approach to undergraduate retention. There are also significant declines in online and face to face graduate enrollments. There were some bright spots, however: the Washington College of Law and Kogod are both doing very well.

The Provost also spent time discussing the staff strike, with assistance from Bill LeoGrande, who helped handle the negotiations from the university's side. Together they made several points:

- The Provost said that the university bargained in good faith and tried to balance the needs of the staff and the needs of the larger university.
- He suggested that the deal that the university finally offered was similar to the position the university took with regard to term faculty—that is, the university tried to help the least paid staff and the longest serving staff.
- Provost Starr acknowledged that mistakes were made in the strike negotiations. He singled out the decision to disinvite faculty from convocation, and apologized for that decision.
- Some faculty were unhappy about the university using the law firm Jackson Lewis. The Provost responded by pointing out that the university had not started with Jackson Lewis, but that the university's chief negotiator had moved to Jackson Lewis in the middle of negotiations. Rather than start with a whole new negotiator, the university followed their negotiator to Jackson Lewis.

- Bill LeoGrande suggested that the university made a mistake in not communicating enough to the university community during the negotiations. But, stated the university was trying to avoid increasing polarization on these issues.

Discussion Item: Term Faculty Reappointment Guidelines—Peter Starr and Monica Jackson

Provost Starr and Deputy Provost/Dean of Faculty Jackson discussed the proposed guidelines for term faculty reappointment process. The most important new thing in these guidelines is that term faculty, if they stay at the university long enough, will move to a continuing reappointment (or at will contract) rather have to undergo periodic reappointments. Under the new proposal, a newly hired term faculty will undergo this pattern of reappointment:

- 3 one-year contracts
- 1 3-year contact
- If reappointed at all stages, consideration for a continuing (at will) contract

This proposal will not go into effect until the 2023-24 academic year. Dean of Faculty Monica Jackson also spoke to issues around the transition from the current system to the new system. A FAQ document regarding these changes will be posted on the Provost’s website soon, [at this link](#).

Discussion Item: Spring 22 Campus Climate Survey—Karen Froslid Jones and David Kaib

Karen Froslid Jones, Assistant Provost (OIRA), discussed selected results from the Spring 2022 Campus Climate Survey, which was circulated to the community. Some headline results from the survey were:

- More than 50% of term faculty disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that AU values term faculty—a considerably higher percentage than for other faculty types for equivalent statements.
- Only about 30% of faculty agree with the statement that AU leadership listens to faculty.
- Only about 55% of Hispanic faculty feel that they are treated equitably at AU—a lower percentage than other racial and ethnic groups.
- A lower percentage of women felt that they were treated equitably by the university or by their department than men did. These gender differences were noticeable in both the tenured faculty and the term faculty.

Action Item: CABB Bylaw Changes—Bill Ryan

The Committee on Academic Budget and Benefits proposed to change the number of CABB members recommended to sit on the University Budget Committee from four to “three or four.” The Senate **VOTED** 21-0-0 in favor.

Discussion Item: Emergency Waiver Proposal to Senate Bylaws—Todd Eisenstadt, John Heywood, and Andrea Pearson

Todd Eisenstadt (SPA), John Heywood (WCL) and Andrea Pearson (CAS), all former chairs of the Senate, presented a memo with proposals to codify the process whereby the Senate can issue waivers to Senate by-laws, especially in cases where important senate committees (like the Committee on Faculty Actions) find themselves without a quorum and so unable to do their business. The memo, which was circulated to the community, outlines four different ways of handling this issue; there seemed to be a consensus that option 2 (allow waivers as a matter of last resort, but no waivers for conflicts of interest) was best. Senate members had different opinions and the issue was debated. We expect that the Senate will vote on this issue at a future senate meeting.

Discussion Item: University Syllabi Repository—Brad Knight

Brad Knight, Senior Director of the AU Core and University College, presented a proposal to create a single online repository/archive for undergraduate syllabi. Currently undergraduate syllabi are collected by departments, but standards vary and faculty teaching in cross disciplinary programs like the Core can get confused. This proposal would create a single process for syllabi collection and a single archive for syllabi.

For the Good of the Order—Lillian Baeza-Mendoza

Lillian Baeza-Mendoza ended the meeting by reminding the community of the work that is still ahead to heal our divisions and pledged to keep the lines of communication open.

The meeting was dismissed at 5pm.