

*Minutes  
Faculty Senate Meeting  
November 2, 2022*

*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:** Lillian 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 the meeting promptly. She made several announcements as part of the Chair's Report.

- Baeza-Mendoza thanked the members of the Senate for their patience during the September 7, 2022, meeting.
- The minutes of the October 12, 2022, meeting were **VOTED** on 19-0-1 in favor.
- The members of the Working Group on Faculty Engagement were announced. John Heywood (WCL) and Bev Peters (OGPS) will co-chair this working group.
- The Working Group on Service will be launched soon. Garret Martin (SIS) and Taryn Morrisey (SPA) will co-chair this group.
- Lilian Baeza-Mendoza will be holding drop-in office hours for any member of Senate who wants to speak with her.
- The proposal for a joint OGIS/OGPS seat on the Faculty Senate did pass in the last senate meeting.
- Tom Merrill (SPA) announced that there will be a series of events in the spring to publicize and discuss the University's new Freedom of Expression Policy and Statement of Values on Free Expression. The first event is expected a panel on free expression in late January with President Burwell and other university presidents.
- The Provost's office is working on implementing new policies on term faculty continuing appointments based on the report of the Term Faculty Task Force on Reappointment from last year. Robert Kelley (SIS) is representing the Senate on this issue.
- There will be a special election to nominate candidates for the Search Committee for the next Dean of Undergraduate Education. The election will produce five candidates for that committee, from which the Provost will choose three.

## **Provost's Report—Peter Starr**

Provost Starr mentioned several items:

- Starr mentioned the incident in Leonard Hall and reminded the community not to speculate without adequate information. The university is providing as much information as it can right now.
- The retention and graduation rates are disturbingly low—last year our first to second retention rate was 86.3%, below our historical norms. Our 4 year retention rate (from the class of 2018) is also low.
- The university is making a cross-university effort to do a better job collecting, sharing and analyzing data on retention and other issues.
- The university is concerned about recent anti-Semitic events here at AU and elsewhere, including possibly integrating this topic into the AUx classes.
- The university is reevaluating its relationships with its OPM partners (i.e. online learning providers) and may not continue some of those relationships.
- The university may try to join the R1 Carnegie Classification. There are also other Carnegie classification (including Leadership and Public Purpose) that AU fits into well.
- The third and last of the Provost's Open Forum will be concerned with the issue of promoting community (One AU)
- David Keplinger (CAS) will be giving the Provost's Distinguished Lecture and Heng Xu (KSB) will deliver a lecture later in the semester.

### **Action Item: Proposal for a Joint OGIS/OGPS Seat on the Committee on Information Services—Bev Peters (OGPS) and Alan Isaac (CAS)**

The senate considered a proposal to create a joint seat on the Committee on Information Services for the OGIS and OGPS, which were established as academic units in spring 2022. The proposal is that these two units will alternate in holding this seat, just as these two units also alternate in holding the joint OGIS/OGPS senate seat. This proposal was the result of hard work and compromise between members of these two units and the leadership of the CIS. The Senate **VOTED** 19-0-1 in favor.

### **Discussion Item: Faculty Distribution Update—Monica Jackson**

Deputy Provost Monica Jackson shared the most recent data on the distribution of faculty by tenure and term categories in the different schools across campus. Currently about 51% of full time faculty are tenure-line faculty and about 49% of full time faculty are term faculty. This information was circulated to the community as an attachment to the email announcing this meeting of the senate.

### **Action Item: Senate Bylaw Emergency Waiver—John Heywood and Andrea Pearson**

The Senate considered a proposal to create a process for the Senate to issue emergency waivers of the Senate bylaws when needed. This issue was first discussed at the last Senate meeting. The

proposal considered at this meeting is “waivers rarely allowed.” The Senate **VOTED** 7-6-2 in favor.

### **Action Item: Core Bylaw Changes—Bradley Knight and Martyn Oliver**

The Senate considered a set of proposed changes to the bylaws of the AU Core. These changes included: 1. Changing the library seat on the AU Core Council from an ex officio seat to a voting seat. The Senate **VOTED** 18-2-1 in favor; 2. Replacing the Kogod seat on the Cultural Inquiry subcommittee with a seat for a CAS faculty member. The Senate **VOTED** 18-0-3 in favor; 3. State the expectation that school representatives will “customarily” serve no more than two consecutive terms of AU Core committees. The Senate **VOTED** 19-2-0 in favor; 4. Update the Core bylaws to describe that twice annually the updates to the Core committee memberships will be presented to the Senate Executive Committee in the fall and spring. The Senate **VOTED** 19-1-1 in favor.

### **Discussion: Retention Update—Peter Starr and Fanta Aw**

Provost Starr and VP Aw presented to the community on the university’s current problem with student retention. The situation is serious; Starr describes this as an “all hands on deck” moment. AU’s first to second year retention rate for last year was 87.75%, which is lower than all of our benchmark peers and lower than all of our peers in the Patriot League. This is part of a historical trend, not just a one year blip. AU also has a low 6 year retention rate at 79.5%. The university is working hard to understand and formulate a plan to address this issue. Probably the single biggest source of concern that shows up in student surveys is “lack of social fit.” The PowerPoint slide show discussing the problem and proposed solutions was circulated to the community.

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

Lilian Baeza-Mendoza reminded the community that the Senate will need a vice-chair for the next academic year and called for nominations. According to the Senate by-laws, the next vice-chair should be a term faculty member.