

*Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
April 5, 2023*

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, Mauro Tiso, Dan Abraham, Yijiang Zhao, Robert Shand, Randall Blair, Steve Silvia, Alan Levine, Nikhat Ghouse, Shawn Bates, Jim Quirk, Katie Holton, Bryan Fantie, Kelly Joyner, Jennifer Axe, Rhonda Zaharna, Dario Bernardini, Alan Isaac, William Ryan, Mieke Meurs, 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 her Chair's Report:

- The minutes from the March 1, 2023, meeting were **VOTED** on and approved 19-0-0.
- The Senate held an election for the 2023-24 senate vice chair position. Jennifer Axe (CAS) and Sheila Bedford (KSB) were both candidates and made statements about their vision for the Senate. The Senate **VOTED** 11-8-1 in favor for Jennifer Axe who will be the vice chair for AY 2023-2024.
- The spring at-large elections for Senate seats have occurred. The results will be announced at the May Senate meeting.
- The Working Group on Faculty Engagement will visit the Senate again before it presents its final report.

Provost's Report—Peter Starr

Provost Starr made several announcements:

- Community members may have noticed the new art installation, Sudama, behind the Kay Spiritual Life Center. This was the subject of a recent story in the *New York Times*.
- The most recent student climate survey showed significant improvement in a number of academic affairs related items. Our faculty should be proud of themselves.

President Burwell's Spring Visit—Sylvia Burwell

President Burwell made a prepared presentation and then took questions from members of the community. Some of the topics she touched on in her presentation included:

- There are three main areas in President Burwell’s vision for the university: people, mission, and community.
- Retention is still a problem for the university.
- The university will have a budget shortfall for this year, mainly because of undergraduate retention and weaker than normal graduate enrollment.
- University leaders are thinking a lot about the value proposition for students as they think about the retention issue.
- Research funding at the university has improved significantly.
- University leaders are proud that the university did not cut any jobs for staff during Covid. The university has also invested more resources in people recently.
- The University is hosting an exhibit on Anne Frank.
- President Burwell asked the group: what we want from community and how do we think we should try to get community?

Questions and issues raised by the community included:

- Is there a connection between the student retention issue and faculty demoralization?
- Faculty feel like they are not included in important decisions.
- Faculty want the university faculty club to come back.
- What do university leaders think is the right proportion between tenure line and term faculty and why?

First Year Experience Update—Jessica Waters & Peter Starr

Dean of Undergraduate Education Jessica Waters and Provost Starr announced several changes to the undergraduate curriculum that are intended to help with the retention problem. These include:

- Reducing internal GPA barriers to students changing majors
- Allowing students to count more AP credit toward Q1 requirement of the AU Core
- Changing the First Year Advising Program so that First Year Advisors will advise student only in a single school. This will allow students to be connected to their majors more quickly, which students want.
- Students will now be taking their AUx1 sections mainly with students from their intended school rather than students from across the university. This change will not affect AUx2 sections.
- The university will run a pilot for AUx1, in which AUx1 will be reduced from a 14-week 1.5 credit class to a 10 week, 1 credit class. If the pilot is successful, this may become the model for AUx1 for all students moving forward.
- Provost Starr called for a broader, robust conversation with the Senate and the community about what the goals of the AUx program should be.

Undergraduate Regulation Change (Class Attendance)—Jessica Waters & Justin Bernstein

The Senate reviewed a proposal from Dean of Undergraduate Education Jessica Waters and Associate Dean of Students Justin Bernstein to define excused absences for undergraduate classes more precisely. This proposal refers to Section 4.1-4.13 of the Academic Regulations. The Senate **VOTED** 18-4-0 in favor.

**Graduate Regulation Change (Combined Bachelor's and Master's Degree Credits)—
Wendy Boland**

The Senate reviewed a proposal by Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies Wendy Boland to allow AU students who are in a combined BA/MA program to share credits between the two degrees. This change will help students who come into college with a lot of AP credits and take MA classes while they are still undergraduates. The Senate **VOTED** 21-0-0 in favor.

Continuing Appointment Implementation Plan—Monica Jackson & Peter Starr

Dean of Faculty Monica Jackson and Provost Starr made a presentation about the university's plan for implementing the new Continuing Appointment arrangement. Academic units should plan to revise their bylaws concerning term faculty to reflect the new status and process in time for the first applications for Continuing Appointment in fall 2023. For more details, see the PowerPoint slides that were circulated in the Senate email to the community.

For the Good of the Order—Lilian Baeza-Mendoza

The Senate's May meeting will be in the SIS Founder's Room, not the Butler Board Room.