

**Washington University in St. Louis**  
**Minutes of Faculty Senate Council Meeting**  
November 2, 2021

Amy Eyler, Bruce Carlson, Derek Hoeflerlin, Kimberly Johnson, Stephanie Kirk, Timothy McBride, Bess Marshall, Guillermo Rosas, Adam Rosenzweig, Carla Seigfried, Renee Van Stavern, Iva Youkilia, Chancellor Andrew Martin, Provost Beverly Wendland, Vijay Ramani.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Meeting minutes from September 13, 2021 were approved as amended.

**2. Chancellor's Report—Andrew Martin, Chancellor**

The Chancellor reported on three things. First, on COVID-19 the campus continues to do well. In terms of vaccinations, 98% of the faculty has been vaccinated. Very few students have contracted COVID-19: 24 students are in isolation; but that is much less than last year. We are not seeing people get seriously ill.

On Strategic Planning, the Provost continues to lead the process. After the work groups worked through the process, a big retreat was held. Now the Coordinating committee is doing synthetic work. Exciting and great to see where this ends up.

On Parents weekend: it was an extraordinary turnout; it was very successful. We believe it was the largest tailgate party ever had at WashU.

**3. Chair's Report – Amy Eyler**

First, the Senate meeting was held on October 14<sup>th</sup>, and we had a great showing: 55 on zoom and 21 in person. It was a hybrid meeting, and a video of the meeting was up for a week.

At the University Council the external professional policy was passed. We had opportunity to have input into this policy, and this led to revised disclosure and communications.

Next month: The gender pay equity report will be presented. We will also take a deeper dive into strategic planning and how the faculty will be involved in next steps.

Q: Will there be a written report on gender equity?

A: Yes, a draft will be available this month

**4. Guidance on Religious Holiday Observance Policy Beverly Wendland  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**

The policy on Religious Holiday Observance was presented at the University Council, strengthening religious accommodations. WashU recognizes the choice of students. Students are encouraged to make up work missed. Instructors are asked to make every reasonable request. This policy is softer than our peer institutions.

In the current version of the language, in the revised policy we are trying to decide whether “University students must be accommodated as follows” or “should be accommodated as follows...”

Also, should we have excused absences?

Q: What problem are we trying to solve?

A: Our policies are out of step with peers, diversity, heterogeneity.

Q: How common are conflicts?

A: Not common. Twelve different institutions different policies.

Q: Broader question – what defines a religious holiday?

A: A major holiday, not a little holiday.

Q: Do we have guidelines over which type of holidays count?

A: There is an official list. This should be borne in mind when setting exams. For major holidays encourage faculty to work around it.

Q: Schools are on diff calendars – the more mandatory the language has the issue of maybe leading to exclusion?

A: We need nuanced language. Do we use the words “must” vs. “should”? We will make it the responsibility of the student to contact faculty member before 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class.

Q: Can we provide template language?

A: We will provide process and timeline; what is in bulletin. A shorter syllabus blurb has been developed. We have canvassed schools for best practices. In a conversation with the Deans, they proposed new language; then back to this group, then to Deans and then back to U Council. The final write off will be by the Chancellor. Done in January.

Q: How to handle faculty? What about for faculty who have religious observances – how to deal with it?

A: We handle it informally. Faculty will have their own accommodations. The Provost can circulate current policies from U Council. Draft language.

## **5. Discussion on University Approach to Communicating in Crisis Amy Eyler**

This relates to the University’s response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> incident.

Questions:

- How did you hear?
- Did you spread it?
- How could it be improved?

Discussion:

1. Different impressions about when it was heard: email, rumors. Some space for student rumors to take hold. We heard about it from students, who were extremely concerned.
2. An issue: clamp down on concerns, fear.
3. Talking points – how best to communicate this within schools. Should it be filtered through school.? We want a unified voice. How else would you do it? Have a unified

voice and from Chancellor, then through leadership. The FSC brought up the example of a campus shooting. There were continual updates until the crisis is resolved.

4. We expect there will be an unannounced drill.
5. The Medical school cannot lock down; nor the hospital.
6. We need consistent messaging. We should not project messages that are not helpful.
7. Social media: it was carefully monitored. If there was a whiff of a potential threat, the WUPD would have been involved. But there were no credible threats. Do we need to do something better to help students?
8. Rumors from faculty? We need to provide guidance to faculty. Faculty need a refresher. Faculty are in a tough spot not knowing what to do. How to disperse information without getting it into social media?

## **6. Other Business**

Academic analytics: New Vice Provost Mary McKay getting trained. This will allow us to elevate leadership. It allows us to estimate influence of department, relative to peers. It also tracks faculty awards. It can help with recruitment and retentions. Training has just started. If someone from FSC wants to learn this, we are happy to extend connections. Guillermo Rosas would love to do it.

Reorganization of Graduate School Doctoral Council. How does it differ from the Senate?

U College: just yesterday the new Dean Sean Armstrong started. He has a long to-do list. Dean Perlmutter to help work on the health worker shortage.

Bicampus Experience Committee: this will be brought back to the FSC, the leadership.

## **7. Executive Session**

An executive session started at 5:10 pm.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Timothy McBride, Secretary