

## **Faculty Senate Minutes – March 9, 2021**

### **Zoom – @ 6:00 pm (details at end of Agenda)**

**Senators present:** Aaron Joy, Alex Lopez, Alex Watson Angela Green, Brad Jones, Brian Reithel, Carolyn Higdon, Carrie McCormick, Carrie V. Smith, Charles Stotler, Christy Nielson, Cole Stevens, Corina Petrescu, Daniel Durkin, David Golgor, Donna Buckley, Fei Lan, Hyunwoo Joung, Jenny Bucksbarg, John Lobur, Jon-Michael Wimberly, Jordan Ballou, Joseph Carlisle, Julia Bussade, Kathleen Fuller, Kenya Wolff, KoFan Lee, Kyle Fritz, Lance Yarbrough, Lauren Cardenas, Mandy Perryman, Mary Hayes, Meagen Rosenthal, Michael Repka, Phillis George, Randy Dale, Richard Gordon, Stuart Schafer, Sue Ann Skipworth, Tom Brady, Whitney Sarver, Chip Wade, Chris Mullen.

Senators Excused: Zenebe Beyene, Joel Mobley.

Senators Unexcused: Brian Boutwell, Carmen Sanchis-Sinsterra, Cristie Ellis, Jim Cizdziel, Mikaela Adams, Willa Johnson.

- **Call Meeting to Order**
  
- **Approve minutes from the February 9, 2020 meeting**
  - Motion – Corina Petrescu
    - Second – Michael Repka
      - Vote – APPROVED
  
- Chair: Acknowledged this day marks one year since pandemic “began” so thanks to everyone for all your hard work. I encourage you to take a rest in lieu of spring break.
  
- **Academic Discipline Committee – processes and best practices – Dr. William Berry III**
  - Excited for Paul to be back in the role of Ombuds.
  - Process of academic discipline and unique challenges online: instructor is in charge of this in the classroom and we defer to the instructor as to whether the student has cheated and what should be done. A student has 14 days to appeal after a report has been filed. Appeals come before the committee, and we usually have just a few per year.
  - Our standard is to ask was there academic dishonesty based on the preponderance of evidence?
  - We also look at what sanction has faculty called for. We abide by the Deferential Abuse Standard. Usually we have just have a few hearings every year and they are required for expulsion.
  - Generally the policy is forgiving for the students. A single sanction at my alma mater, UVA, was unforgiven and grounds for expulsion. Here we show them this behavior was wrong and enact a penalty but it doesn't affect the student long term except in those rare cases of expulsion.

- Our number of cases per year is remarkably consistent, about 160-170, even under Covid. We have about 165-175 appeals per year.
- Please report cheating. We need to know if there is a pattern of recklessness that requires intervention. While the volume of cases hasn't changed under Covid, the intensity has changed because everyone is under even greater stress.
- CHEGG has been a problem and using that to answer test questions.
- GroupMe's are also a culprit (test copying to hundreds of people)
- When faculty issue a warning that they care about cheating, even this can help prevent some of it. Online is harder and proctoring software has issues. Proctorio a lot of people like but struggle with.
- Open book is one way to go to avoid cheating. The law school used open and closed book quizzes with about the same results.
- Also decrease time limits on tests so they don't have the time to look up answers. This may not always be appropriate, but is worth considering.
- Written assignments are much better than tests, for most departments, not all.
- Talk to each other in your department and compare what's working and not working to curb these issues. We're hoping to be back in the classroom in the fall, and I'm here to help.

**Q: How many folks have gone through the process and removed from university under Covid compared to previous years?**

**A: Expulsions are very, very rare. Students are usually very careful not to cheat again once caught. Covid hasn't changed our process at all except that we have been on Zoom. I've had a lot more calls with parents but our process hasn't changed and we haven't experienced an increase in academic dishonesty. Thanks to all of you for the hard work you do to keep these things to a minimum.**

**Q: I'm in the midst of a cheating scandal that has prompted me to look into how easy it is to cheat and I found literally in one minute someone who would write a 10-page term paper for me for \$200, a legally run business. I also found someone who would take a Proctorio exam alongside the student for \$200. Can we look at this on a wider level?**

**A: This is not entirely new, but I'm not sure there are a lot of students here who would do this kind of thing. Most people who commit crimes in general are not very sharp and aren't very sophisticated when it comes to cheating. Who cheats? Students who have had too much fun and end up out of time to do their work. They panic. Maybe Covid has kept students from socializing as much and not panicking. But this is a larger administrative question. Usually there is a tell, a drastic increase in quality of work. But only a handful of students do this. Maybe in the EDHE curriculum we can add discussion of this issue, an updated version talking about the culture of academic honesty here at this university.**

**Q: There's no record if a student is repeatedly cheating? How do we know if a student is cheating in another class as well as ours?**

**A: It's easy to see if this is a second offence. We keep records. These fall to the dean to determine any additional penalties or consider an intervention. Most students feel it's a traumatic thing just to be accused of cheating and usually learn from it and don't do it again.**

**Comment: A link to a well-defined policy at the University of Indiana:**

<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/certificationTests/>

**Comment: A former student caught cheating in my class recently thanked me for catching him and saving him professional embarrassment in the future. Also, there's likely a lot of cheating out there that is not being reported.**

**A: We don't seek out violations but encourage faculty to report them.**

**Comment: GroupMe is definitely a concern. Students share answers with each other on quizzes. Advice is to add instructor or TA to the GroupMe.**

- **Athletics updates –**

**Ron Rychlak – Distinguished Professor of Law – Chair of Intercollegiate Athletics and member of Athletics Compliance**

- **Challenging year for athletes, staff, fans trying to keep everyone safe and keep student athletes in their classes. A lot of people have worked really hard to make that happen, raising, for example, limits on baseball games, etc.**
- **Student athletes we are concerned about their mental health but Dr. Josie Nicholson sends out a mental health minute note to help them and us through difficult times. Cheating is always an issue in normal times and also in online teaching. It is more difficult to keep track of all students, including athletes, in online environments.**
- **If the mens' basketball players get to go to NCAA tournament we would have to keep them in a bubble. This is similar to the issues we have been working around all year.**
- **We haven't had athletic fraud on our campus in terms of exchanging gifts or giving unfair advantage to athletes.**
- **Sometimes faculty schedule in-person work not scheduled in advance with our department, so we have to work to make reasonable accommodation. This usually happens with new faculty.**
- **NCAA athletes can now profit on their "name, image, and likeness" in many states but not standard across all states. Gambling on college sports is also new. These will be discussed with SEC later this week. We have prohibited all athletes and personnel are forbidden from entering any gambling establishment in Mississippi. Athletes also have gambling issues, like other people do.**
- **We have one finalist on our campus for a major SEC awards, though we cannot identify them at this time.**
- **Pending SEC legislation to liberalize allowing athletes to transfer between institutions.**

**Bob Baker – Senior Associate Athletic Director Student Athlete Development**

- **Appreciates Ron and having a great relationship with a FAR. Ron helps me fight battles.**
- **The FedEx Student Athlete Success Center is here to help prepare our student-athletes for life after sports, as the vast majority of them are not going on to the pros.**
- **I attend every senate meeting and usually just listen and learn. Dual report to Provost and to Athletics. I've been at other schools without one reporting to Academics, so this is the ideal setup for me.**
- **My job is a liaison between the athletic and academic worlds to make sure they mesh together well. My job mainly is to remind folks, especially coaches, to put the student before the athlete and to prepare students for after college.**
- **Bragging about our athletes is among my favorite things. The fall report card was very good despite it being a very difficult year. Athletes have adjusted and some have even learned to be even more self-sufficient. Almost 70% have above a 3.0 GPA. 15 will graduate in the fall. We have 3 Rebel Reconnects, former student-athletes who left to go pro and return to finish their degree. Success story of AJ with the Tennessee Titans.**
- **We are very proud of our student-athletes; they are disciplined, committed, and strong.**
- **Student-athletes are in 56 different majors across campus. Whatever excites our athletes that will lead to a career we want to encourage them to pursue, not any single kind of major. They must declare a major and be careful changing majors after the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, putting them at a disadvantage compared to non-athletes. Parents also have a lot of influence over student-athletes, just as other parents do. But we do try to push and challenge them to take advantage of this educational opportunity and the chance to study what they really want.**
- **How can faculty help? We send out Faculty Progress Reports (switched to RETAIN last summer, with a 50% return rate each round) which are secure and FERPA-compliant and allow you to pull up information about student-athletes in your classes. I love to hear the positive stories, so please send them our way.**
- **Unexcused absences will be added to the reporting soon. Some of you don't take attendance, which is fine.**
- **Refer strong students to work as tutors for athletes in the FedEx Center. It's structured, monitored, and supervised. We pay pretty well and it's a good opportunity.**
- **Asked for help sharing positive stories about student-athletes, which Lane Kiffin tweets out every week.**
- **Q: You expressed a need for accountancy tutors, juniors in particular. Would any year student be helpful, such as a sophomore?**
- **A: We usually look for juniors and seniors but if you have a sophomore you feel strongly about, send them my way.**

- **Committee Updates**

- Academic Instructional Affairs (chair: Corina Petrescu) –

At our next faculty meeting, Dr. Josh Eyler will come to the Senate to talk to us about the results of the committee's work and get input on improving the Student Evaluations of Teaching and other methods of evaluating teaching.

- Academic Conduct (chair: Kenya Wolff) – Nothing to report
- Finance & Benefits (chair: Joseph Carlisle) – Asked to look into the Red Book and why it wasn't provided to the university library. Director of Budget Audrey Floyd says it's in progress and should be available soon but couldn't give a definite answer.
- Development & Planning (chair: Jon-Michael Wimberly) – Nothing to report
- Governance (chair: Dan Durkin)

Working on a number of things to recommend to Executive and then to the full Senate: 1) Grievance policy 2) Ombuds 3) Clarifying governance rules, including Roberts' Rules of Order in a revised form better fit for our purposes, 4) OSRP policy change. We collated your concerns and sent them to Josh Gladden for clarification. Please discuss this policy with your departments. Focus is on how the new changes are being implemented. (**A written summary of the work has been added to the end of this document**)

Q: The Chancellor's email omitted reference to confidentiality of the Ombuds office and that is raising some concerns. Can the committee communicate with the Chancellor to look into this?

A: Yes, we are aware of that omission and intend to do just that.

- Research & Creative Achievement (chair: Donna Buckley)

Met with Katie Busby about launching a survey and how to do it. Met with Dr. Levine of AERA last night, who was very generous and helpful in getting the survey shortened and seeing which instrument meets our needs better. It will be more successful if we can whittle down the original AERA survey, which is fine by that organization. We want to divide it into two surveys, one focused on doctoral and early career faculty, and another for all other faculty.

- University Services (chair: Carrie McCormick) – Nothing to report

- **Chair:** Reminder that in February we asked for feedback about better communicating policies and procedures to include in a faculty handbook, which the Executive Committee would be happy to put together, along the lines of a one page boot camp for new senators.

**Dan Durkin:** The Governance Committee would be happy to take those recommendations and include them in our report.

- **Old Business**

- **New Business**

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM.

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- Motion

- Second

- Vote

**NEXT MEETING: April 13, 2021 @ 6:00 via ZOOM**

Zoom details:

Join Zoom Meeting:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91338543383?pwd=S3NNYkZ4UEluSGlMd0ZiYjkhWkh2dz09>

Meeting ID: 913 3854 3383

Passcode: 523851

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Meeting ID: 913 3854 3383



## Governance Committee Updates

### 1. Grievance Policy

- a. We have interviewed faculty from across campus, attended a listening session hosted by the Isom Center, and reviewed the information that was provided to us by HR. This includes the one colleague who successfully navigated the grievance process to resolution.
- b. The Committee has determined that there are issues with processes that need to be addressed.
- c. In the next few months, we will seek assistance from entities across campus (e.g., HR, EORC, Provost's office, etc.) to create a flow chart that directs faculty to the appropriate office depending on the concern.
- d. We will reach out to the Staff Council to include them in the process as much of this applies to staff as well.
- e. Members of the Governance Committee have identified policies and processes at other universities that could be helpful.
- f. Our goal is to prepare recommendations to present to the Executive Committee and then to the Faculty Senate.
- g. The overall goal is to provide all the entities involved in this process with recommendations designed to clarify and improve processes.

### 2. Ombuds

- a. The Committee is reviewing current policies and comparing to the Faculty Senate resolutions that recommended the creation of the Office of the Ombuds and to the original job description, policies, etc. when the Office of the Ombuds was created.
- b. Members have identified policies at other universities that could be helpful.
- c. Our goal is to prepare recommendations to present to the Executive Committee and then to the Faculty Senate.

### 3. Robert's Rules for the Faculty Senate

- a. The Governance Committee has been charged with identifying, developing and clarifying rules that govern Faculty Senate meetings.
- b. In particular, the Committee is working to identify rules that are not a good fit for the Faculty Senate and suggesting modifications.



- c. Members of the Committee have identified Faculty Senate rules at other universities that have already modified the rules for their senate. We will review these and adopt rules that we believe are a good fit for us.
  - d. The goal is not to reduce the number of rules. Similar to our approach to grievances, the committee is looking to create a flowchart or decision tree as well as a "Faculty Senate for Dummies" document.
  - e. As with the Ombuds recommendations, we hope to have this completed in time to present to the Executive Committee and then to the Faculty Senate.
4. ORSP policy change
- a. The recent announcement from ORSP of a new policy titled Required Consent by UM Investigators effective March 1 has raised concerns from faculty across campus.
  - b. The Committee collected feedback from faculty. With the short time frame we recognize that the information we have collected so far is by no means exhaustive; however, we believe that it is critical to start the conversation.
  - c. To that end, the Committee collated questions to send to Josh Gladden in the hope that he could address the concerns and attend the next Faculty Senate meeting to answer remaining questions and provide further clarification.
  - d. We would appreciate it if Senators could discuss this policy with colleagues in their department and bring any questions or concerns to the next Faculty Senate meeting.
  - e. It should be noted that the policy is a federal policy that cannot be changed. Questions and concerns should focus on implementation.