

Notes for University Faculty Meeting
April 23, 2019

Welcome to our first annual Faculty Meeting. In keeping with our year of change, this meeting is not a business meeting of the Faculty Senate, rather it is an opportunity to convene the faculty and share where we are and where we are heading in terms of faculty involvement in the ongoing governance of Lehigh.

For us collectively: We are still on the steep end of the learning curve (although I hope we are nearing the top) on what it means to have a representative Senate in place. At its heart, we have a representative body to drive change as well as collectively consider and convey the sentiment of the faculty on matters of importance to Lehigh Community.

We are an organizing body, whose functions include coordinating and overseeing the work of the various standing committees. But we are more than that, the Senate offers, for the first time, a consistent and identifiable core group of faculty for whom the administration, our fellow faculty colleagues, and our students can turn for input, guidance, and leadership across myriad issues.

And beyond the formal structures of the Senate, I along with members of the Executive Committee routinely engage with the leaders of this institution to discuss initiatives (proposed or undertaken).

Often, though, it is the in-between moments—quiet conversations that take place outside of formal meetings--that affords us the greatest opportunities to express our opinions and shape decision-making.

It is a journey that I am grateful to be a part of, and I am proud to serve alongside my fellow senators in this inaugural year.

As you know, significant change has occurred and continues to unfold within our community. Beyond the Path to Prominence, the start of the Capital Campaign, or the launch of the Health Care College, we have three new Deans and we are about to launch a search for our next Provost.

For, as you know, Provost Pat Farrell has indicated he will step down as Provost next June after I believe ten years in that role.

President Simon has agreed to come meet with the Senate to hear what we think are the key attributes of our next Provost along with our sense of the challenges they are likely to face.

President Simon will also hold a town hall in the early fall to engage in a similar discussion with the faculty.

Within the Senate: we have been actively working toward modernizing our systems of committees and broadening our role in governance. Our aim, is to end with a network of committees that reflect the current and future needs of the Faculty and of the broader Lehigh Community. Presently, we have / or are in the process of consolidated the work of 11 standing committees into the Senate.

As we move forward, one challenge is to ensure continuity overtime. Administrators will come and go, as will our students. Indeed the average tenure of Sr. Administrators and undergraduate students is about the same. However, the faculty tend to stay much longer.

Thus, when long term initiatives are started (such as the Path to Prominence) it often will come down to the faculty to ensure the vision and strategy we agreed to is carried out faithfully and in a manner consistent with the values and needs of our university. It is perhaps in this role, that we in the Senate can and will play a significant role. I look forward to those opportunities and the challenges that they represent.

I will now turn the podium over to President Simon, who I should note, is scheduled to present the Farrington Award at tonight's Baker Awards ceremony up on Mountaintop. So unfortunately, he will be unable to stay after he presents his remarks on the State of Universities. Welcome President Simon.