

MEETING OF THE LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY

Minutes of the Meeting held on February 21, 2025, at 1:10 pm

HST L185

Do the Minutes include R&P Changes? ~~Yes~~/No

Do they require a vote of the entire Lehigh Faculty? ~~Yes~~/No

Do they require Board of Trustees approval? – ~~Yes~~/No

Faculty Secretary's Note: Given the exploratory nature of the discussion to help the senate working groups collect feedback and ensure a frank discussion, individual faculty members are not identified here. In addition, much of the deliberations took place in small group settings, which are not fully captured here except via the recaps from the groups. Only Senate and University leadership responses are attributed to individuals in limited instances based on the required context.

Professors Jenna Lay and Peter Zeitler provided an overview of the meeting and requested faculty members to engage fully in the discussions. The deliberations would inform how the Faculty Senate can work with the faculty and administration.

Small-Group Feedback on Issues for Future Senate Deliberations

- Senate working group members obtained feedback in small group settings on several issues listed below:
 - Revisions to the Faculty Code of Ethics
 - Voting rights for term faculty
 - Service load and equity
 - Grab bag: caps on term-faculty numbers (R&P 2.15) leadership as a promotion criterion
 - Other issues

The following were the salient points mentioned during the session to compile the thoughts from the small group discussions.

- We should aim for a targeted expansion of voting rights to all full-time faculty members, aimed more at department- and college-level matters and less at university-wide issues. We should develop a rationale for such an expansion before finalizing proposals.
- There are issues related to faculty service load and equity.

- Leadership path to full professor promotion must be considered for exceptional service contributions.
- Also, significant external contributions should be valued and considered in faculty promotion to full professor.
- It is helpful to periodically review our promotion and tenure standards so they can be revised to face evolving realities.
- We should discuss the college-level and university-level caps for the percentage of term faculty members.

Lehigh's Response to Federal Government Actions

Salient points made during the discussion are listed below.

- We should focus on significant issues facing higher education because of recent Federal actions. We should engage with our congressional representatives and the public to articulate the value of higher education. Working with academic journals, professional organizations, and popular press to articulate the role of education and academic research is a constructive way for faculty engagement. These efforts will also help to inform the public what universities do to enhance society – the public is not fully aware of it.
- The current situation can also present an opportunity to recruit top people in some disciplines with fewer resources compared to normal times.
- The purpose and activities of some centers at Lehigh will need clarification and support in the context of the current national scenario.
- Tenure-clock extension for pre-tenure faculty should be augmented by additional ongoing support to sustain the activity momentum in the following years.
- We should be flexible in helping students change majors and colleges.
- Faculty should be more engaged in voicing their opinions. There is strength in collective action.
- Instructors of some courses that focus on specific topics in social justice and related topics are justifiably concerned. It is feared that some majors and minors that students currently take may even disappear.

- The current situation affects students also. We need to do something to support them.
- Changing the names of some offices and programs may not be seen as enough. More substantive changes may be required to comply with federal guidelines.
- Faculty activities as part of their job are fully protected under the principles of academic freedom. There is no change in Lehigh's perspectives on academic freedom. [Provost Nathan Urban]
- We should be thoughtful about the outcome of our responses to current events. The public perception of universities is not very favorable. It is important to talk individually and collectively about the importance of higher education for the country. [Provost Nathan Urban]
- We should focus on teaching students to think critically without engaging in political discussions.
- Faculty members are welcome to share ideas and suggestions with the Faculty Senate as we navigate these uncertain times. Direct communication with faculty senators and the use of the "Faculty Senate Suggestion Box" are both encouraged. [Professors Peter Zeitler and Jenna Lay]

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Siva", written over a horizontal line.

K. Sivakumar ("Siva")
Arthur Tauck Chair and Professor of Marketing
Secretary of the Faculty