

If you have questions, please contact K. Sivakumar (kasg@lehigh.edu).

## **MEETING OF THE LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on **October 4, 2024, at 1:10 pm**

BIB 108 and Via Zoom

**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**

The roster of senators present for the meeting appears in Appendix 1.

[Appendix 1 available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/meeting-minutes>]

### **1. Minutes of the Prior Faculty Senate Meeting**

The 09/06/2024 meeting minutes were included in the consent calendar. Since no request to discuss them separately was made, the minutes were deemed approved.

The approved minutes are available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/meeting-minutes>.

### **2. Update on fraud charges against international students**

Provost Nathan Urban provided an update. He noted that four Lehigh students and one incoming student were arrested and charged with fraud for obtaining financial aid using falsified academic documentation. Lehigh's admission has been rescinded, and their visa status has been revoked. The judicial process will continue, and eventually, they will be deported. The following were the salient points discussed during the ensuing discussion.

- There is no public information about similar cases at other universities, although the existence of such cases is likely. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professor Chengshen Xiao]
- Once admission to Lehigh's program is withdrawn, FERPA does not apply, and there is no protocol for informing family members of students. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professor Frank Gunter]

- Given that these students were in good standing and highly contributing members of the student community, we should identify other ways of punishing students rather than putting them in jail. Rescinding their admission and sending them home should be enough punishment. [Professor Lindsey Reuben]
- Lehigh administration wrestled with the issue; the crimes are serious, with the amount in the range of \$600,000-1,000,000; this amount could have gone to other deserving students. If not addressed appropriately, questions raised about Lehigh's admissions process will have ramifications beyond the financial aspects. [Provost Nathan Urban]
- There is no plan to send a university-wide message, although targeted messages are being sent to international students along with responses to specific questions that may arise. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professor Peter Zeitler, who said that the Senate Executive Committee prefers such a communication from the University leadership]
- The admissions office is responsible for undergraduate admissions only; guidelines for graduate program admissions are being developed. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professors Jenna Lay, Anders Knospe, and Mike Spear]
- There is no negligence on Lehigh's part; the crime was sophisticated and organized. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professor Kristi Morin]
- It is essential to clarify the process of rescinding admissions, factors governing the referral of the matter to the District Attorney, and the impact on members of the Lehigh community. [Professor Jenna Lay]
- The decision was very difficult because the administration was concerned about these issues. Several factors were considered, including the integrity of the admissions process. [Provost Nathan Urban]
- There are no mechanisms for communication among universities about applicants following questionable practices; hence, there is no way to estimate the extent of the problem. The immigration process is deemed adequate for addressing admissions obtained using fraudulent documentation. [Provost Nathan Urban in response to Professor Al Wurth]

### **3. New Business**

Professor Jenna Lay raised the issue of whether the Faculty Senate should send a university-wide communication on international student admission. The following were the salient points raised during the discussion.

- The incident and its aftermath have already caused serious harm; students are confused, and while rescinding admissions is appropriate, criminal charges are inappropriate. The reputation effects arising from public discussion of how Lehigh handled the issue will be severe. The Faculty Senate should issue a statement. [Professor Seth Moglen]
- The Faculty Senate Executive Committee asked the administration to issue a public statement. [Professor Peter Zeitler]
- The Office of Admission's ability to rescind admission is a powerful tool exercised in secrecy. [Professor Angela Hicks]
- Without a public statement, rumors may persist. It is best to be transparent. [Professor Chengchen Xiao; Professors Mike Spear and Frank Gunter also supported the issue of a statement by the Faculty Senate]

#### **4. First reading of changes to R&P Section 3.14.5.1 (Apprentice Teaching)**

A number of issues were raised, including the current version not including changes suggested in the past [Professors Frank Gunter, Angela Hicks, Mike Spear, and Damien Thévenin] and the need to incorporate broader issues related to undergraduate student grading [Professors Angela Hicks, Jenna Lay, and Mike Spear]. Professor Fathima Wakeel clarified that the objective of the proposed change is limited to addressing the inconsistent use of Apprentice Teachers for grading.

Professor Frank Gunter moved that the item be sent back to the Educational Policy Committee for incorporating additional changes requested by the Faculty Senate before being brought back to the Senate. The motion was seconded, put to a vote, and passed.

#### **5. Consent Calendar: First reading of changes to R&P Section 3.11.2 (Departmental Honors)**

The item is available at

<https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/consent-calendar>

Since there was no request to discuss the item separately, the item will come up for a second reading at the next Senate meeting.

#### **6. DEI statements and hiring**

Professor Will Lowry provided an update. He noted that the Provost's Office is already implementing the inclusion of DEI statements in hiring, and it is important for the Senate vote to occur at the November 2024 meeting. The following were the salient points made during the follow-up discussion.

- The statement is confusing for international students since the context differs for them. [Professor Frank Gunter]
- The objective is to focus on the sense of belonging, which could be different for different people. The rubrics suggested by ADVANCE are only suggestive and not prescriptive. [Professor Will Lowry]
- "Sense of the Senate" statements send a message to the Lehigh community, but they can be ignored. [Professor Peter Zeitler in response to Professor Damien and Thévenin]
- The added value of such statements is unclear if the matter has already been discussed in the research statements submitted by the applicants. [Professor Mike Spear]
- We are already advising doctoral students about the need to include DEI statements since most jobs require such statements. [Professor Nancy Carlisle]
- Potentially, candidates' service statements can include DEI-related information. [Professor Will Lowry; Professor Jenna Lay noted that currently, we do not require service statements]
- The requirement of DEI statements is not in faculty contracts; the requirement of such statements results in departments becoming politicized and viewpoint discrimination. [Professor Kevin Narizny]
- We can overcome the limitations by more rigorous training, increasing faculty engagement, and introducing innovations. [Professor Will Lowry]
- We can also consider requiring DEI statements for promotion and tenure. [Professor Angela Hicks]
- Diversity is an important issue in some disciplines, such as Computer Science, where these statements have been very useful for establishing a minimum threshold for candidates. [Professor Mike Spear]
- International applications do not understand our expectations. [Professor Subhrajit Bhattacharya]
- There are opportunities to do more on DEI issues; the goal is to bring this item to a vote in the November 2024 meeting. This will help in next year's hiring. [Professor Peter Zeitler]

## **7. Consultation Guide and Experimental Request for Consultation (RFC) Process**

Professors Jenna Lay and Peter Zeitler initiated a discussion on the item. The working documents are available on the Lehigh Faculty Senate Course Site:

<https://coursesite.lehigh.edu/course/view.php?id=333396>

Professor Jenna Lay noted that these processes are being rolled out soon. Professor Nancy Carlisle noted that in her role as the Provost's faculty fellow this year, she has observed that the administration supports this proposal.

The senators approved the implementation of the experimental RFC process, which will be evaluated after one academic year.

## **8. Working Groups**

Professor Jenna Lay noted that working group assignments are being finalized. Working groups' processes and progress will be assessed throughout the semester.

Respectfully submitted by

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