

MEETING OF THE LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Meeting held on December 5, 2025, at 1:10 pm

UC 375 and Via Zoom

Do the Minutes include approved R&P Changes? Yes/~~No~~
Do the Minutes include items ready for a vote of the entire Lehigh Faculty? Yes/~~No~~
Are there items requiring Board of Trustees approval? – Yes/~~No~~

The roster of senators present at the meeting is listed in Appendix 1.

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

1. Minutes of the Prior Faculty Senate Meeting

The minutes of the 11/07/2025 Senate Meeting were included in the consent calendar. The minutes were deemed approved since no request was made to discuss them separately.

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

2. President Joe Helble: Remarks on “Thinking Educationally” and Follow-up Discussion

The following were the salient points mentioned.

- Higher educational institutions, including Lehigh, are facing two critical issues: the cost of higher education and ideological homogeneity. The goal is to invite external speakers with a range of views. [President Joe Helble]
- The goal is to provide opportunities for free expression of even extreme viewpoints without favoring one side or the other. Individual departments are best equipped to decide which viewpoints would be most useful to hear. A combination of department-organized events and university-organized events may be a good balance. [President Joe Helble, in response to Professor Anders Knospe’s question about the potential outcome of extreme viewpoints from one side but not the other, and to Professor Gordon Bearn’s point about the institutional leadership having a viewpoint may result in fewer speakers]

and less ideological diversity, and that sometimes, less well-known speakers can provide excitement to the Lehigh community]

- The objective is to ensure that the external speakers represent the range of viewpoints outside Lehigh, rather than selecting speakers who represent the range of views within Lehigh. [President Joe Helble in response to Professor K. Sivakumar]
- Having two people with different views debating on stage may inadvertently lead the audience to root for one side; there is value in listening to each side at a time. [President Joe Helble, in response to Professor Ethan Van Norman’s comment about the utility of long-form interviews without the speaker being challenged]
- There has not been a formal mechanism for obtaining feedback on the “compelling perspectives,” and the attendance has been low for various speakers. [President Joe Helble, in response to Professor Jenna Lay’s question about the speaker series being effective and the point that most speakers seem to occupy positions that can be considered as center right or center left]
- There is a need to develop an objective function for these speaker events and to maximize it. [Professor Tom McAndrew]
- Each field/department can decide which frontier issues and relevant problems to focus on, and on broader issues to increase engagement. [President Joe Helble, in response to Professor Hannah Dailey’s question about increasing student turnout for the speaker events]
- Faculty Senate working groups may discuss the issue of speakers and viewpoint diversity. [Professor Peter Zeitler]

3. Second Reading: Deletion of R&P Section 1.3.5.3: Visiting Lecturers Committee

The changes were moved, seconded, and approved. This will need a full faculty vote and approval by the Board of Trustees.

4. Second Reading: Changes to R&P Section 3.21.1: Graduate Admissions

The changes were moved, seconded, and approved. The revised text is given below.

3.21 Graduate Studies Regulations

3.21.1 Graduate Admissions

Undergraduate students who have achieved junior standing and a grade point average of 3.0 or greater may petition the Committee on the Standing of Graduate Students (SOGS) for permission to register for graduate level coursework. Undergraduate students may also request permission from the college administering the graduate program to apply course credits taken as an undergraduate toward a graduate degree. The following guidelines should be followed:

- 1. No undergraduate student may take 400-level courses during a term where the student's total credits are greater than 18 (including audits), with the exception of students enrolled in a 4+1 program.*
- 2. Students requesting a second 400-level course in a given term must petition the Standing of Graduate Students committee and may not register for more than 15 credits total in that term, with the exception of students enrolled in a 4+1 program.*
- 3. An undergraduate student may request permission to use no more than 12 credits taken as an undergraduate toward a graduate degree. These courses must be at the 300 and 400 level and beyond all undergraduate degree requirements. Courses at the 200 level must be approved by the course instructor, department chairperson, and the appropriate college dean to be considered eligible for graduate program credits. The course credits may not have been submitted as part of the requirements for a previous degree. A grade of B or better must be attained.*
- 4. Students who elect to pursue a graduate degree at Lehigh University must apply to their program of interest through the graduate application process. Students may elect to reserve credits either before or after their official graduate application is completed, but before the baccalaureate degree is awarded.*
- 5. All students receiving a graduate degree must be enrolled at least one full semester or summer as a regular-status graduate student prior to the awarding of a graduate degree.*

3.21.1.1 Accelerated 4 + 1 Programs

Students with junior standing who are completing the undergraduate portion of their 4 + 1 program may register for 400-level courses through the process of the college in which the graduate program will be completed. Students with sophomore standing who are completing the undergraduate portion of their 4 + 1 may register for 300-level courses in their graduate curriculum through the process of the college in which the graduate program will be completed.

Students may take a maximum of 18 credits when enrolled in two 400-level courses and may petition to overload when enrolled in one 400-level course. Students in these programs may begin their graduate-level coursework when they enter their second year of attendance at Lehigh, achieve a grade point average of 3.0 or greater, and attain sophomore standing, in consultation with their undergraduate major advisor.

5. R&P 2.2.1.5 Criteria to be Applied (in T&P) (First Reading)

The details are available at

https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Proposed%20R%26P%20Changes%20on%20P%26T_111825.docx.pdf

The changes were moved and seconded. During the follow-up discussion, senators raised issues related to the need to include teaching and the role of teaching evaluations (Professor Frank Gunter), need to broaden the examples of public-facing activities and to go beyond scholarship by including teaching and service (Haiyan Jia), the difficulty in including specific examples due to their inability to be comprehensive and hence the desirability of removing examples from this R&P document but include more detailed guidelines from the Provost's Office and in department documentation (Professors Beibei Dong and George DuPaul), the need to focus the changes to things not considered currently (Professor Wenxin Liu), the need to make the main document short to avoid confusion (Professors Hannah Dailey and Beibei Dong), but add an appendix with additional details and examples (Professors Subhrajit Bhattacharya and Angela Hicks), and the need to acknowledge public facing work in our documentation in some way as it has been excluded so far (Professor Will Lowry).

6. R&P 3.1.4.2 Undergraduate Leaves of Absence (First Reading)

The proposal is available at

[https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Revised_R%26P%203.1.4.2%20UG%20Leave%20of%20Absence%20Policy%20\(1\)_0.pdf](https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Revised_R%26P%203.1.4.2%20UG%20Leave%20of%20Absence%20Policy%20(1)_0.pdf)

Professor Jenna Lay explained that the changes reflect the current practice. Professor Angela Hicks noted that first-semester students may require a different procedure. Professor Frank Gunter noted that students can automatically receive a five-year leave of absence for some government services, such as the National Guard and the armed forces reserves.

Professor Jenna Lay noted that the revised proposal with suggested editorial changes will be finalized before the second reading.

7. R&P 2.15 Limits on Term (Non-tenure track) Faculty [Discussion Only]

Professor Peter Zeitler noted that a formal motion for proposed changes would be introduced subsequently. The entire Lehigh faculty must then approve any such motion before being sent to the Board of Trustees for approval. The following were the salient points discussed.

- There are no publicly available documents detailing the proportion of term faculty at peer universities. [Professor Peter Zeitler in response to Professor Subhrajit Bhattacharya]
- College deans are most concerned about adjunct faculty numbers and quality; they are not happy about restrictions on term faculty. [Provost Nathan Urban]
- There should be a cap for the proportion of term faculty that is below 30%; further, the caps for different categories of term faculty must be specified; there are no rules governing the number of adjunct faculty members [Professor Anders Knospe]
- Ranking criteria and accreditation requirements place implicit limits on adjunct faculty. [College of Business Associate Dean for Graduate Programs Burak Eskici]
- Colleges differ in how they use adjunct faculty, and these differences must be recognized. [Professor Peter Zeitler, in response to Professor Will Lowry's point that some departments prefer to use adjuncts for certain specialty roles in the arts]
- Data on credit hours taught by adjunct faculty are available. [Deputy Provost Larry Snyder in response to Professor Anders Knospe]
- We should focus more on the quality and less on the number of adjuncts. [Professor Maryam Rahnemoonfar]

9. New Business

Labor Day Classes: Professor Jenna Lay noted that the feedback so far indicates that faculty senators are not in favor of changing the status quo. This is due to potential issues with the mid-term grade deadline and childcare arrangements (unless asynchronous instruction is allowed for classes on Labor Day). Senators were encouraged to share additional feedback with the Senate Executive Committee.

Respectfully submitted by



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Secretary of the Faculty