

**COMBINED MEETING OF THE LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE AND THE LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY FACULTY**

Minutes of the Meeting held on April 14, 2023, at 1:30 pm

Sinclair Auditorium

**Do the Minutes include R&P Changes? Yes/~~No~~
Do they require Board of Trustees approval – ~~Yes~~/No**

Faculty Senate Vice Chairperson Professor Peter Zeitler called the Meeting to order.

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

Professor Peter Zeitler called for any corrections to the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of 03/03/2023. A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made and seconded. The Senate unanimously approved the minutes.

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

2. Consent Calendar: Graduation Motions

May 2023 and August 2023 Graduation motions were moved, seconded, and unanimously approved. The motions are available at

https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/MAY%20and%20AUGUST%20graduation%20motions_2.pdf

3. Provost's Remarks

Provost Nathan Urban provided an update on the potentially unforeseen challenges facing universities like Lehigh.

The following were the salient points mentioned. Unless specifically mentioned, the points were made by Provost Nathan Urban.

- Lehigh's investments in supporting applications for national scholarships and fellowships are showing positive results, with faculty members and students successfully obtaining these awards.
- Demographic changes (decline in the college-age population, especially in the northeast), challenges in diversifying the student body, State Governments such as Pennsylvania discontinuing the need for college degrees for many jobs, alternative credentials available for some skills, issues related to the proper use of generative AI, and the increase in the number of students with mental health issues are factors that will significantly influence the future of universities, including Lehigh.
- The anticipated Supreme court decisions related to affirmative action in admissions will significantly impact all aspects of higher education, including financial aid. The decision's impact will depend upon whether the court completely disallows affirmative action or puts additional constraints on its implementation.
- The most troubling issue is the declining trust in higher education indicated by national surveys. This decline is interesting because the superior value of higher education in people's lives has been demonstrated in various studies.
- Race and simple and direct surrogate indicators for race may be disallowed. Still, other criteria, devising admissions strategies for specific ZIP codes and admitting high-performing students from all high schools in a state, etc., may more likely prevail. [In response to Professor Anne Meltzer]
- A recent New York Times article argues that only 15% of all college admissions are purely based on academic merit.
- Race may be disallowed as a factor in admissions, but more trivial factors are allowed. This trend is troubling. [Professor Anne Meltzer]
- The lack of trust in higher education in the U.S. is shocking. [Professor Dawn Keetley]
- Trust in higher education has been decreasing for many years now. The high cost of higher education and the perceived low relevance of higher education are some key reasons. Higher education is also to be blamed for its lack of public trust. Educators should be modest in their assertions to avoid too much polarization.
- Are we doing enough about skepticism toward higher education? Perhaps the personal connection with students is more critical than faculty Op-Eds. [Professor Peter Zeitler]

- We must address the issue; currently, academic research is considered too abstract and not integrated with community needs.
- What is the administration's position on tuition and financial aid? [Professor Anne Meltzer]
- Among our peer group of 22 universities, Lehigh is 21st according to the cost of attending. So, we are doing well. We meet the full demonstrated financial need based on FAFSA. On average, Lehigh covers 40% of the expenses. Lehigh also scores very high on financial return on investment (ranking in the mid-20s). In a way, people paying full tuition subsidize financial aid to other students.
- Lehigh is better prepared for demographic shifts than most private universities. Our biggest protection is the high demand from students. [In response to Professor Timm Wrase's question about Lehigh's financial preparation for the near future]
- The terminology used in the discussion surrounding students' mental health issues is vague. [Professor Hyunok Choi]
- Most students seeking attention suffer from depression and anxiety rather than more serious issues such as bipolar disorder and Schizophrenia.
- There is a lack of accountability for poor mentoring of graduate students. [Associate Deputy Provost for Graduate Education Kathleen Hutnik]

4. Senate Chairperson's Remarks

Senate Vice Chairperson Peter Zeitler made the following remarks.

- The shared governance is not working. We should discuss the meaning of shared governance and what it should look like. A meeting between the Senate and senior administration is scheduled for May 2023.
- Faculty participation is a chicken-or-egg question. Faculty must participate in decision-making, and the senior administration should incorporate faculty input. If faculty members do not participate, shared governance does not work.
- We need to carefully examine the workload created by various service activities and focus more on service that matters.
- We should also discuss the operation of the Senate. It appears that most of the meeting time is spent discussing R&P changes.

5. Second Readings of R&P Changes

- a. R&P 2.10 Graduate Assistants (Major revision)
- b. R&P 2.11 Research and Graduate Project Assistants (Delete)
- c. R&P 3.21.1 Graduate Admissions (Major revision)
- d. R&P 3.14.5 Special Undergraduate Course Opportunities (Minor addition to be consistent with revised R&P 3.21.1)

Because of low attendance by Senators that might have left the meeting below a quorum, a motion to postpone the consideration of all second readings was made, seconded, and approved. These will be considered during the next Meeting.

6. First Readings of R&P Changes

a. Revision of R&P 3.11.1 Graduation Honors

The proposed changes were moved and seconded. Professor Peter Zeitler noted that the changes are to make R&P consistent with current practices limiting the honors to undergraduate students since there are no graduation honors for graduate students. [In response to Professors Sara Kangas and Will Lowry]

b. Deletion of R&P 3.14.5.2 Cooperative Undergraduate Education

The proposed change was moved and seconded.

The proposal will come up for a second reading at the next Meeting.

c. Deletion of R&P 3.15.2 Winter Intersession

The proposed change was moved and seconded. Professor Peter Zeitler noted that there is no corresponding item in the R&P for the fall and spring semesters; therefore, there is no case for having this section. [In response to Professor Will Lowry]

The proposal will come up for a second reading at the next Meeting.

6. Admissions

Vice Provost for Admissions & Financial Aid Dan Warner made a presentation. The slides are available in Appendix 2.

[Appendix 2 available at <https://faculty senate.lehigh.edu/meeting-minutes>]

The following were the salient points discussed during the follow-up discussion.

- We are optimistic that we will not be using the waitlist this year; so the admit rate will remain at 28%. [In response to Professor Timm Wrase]
- Early decision acceptance rates are much higher than regular decision acceptance rates. Different philosophy is followed in evaluating early decision applications due to the binding nature of choice. [In response to Professor Peter Zeitler]
- The applicants submitting test scores are in the 50% range; our test scores are up, but there is a self-selection process – applicants who get a higher score are more likely to include their test scores. [In response to Professor Dawn Keetley]
- There are attempts to increase the number of transfer students from the Lehigh Valley by offering scholarships and streamlining the transfer credit evaluation. [In response to Professor Anne Meltzer]
- The phrase “mental health” is used more broadly to include all aspects of non-academic services and well-being. Lehigh faculty can communicate about these services to potential students. [In response to Professor Peter Zeitler’s question about mental health services as a factor in student decision-making]

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siva" with a horizontal line underneath it, all contained within a thin black rectangular border.

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