

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Meeting held on February 4, 2022, 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

Do the Minutes include R&P items requiring Board of Trustee approval – Yes/No

Faculty Senate Chair Professor Kathy Iovine called the meeting to order.

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

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

1. Minutes of the Prior Faculty Senate Meeting

Professor Kathy Iovine called for any corrections to the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of 12/03/2021. 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. Senate Chairperson's Update and Follow-Up Discussion

Professor Kathy Iovine provided an update. The following are the salient points made during the discussion. Unless otherwise noted, the points were made by Professor Kathy Iovine.

- Professor Jill Schneider will replace Professor Josh Pepper as a member of the Senate.
- The Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs is undertaking a university-wide salary equity study.
- The administration will provide an update on the University's budget process at the University Faculty Meeting on 03/25/2022.
- A faculty forum on controversial topics on 02/16/2022 will focus on academic freedom. [Professor Frank Gunter]

- Currently, Senate Chair and Vice-Chair are given course releases.
- Discussions with the Provost are ongoing regarding standardization of course releases for senate service and senate executive committee service due to the substantial service commitment. [Professor Frank Gunter supported by Professor Jeremy Littau]
- Department chairpersons do not evaluate faculty service consistently. [Professor Parveen Gupta]
- Service demands on faculty should be examined more broadly; some faculty members are overburdened with different service responsibilities, and equitable reward systems and course releases must be considered. [Professor Jenna Lay supported by Professors Bridget Dever and Doug Mahony]
- Faculty Affairs Sub-Committee will study the broader issue of faculty service and course release. [Professor Kathy Iovine]

3. Senate Subcommittee Updates

The following were the salient topics being addressed by the subcommittees.

Faculty Affairs:

- (1) Steps for improving response rates of course evaluations and (2) providing more organized and reliable support for students with documented disabilities. [Professor George Nation]

Inclusive Community:

- Working with department chairpersons to provide DEI resources and activities. [Professor Ed Gomez]

Academic and Student Affairs:

- (1) Revitalization of the Faculty Committee on Student Life, (2) changing the subject codes for educational programs, and (3) 4+1 master's program proposed by GRC [Professor Ray Pearson]
- There is a need to develop streamlined course and curriculum change processes. [Professor Ray Pearson]

Research Environment:

- Review of internal funding policies and procedures, and (2) the role of Vice Provost for Research. [Professor Craig Hochbein]

University Issues and Initiatives:

- Speeding up of the graduate program approval process proposed by Deputy Provost for Graduate Programs Oiver Yao. [Professor Peter Zeitler]

4a. Open Discussion by the Senators

The following were the salient issues raised.

- Barriers to dual degree programs; concerns about salary raises not being enough to cover inflation; rules not appearing in R&P but communicated to the departments by the University Registrar, especially regarding cross-listing provisional courses in interdisciplinary programs and consistency of course descriptions between line schedules and the catalog [Professor Jenna Lay]
- Addressing the perception that the faculty senate is not doing enough about salary issues [Professors Tony DiMaggio and Jeremy Littau]
- Increased workload for faculty further exasperating inadequate salary increases [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- Faculty morale and student morale being very low [Professor Kelly Austin]
- Students not having adequate dining options [Professor Kelly Austin]
- Students thinking about leaving Lehigh [Professor Kelly Austin and Professor Jenna Lay]
- Greek Life issues [Professor Peter Zeitler]
- The need for more clarity about the selling of real estate by Lehigh [Professor Peter Zeitler]
- Issues with the Lyterati system [Professors Peter Zeitler and Mellie Kalakatos]

- We need to evaluate the purpose of PAR and how faculty and department chairs are using it. The complaint about Lyterati is regarding the PAR and not about the P&T process. [Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs Jackie Krasas]
- The University administration has been made aware of the faculty salary issues by the Faculty Senate leadership. [Professor Frank Gunter]
- A formal statement by the Faculty Senate about faculty salary issues will be useful. [Professor Tony DiMaggio]
- Salary issues should be discussed at the upcoming faculty meeting in March. [Professor Jenna Lay]

5. Remarks by President Joe Helble & Follow-up Discussion

President Joe Helble thanked the faculty for resuming the residential experience for our students and said that he was looking forward to participating in more in-person events on campus. He said that he has been engaging with several groups such as assistant professors, department chairpersons, Lehigh faculty, students, and the broader community. He mentioned that he was aware of the challenges faculty face in teaching, research, and service.

President Helble noted that we should identify academic areas of excellence that will provide Lehigh national and international leadership. The principles such as being the first, the best, or the only one in a given domain can help us identify specific areas for resource allocation. We should ensure that all Lehigh students get the fundamental knowledge areas to succeed from all of our colleges, appreciate the values of diversity and open discussion, and build a strong sense of community. Student access and affordability are essential for the future of Lehigh. Our success would depend upon increasing graduation rates, achieving gender equity, and enhanced job placement.

President Helble said that the strategic planning process will begin soon with a working group that will review prior strategic plans and documentation. Additional details about the strategic planning process will be forthcoming soon.

The following are the salient points made by President Helble during the ensuing discussion.

- The President was aware of faculty concerns related to faculty salary raises not keeping up with inflation. He is committed to conducting salary equity studies regularly (every three/four years). Such studies should not be limited to times of crisis. [in response to Professor Frank Gunter]
- The President understood that the morale of faculty, staff, and students is low; the University would organize spontaneous and planned events to bring the community together. Faculty members should directly contact him with concerns and suggestions. [In response to Professor Jeremy Littau]

- We are three-fourths of our way to achieving the \$1 billion target for the “Go” campaign. Student affordability and financial aid are the topmost priorities, as are resources for intercollegiate programs. [In response to Professor Doug Mahony]
- An increase in the size of the interdisciplinary programs cannot be successfully achieved without earmarking the needed resources. Discussions are taking place about ways of strengthening our interdisciplinary programs.
- Lehigh’s value proposition depends upon students’ ability to draw freely from coursework available at different parts of the University.
- The strategic plan is not limited to articulating our aspirations. It should also offer tactics for identifying and removing barriers to increase the value of Lehigh education to all of our students. [In response to Professor Jenna Lay]
- Faculty members are the intellectual lifeblood of the University, and the University stands to benefit if conversations with faculty are generative rather than limited to consultations during the later stages of decision-making. [In response to Professor Peter Zeitler]
- We will examine ways to increase campus activities, the availability of food on campus for students, and opportunities for strategic and opportunistic engagement among faculty and students. [In response to Professor Kelly Austin]

Professor Kathy Iovine noted that President Helble’s remarks are helpful in understanding his perspectives and hoped for continued interactions between the Faculty Senate and the President. President Helble agreed to come back to the Senate to provide further updates on university matters.

4b. (Continued) Open Discussion by the Senators

- Students feel isolated, some ask for recommendation letters to transfer out of Lehigh, and some take leaves of absence. We might consider asking Director of Retention Donna Mohr to visit the Faculty Senate to address these issues. [Professors Jill Schneider and Jenna Lay]
- Most faculty are not interested in teaching on Fridays or following a Wednesday-Friday schedule. [University Registrar Steve Wilson in response to Professor Parveen Gupta’s point that W/F classes can reduce student stress levels]
- A 10-minute gap between classes essentially eliminates student-faculty interactions before/after classes. [Professor Parveen Gupta]

- There is a concern among the faculty members that information about faculty social media activities collected as part of the background check is made available to the University by CBY, the agency conducting the background checks. [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- The background check process seems to be very intrusive. Why do we need to take fingerprints the second time? [Professor Clay Naito along with Professors Frank Gunter and Ray Pearson]
- The Provost's Office will take a look at this issue. [Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs Jackie Krasas]
- Limiting the number of classes offered on prime time is one way to prevent students from cramming their schedules and increasing their stress levels; the proposed new software will enable conducting more robust degree audits. [Registrar Steve Wilson]
- The Calendar Committee can look into expanding the current gap of 10 minutes between classes; more consultation is needed regarding the costs and benefits of this change. Consultation with the Council of Deans, calendar committee, and a subset of senators is possible. [Registrar Steve Wilson; Professor Kathy Iovine concurred]
- The Faculty Senate should look into the recent restructuring of the campus safety division; the restructuring was contrary to the recommendations by a committee appointed to evaluate the safety issues on campus. [Professor Kelly Austin]
- The Senate Executive Committee will discuss this issue and develop a plan. [Professor Kathy Iovine]

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Siva". The signature is written in black ink and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

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

Secretary of the Faculty