

# LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Meeting held on April 24, 2020, 2:00 pm

Via Zoom

Faculty Senate Chair Professor Douglas Mahony 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 Faculty Senate Meeting of 04/03/2020**

Professor Doug Mahony called for any corrections to the minutes of the Lehigh University faculty senate meeting of 04/03/2020.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

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

## **2. Updates by Professor Doug Mahony**

Professor Doug Mahony provided an update. Salient points are summarized below.

- Faculty involvement in the planning groups set up by the University to discuss scenarios for the Fall 2020 semester and beyond is being raised with the President and the Provost. [In response to Professor Jenna Lay]
- Professor Ageliki Nicolopoulou will provide an update on Faculty Senate involvement.
- There is a plan to hold a faculty townhall to discuss the implications of Covid-19 for Lehigh. University Senior leadership will participate as well.

## **3. Remarks by Provost Patrick Farrell and Follow Up Discussion**

Provost Farrell provided an update. Unless otherwise noted, comments are made by Provost Patrick Farrell.

- Overall, remote teaching in response to Covid-19 has gone reasonably well.

- A small committee will be set up to present options for Fall 2020. A wide variety of scenarios are being evaluated including fully online, fully on campus (highly unlikely), delaying the semester, having some students on a rotating basis on campus, and others that are combinations of these options.
- Our options will be primarily governed by federal, state, and local government guidelines.
- The goal is to arrive at this determination by June 1, 2020.
- There is still uncertainty about the incoming class size. This will have significant budget implications. For example, reduction the number of students from 5000 to 4500 will result in a \$15 million difference in revenue. Of course, the number of students will depend upon how we design our plans for Fall 2020.
- Already announced hiring freeze and the cancellation of the merit raises will help our budget situation.
- Limited faculty access to campus may be available sometime during May, 2020; but physical distancing practices will be followed even as we provide restricted access to enable faculty to retrieve things from their offices. Dean's will be involved in deciding this access. [In response to Professor Frank Gunter]
- Debriefing should be conducted with faculty to understand lessons learned, opportunities, and challenges.
- While the Spring 2020 transition was a sudden development with a very short notice, if we decide to implement remote teaching for Fall 2020, the expectations will be higher given that summer can be used to prepare for teaching in the fall. LTS will work with faculty to assist them.
- There will be opportunities to make changes in fall offerings. A number of strategies to support courses are being considered by LTS – for example, intense support for some high enrollment courses versus uniform support for all who seek such support. Faculty input will definitely be useful and be considered in devising our approach [In response to Professor Kelly Austin's comment about the potential need for recalibration of fall courses and fall 2020 registration timeline could have been altered.]
- Office/lab access to graduate students is also being considered and procedures will be developed. [In response to Professor Peter Zeitler]
- Decisions will be made after consultations with the deans and faculty. Open discussions with faculty, faculty senate, and undergraduate and graduate student senates will be held once we are ready with some alternative scenarios for more detailed evaluation. Given the constraints, it cannot be based on majority rule. [In response to Professor Jenna Lay's question about the process for obtaining feedback before the University decides on Fall 2020 teaching scenarios]
- Senate is already involved in curriculum design strategies with LTS staff. [Professor Ageliki Nicolopoulou]

- Registrar's Office is already working on some scenarios so they will be ready when the actual decision is made. [Registrar Steve Wilson]
- It is important for the department chairpersons to keep their faculty informed. [Professor Doug Mahony; Provost Patrick Farrell concurred]

Provost Patrick Farrell expressed his appreciation for the hard work of faculty in these challenging times.

#### **4. Discussion about Curriculum & Course Evaluations**

The following are the salient points made during the discussion.

- A small group is being set up to collect ideas and suggestions for enhancing student experiences. [Professor Ageliki Nicolopoulou]
- Low response for student course evaluations is a concern. Additional questions should also focus on the major shift in pedagogy taking place this semester. [Professor Al Wurth]
- New questions are being added to get feedback about changes this semester. Individual faculty can also request custom questions to be added. This year, the student feedback will only be shared with the individual faculty members. They will be used only for developmental purposes and not for evaluation. [Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs Jackie Krasas]
- It may be useful if prior to students completing the evaluation, they are told that Lehigh was making changes to the mode of delivery not voluntarily but in response to government regulations and to protect students and faculty. [Professor Bob Skibbens]

#### **5. First Readings**

The motions are available at the following link (under April 24, 2020)

<https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/meeting-documents>

##### **Changes to R&P 2.2.5.7.3 Elective Extension of Probationary Period for Any Reason in the Year Prior to the Final Probationary Year**

##### **Changes to R&P 2.2.5.8 Maximum Length of Probationary Period**

A motion to suspend the "seven-day rule" for the introduction of R&P changes was made, seconded, and approved by the senators. The proposed changes were moved and seconded. The following are the salient points discussed:

- There are serious equity issues related to the “opt in” process proposed. A blanket extension for all faculty with an option for an “opt out” is more reasonable and will avoid unneeded disclosure of health and other personal information by faculty members. [Professor Jenna Lay]
- A blanket extension for all faculty will likely not be supported by the Provost and the Board of Trustees. The language was arrived at to recognize that only a small number of faculty may be affected by this, the primary objective is the change of “eight years” to “nine years” as upper limit, and to provide flexibility for affected faculty. The equity issue is a broader issue that can be taken up in the future. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- Faculty may be better off taking the Covid-19 extension now even if they may not need the other extensions in the future. [Professor Al Wurth]
- That is not the intent of the proposal; the objective is to change the maximum time from “eight year” to “nine years.” Request for extension due to Covid-19 can be applied for under the personal hardship provision. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- Since some other institutions are providing a blanket extension, it is important to provide a detailed explain to the faculty. [Professor Craig Hochbein]
- Covid-19 can be used whether the faculty member has used one or two extensions before or has not used any other extension before. Similarly, the other two extensions can be taken even if someone takes an extension for Covid-19. The goal is to ensure that no one is penalized due to Covid-19. [Professors Frank Gunter and Doug Mahony in response to clarifications sought by Professors Matt Melone, Heibatollah Sami, Al Wurth, and Damien Thevenin]
- The wording should be clarified to avoid any confusion regarding the eligibility, timing of application, and details provided in the application for tenure extension due to Covid-19. [Professors Bridget Dever, Haiyan Jia, Jenna Lay, Heibatollah Sami, Matt Melone, and Damien Thevenin]
- The various issue raised are good justifications for the “blanket” policy with the “opt out” provision. [Professor Jenna Lay]
- The wording changes to reflect today’s discussion will be made prior to the second reading. Since the BOT is not likely to support a blanket extension with an “opt out” provision, the revision for the second reading will not include the blanket extension. That is a broader issue for the future. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- In the interest of timeliness, the current proposal should be adopted immediately. However, details of documentation for the personal hardship provision needs to be clarified in the future. [Professor Bridget Dever]

These motions will come up for a second reading after suitable modifications at the next Senate meeting.

### **Changes to R&P 3.7.2 Common Hour Exams**

The motion was moved and seconded. Professor Ray Pearson briefly introduced the motion and clarified key elements the motion. A brief discussion followed in support of the motion. Professor Pearson concurred with Professor Bob Thornton's clarification that the wording should be "one exam period per day" and not "one exam per day."

This will come up for a second reading at the next meeting.

### **Changes to R&P 3.7.3.1 Final Examinations**

The motion was moved and seconded. A brief discussion followed. Wording changes will be made to clarify the exams to mean undergraduate proctored exams on campus (Professor Ray Pearson), to accommodate varying time zones in online exams (Professors Ray Pearson and Al Wurth, Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs Jennifer Jensen), to recognize distance education proctored exams that are different from the undergraduate exams (Professor Bob Skibbens), and to make sure that the differences between graduate course exams and undergraduate course exams are recognized (Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs Jennifer Jensen).

Suitable wording changes will be made prior to the motion coming up for a second reading at the next meeting. [Professor Doug Mahony]

### **Changes to R&P 3.1.4. Transfer Credit**

The motion was made and seconded. A brief discussion followed. Professor Doug Mahony noted that this change enables a speedy decision when the discretion of the Registrar is involved. Registrar Steve Wilson clarified that the Registrar's Office does not override department decisions. The current change is to simplify matters. Anything that needs consultation with the departments will be processed in consultation with the department.

This will come up for a second reading at the next meeting.

## **6. *Options to Matriculate International First-Year Students***

Vice President and Vice Provost for International Affairs Cheryl Matherly updated the senate about Lehigh University's plans for international first year students for next year in light of the current Covid-19 situation. The document describing the details is provided as Appendix 2.

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

A brief discussion followed during which several senators expressed their support. The proposal is considered unique (Vice President and Vice Provost for International Affairs Cheryl Matherly), has precedent with Lehigh in Washington, DC (Professor Frank Gunter), and the language of instruction will be in English and one course will be taught online by Lehigh faculty (Professor Frank Gunter). In response to Professor Jenna Lay, Vice President and Vice Provost Cheryl Matherly noted that several options are being presented to international students including classes at Bethlehem, remote learning, and deferral of admission. Furthermore, a Zoom meeting is being organized for admitted students and parents to describe the options and issue clarifications. To a concern from Professor Bob Skibbens whether the arrangement will be viewed as a competition with Lehigh's regular programs, Vice President and Vice Provost Cheryl Matherly noted that the first semester is designed to achieve seamless blending and the coursework will be carefully planned. Professor Frank Gunter noted that the Educational Policy Committee endorsed the proposal unanimously. The Faculty Senate overwhelmingly endorsed a Sense of the Faculty Resolution supporting the plan proposed by the Office of International Affairs.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

**Respectfully submitted by**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Siva". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

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

**Secretary of the Faculty**