

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Meeting held on June 19, 2020, 1:00 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 05/01/2020

Professor Doug Mahony called for any corrections to the minutes of the Lehigh University faculty senate meeting of 05/01/2020.

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. Remarks by Senate Chair Doug Mahony

The remarks made by Professor Mahony about Juneteenth appear in Appendix 2.

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

3. Financial implications of the University in Response to COVID 19

Vice President for Finance & Administration Patricia Johnson and Director of Budget Office Warren Loller provided an update on the financial implications of Lehigh's response to Covid-19. The slides used by them are provided as Appendix 3.

[Appendix 3 available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/meeting-minutes>]

The following are the salient points made during the ensuing discussion.

- The numbers in the slides will be revised shortly to reflect updated information. The updated information can then be shared with all senators. [Mr. Warren Loller]
- We cannot charge funding agencies more than the actual expenditure incurred for benefits. Internal cost recovery numbers will be reconciled after auditing and the actual rates will be charged to the funding agencies. These rates are likely to be less than the amount approved for projects by the funding agencies due to Lehigh not paying retirement contributions starting July 1, 2020. [Provost Patrick Farrell and incoming Provost Nathan Urban in response to a question from Professor Clay Naito about charging external funding agencies for employee retirement benefits during the time when Lehigh University does not provide retirement contributions]
- Several models are available for salary reductions including having a cutoff below which there would be no salary reductions. However, we have not worked out the details because we are hoping that we do not need to implement salary reductions. [Provost Patrick Farrell in response to a question from Professor Jennifer Swann about whether Lehigh is giving thought to a sliding scale for potential salary reductions]
- Issuing bonds is feasible but not a good idea. Although Lehigh plans to use some reserves to address the current deficit, in general, operating deficit should be made up from reductions in operating expenses. [Provost Patrick Farrell in response to a question from Professor Damien Thevenin about using loans and debts to address the budget shortfall]
- It is unusual to borrow for operating expenses. Our debt is for long-term capital projects and the rates are fixed. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees (BOT) will not support borrowing for operating expenses. [Vice President for Finance & Administration Patricia Johnson in response to a question from Professor Parveen Gupta about Lehigh borrowing money to take advantage of the low prevailing interest rates]
- Our interest rates are already low and there is no opportunity for refinancing. [Vice President for Finance & Administration Patricia Johnson in response to a question from Professors Parveen Gupta and Matt Melone about refinancing our debt using the low fixed rates currently available]
- The decision to temporarily stop retirement contribution was made to avoid salary reduction. [Vice President for Finance & Administration Patricia Johnson]
- Some 188 current students say that they are not coming back in August. [Vice President for Finance & Administration Patricia Johnson]
- We can expect a higher melt in the number of newly admitted students actually starting in Fall 2020. [Provost Patrick Farrell]

- Faculty surveys indicate that there is an approximately even split between faculty members who want to teach face-to-face and faculty members who want to teach remotely. Students are also being surveyed. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- More detailed information about reopening guidelines will be forthcoming. Everyone will be required to wear masks when inside buildings. [Provost Patrick Farrell in response to a question from Professor Tony DiMaggio about requirement for masks in the classroom]
- Faculty and staff are already required to wear masks in research spaces. [Incoming Provost Nathan Urban]
- Offsetting the melt by going deeper into the waitlist would require additional funds related to disability, tutoring, and related services to students. [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- Lehigh is very much aware of that; efforts will be made to ensure student success. [Provost Patrick Farrell]
- Reducing expenses uniformly across the board is not a prudent strategy. Budget for technology, student support, and mental health services will have to increase. [Incoming Provost Nathan Urban]
- Elaborate plans are being prepared for managing the return of students, faculty, and staff to campus. Opening of research facilities is being used as a pilot for the full opening of the campus. We are talking to other universities in the country. We will prepare our plan based on the best advice and the plan will include provisions for testing, isolation of infected individuals, contact tracing, appropriate documentation, and so on. We do have the means for a moderate number of testing for Covid-19. The costs and benefits of increasing the testing are being examined. A number of people are working hard on these plans and they will be revealed to the campus community as and when the plans are finalized. [Incoming Provost Nathan Urban in response to a question from Professor Al Wurth about the need for a sophisticated plan for reopening so people feel comfortable coming back]
- There is no plan for furloughing of faculty. [Provost Patrick Farrell in response to a question from Clay Naito]
- The hybrid mode of instruction requires a significant investment. This is especially severe for part time faculty who are not paid full time salary. [Professor Jenna Lay]
- Workshops on instructional technology should be made available for everyone. [Incoming Provost Nathan Urban]

- Several workshops on instructional technology are being planned for the summer; all sessions are recorded so faculty members joining in August can also benefit. [Vice Provost for LTS Greg Reihman]
- Supporting financially vulnerable groups by providing training and compensation should be considered. [Professor Jenna Lay; Incoming Provost Nathan Urban concurred and noted that this is a budget issue and although campus-wide policies may not be feasible at present, individual cases can be considered based on merit]

4. Current campus climate/culture

Vice President for Equity and Community Donald Outing, Deputy Vice Vice President for Equity and Community Henry Odi, and Chief of Police Jason Schiffer made some initial remarks on the issue and a discussion followed. The salient points are summarized below.

- Antiracism is an important conversation to have at Lehigh. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- Antiracism cannot be legislated and must involve faculty. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- We must educate ourselves about antiracism, hold ourselves accountable, dismantle systems and policies that do not work, and educate the community about these issues. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- Some progress has been made but more needs to be done. [Dr. Henry Odi]
- Changes have been made in faculty search processes to address diversity and inclusion issues. [Dr. Henry Odi]
- Workshops are being offered on inclusive excellence in teaching. [Dr. Henry Odi]
- Lehigh has the opportunity to take some bold steps. [Dr. Henry Odi]
- Early exposure to inclusion and diversity in will help. [Chief of Police Jason Schiffer]
- Having specific coursework on inclusion and diversity in the curriculum is important. [Chief of Police Jason Schiffer]
- Curricular changes are under the purview of faculty senate. [Professor Doug Mahony]

- Some faculty oppose diversity and inclusion by citing academic freedom. Academic freedom does not offer the absolute right to say anything by faculty members. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- We need to think carefully before talking about Lehigh Police disassociating from Bethlehem Police. We have influence in how they operate. We will leverage our strong relationship with Bethlehem Police to ensure that antiracist policies and procedures are implemented. [Chief of Police Jason Schiffer]
- Educating ourselves about racism is important. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- Not everything said by the proponents of antiracism may be accurate. [Professor Frank Gunter]
- It is important to consider the overall context rather than relying solely on the meaning of individual comments by authors. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- There is a need to be proactive rather than reactive. Leadership at the highest level should be involved. [Professors Mellie Katakalos and Liang Cheng]
- While it is important to call out racism, more important is to look at the institutional processes. For example, does the promotion and tenure process support inclusion? Does the outcome reflect our intentions related to inclusion and diversity? While promotion and tenure are bureaucratic processes, they are important tools. [Provost Patrick Farrell]
- Rules and Procedures themselves are not biased; bias comes in the way we implement the rules. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- Some female and minority faculty are asked to do more service while the university seems to promote faculty primarily based on scholarship. [Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs Jackie Krasas]
- It is true that the Department of Education has started an investigation into Lehigh related to the Clery Act. We do not know what specifically prompted the investigation. [Provost Patrick Farrell in response to Professor Frank Gunter]
- The points raised by graduate students related to inclusion and diversity will be considered by the Faculty Senate; and a Faculty Code of Conduct is being developed. [Professor Kathy Iovine in response to Professor Jenna Lay]
- Diversity is a much bigger problem and goes beyond students of color. We must coordinate with other universities in our efforts. [Professor Hugo Caram]

- The non-white student population at Lehigh has grown steadily to 27%. If we do not focus on diversity and inclusion, we will have a problem in filling our classes due to demographic changes. [Provost Patrick Farrell]
- We should create opportunities for faculty getting together in social settings such as the erstwhile Cosmos Club. [Professor Peter Zeitler]
- We should act like a supportive community. [Professor Jennifer Swann]
- We should acknowledge that Covid-19 has different effects on different people; similarly, restarting Lehigh will also have differential impacts. We must anticipate and deal with future issues (e.g., non-vulnerable people not wearing masks can adversely affect the vulnerable population). The issue of differential impacts of racism and disadvantage among students will be exacerbated, e.g., in terms of ease of access to online courses, and in risk to family and community from infection. This is extremely important because our process for choosing to return to campus will result in self-selection by the least risk-averse students, who will, on average, reflect both lower likelihood of compliance with public health measures, and more resources to address COVID exposure and quarantine. [Professor Al Wurth]
- U.S. Military examined its processes and implemented changes. As a result, it achieved remarkable success in the hiring of diverse faculty and was recognized with various awards. [Dr. Donald Outing]
- Lehigh recently hosted a conference on the value of service. We can learn from such conferences. Furthermore, we have to broaden the pool of faculty candidates to increase diversity. [Dr. Henry Odi]
- Law enforcement can be done in an antiracist manner. We are rewriting the policy on use of force although our policy is better than many others in the country. Additional training and more interaction between faculty members and the Lehigh Police will be useful. [Chief of Police Jason Schiffer]

5. Additional Topics

- More detailed communications from the administration about reopening of the campus will be forthcoming in the next few days. The University is covering some of the up-front costs involved in getting the campus ready for reopening. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- An online presence for a consolidated document that includes all campus communications about Covid-19 would be useful. [Professor Josh Pepper]

- Some Fall 2020 class schedules are likely to change; more clarity will be there in July 2020. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- LTS has created guidelines for the range of instructional modes and additional information and training session schedules will follow. Most courses are likely to adopt some version of blended teaching. Provost's Office is working with the Deans to plan the distribution of courses across the various modes of instruction. There will also be collegewide sessions to provide information about fall teaching modes and preparations. [Vice Provost for LTS Greg Reihman]
- Due to physical distancing guidelines, the number of face-to-face classes will be limited. Furthermore, the schedule of some classes may also change. [Professor Doug Mahony]
- A Q&A document is being developed to provide answers to many questions from senators about campus reopening-related issues. [Professor Melli Katakalos]
- The Senators thanked Professor Doug Mahony for his leadership of the Senate for the last two years.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Siva" with a horizontal line underneath it.

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

Secretary of the Faculty