

# LEHIGH UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Meeting held on November 6, 2020, 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

Faculty Senate Chair Professor Kathy lovine 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 10/02/2020

Professor Kathy lovine called for any corrections to the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of 10/02/2020. A 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. Discussion: University Actions Around Addressing Structural Racism

Dr. Donald Outing (Vice President for Equity and Community), along with Dr. Khanjan Mehta (Vice Provost for Creative Inquiry), provided an update. Dr. Outing's remarks are in Appendix 2, and the slides used by him are in Appendix 3.

[Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/meeting-minutes>]

Vice Provost Khanjan Mehta noted that the Council for Equity and Community (CEC) is being restructured to include representation from all colleges and other university stems. CEC will have a representative from the Faculty Senate. Several thematic working groups are being formed, and success metrics are being developed.

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

- Where does Lehigh's Board of Trustees (BOT) fit in this plan? They do not seem to support faculty sentiment related to honorary degrees. It is important to make the BOT accountable. [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- The BOT has been appraised of faculty concerns, and the BOT is actively discussing them. [Vice President Donald Outing]

- Diversity & Inclusion subcommittee of the BOT has been apprised of Lehigh's plans for diversity and inclusion, and the subcommittee will bring the item for discussion with the BOT. [Vice President Donald Outing in response to Professor Mellie Katakalos]
- There is a need for the BOT to publicly address the issues faced by Professor Sirry Alang. [Professor Tony DiMaggio]
- The open letter by Lehigh faculty about Professor Sirry Alang has been shared with the BOT. A formal response is expected shortly. Professor Sirry Alang has been contacted regarding her needs and concerns. [Vice President Donald Outing]
- There has been no response from the University to the open letter. Furthermore, if faculty safety concerns for Prof. Alang are part of the reason for the continued lack of response, the issues outlined in the letter could also be addressed more broadly without naming Professor Sirry Alang in communications. [Professor Natasha Vermaak; she also noted that she was part of the team that created the open letter and sent to Lehigh's administrative leadership]

Chairs of the different Senate Subcommittees provided an update, and brief follow-up comments followed. The key points discussed are summarized below.

- The Educational Policy Committee is setting up several subcommittees to address racism and to generate suggestions to prevent racism. There is a sense that the faculty should take ownership of the process. [Professor Jeremy Littau – Academic & Student Affairs Subcommittee]
- Working with the Deputy Provost for Faculty Affairs, attention should be paid to faculty hiring and the evaluation of service in PARs. Each department should have a strategic hiring plan. Chairpersons will need help in this documentation. We should develop a definition of diversity in the context of Lehigh. It will be useful to have diversity and inclusion committees at the college level. Providing financial support for faculty members visiting Lehigh from HBCUs should be considered. Academic, as well as mental health issues must be addressed. [Professor Herman Nied – Faculty Affairs Subcommittee]
- If one short term priority item and one long-term priority item can be identified, the Faculty Senate can work with the CEC to implement them. [Professor Kathy Iovine]
- The results of the recently concluded climate survey will be shared with the campus community soon. [Dr. Donald Outing in response to Professor Jenna Lay]
- Discussions are taking place with the GRC, Deputy Provost for Graduate Education, and Vice President for Research to assess the initiatives underway and avoid duplication. The need for systemic changes, funding based on a portfolio model, and

training and evaluation of people working in the diversity and inclusion domain are being discussed. [Professor Craig Hochbein – Research Environment Subcommittee]

- Work is going on to generate ideas to reduce structural racism by working with the department chairs, to continue working on a faculty code of ethics, and to develop procedures for dealing with faculty members who are violating the code of ethics. [Professor Ed Gomez - Inclusive Community Subcommittee]

### 3. Grading Options for Fall 2020

Professor Kathy Iovine introduced the topic for discussion.

Professors Frank Gunter and Kathy Iovine noted that the extension in the add/drop period for courses has already been adopted by the University. It is available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Drop%20Add%20Revision%20Fall%202020.pdf>

The discussion proceeded about the grading options available to students.

The student proposal was presented by undergraduate students Ms. Alyssa Milrod and Mr. David Peterson. The proposal is available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Pass%20Fail%20Proposal%20Student%20Senate.pdf>

The request is to institute some form of pass/fail system for Fall 2020 with more restrictions (compared to the last semester) in terms of timing and the number of courses.

Professor Frank Gunter presented the set of options to the R&P proposed by the Senate in consultation with the Educational Policy Committee.

The document is available at <https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/CR%20Options%204Oct20.pdf>

Professor Gunter noted that Alternative #1 has already been implemented as per the Provost's memo to students on October 27, 2020.

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

- Since Covid-19 is worse this semester than the last semester, we should not put additional restrictions; we should simply follow what we did last year. We should not worry too much about the unintended consequence of a few students manipulating

the system in choosing the grading option after the grades are known. [Professor Parveen Gupta]

- The Educational Policy Committee considered Professor Gupta's point but disagreed because the Fall 2020 semester was not a surprise while Spring 2020 was a sudden development. If we go with the CR/NCR option, the students should not be allowed to choose their grades after the course grades are posted. [Professor Frank Gunter]
- Student performance in courses depends on student-related personal factors and course-related factors (some courses are taught well while others are not). Therefore, students need to be given some flexibility. [Ms. Alyssa Milrod]
- There is an agreement that students should choose the grading option before they know the final course grade. This will make students choose the grading option for the right reasons and with some careful thought. [Professor Kathy Iovine, Ms. Alyssa Milrod, and Mr. David Peterson]
- CR/DCR/NCR is preferable to Pass/Fail so students know if a particular course grade enables them to enroll in downstream courses. Knowing the exact grade obtained by the students is also helpful for faculty advisors. [Professor Jenna Lay]
- The actual grades obtained by the students are in the system and can be made available to faculty advisors. [Registrar Steve Wilson]
- CR/DCR/NCR was implemented (rather than tinkering with the pass/fail system) to recognize the extraordinary circumstances in Spring 2021 which may not repeat themselves in the future. [Professor Frank Gunter]
- Stipulating a minimum of 16 credits for qualifying to be on the Dean's list would level the playing field. [Ms. Alyssa Milrod; Mr. David Peterson concurred]
- We should send proper signals to students about their performance in courses (especially service courses) even if they choose an option that does not specify the exact grade. We should be open-minded about accommodating students with mental health issues. [Professor Angela Hicks]
- Since grades serve a diagnostic purpose, getting rid of them altogether is not a good idea. [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- Course grades are not reflective of a student's abilities. They are more an indication of resources available, computing access, access to multiple devices, etc. [Ms. Alyssa Milrod]
- If students want to put restrictions on timing as to when students can choose the grading options, that will be acceptable. However, despite some people trying to game the system, the system followed in Spring 2020 is a more reasonable system.

The exact timing of this choice should be communicated to students to avoid any confusion. [Professor Parveen Gupta]

- Comparability of grades for a course taught in Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 should be considered to ensure consistency. [Professor Parveen Gupta and Greg Tonkay]
- Equity between students with different levels of resources and between students who take courses with and without a final exam must be considered. [Professors Jenna Lay, Jeremy Littau, and Doug Mahony]
- "Incomplete" grade is an option if there are any issues with the proposed changes. [Professor Jim Gilchrist in response to a question raised by Professor Greg Tonkay about students facing problems just prior to the final exams]
- At the minimum, students should be allowed to make a choice after they take the final exam (but before the grades are known). [Professor Parveen Gupta]
- Some professors post the grades on Course Site earlier than others. This difference across courses should be accounted for as well. So, the choice should be either before the finals begin or after the grades are posted. [Professor Jeremy Littau]
- Picking a particular date is always going to be arbitrary due to differences across courses. [Professor Doug Mahony; Professor Jim Gilchrist concurred]

The proposal listed under Option #2 along with the modification to allow students to choose the grading option until the 14<sup>th</sup> week of classes was put to vote and passed. The Senate Executive Committee will work with the Provost's Office to finalize the specific language for communicating with the students.

The finalized description of the grading system for Fall 2020 is given below.

***The grading system for undergraduate students will be as follows:***

- ***CR designation: Satisfactory. Replaces grades of C- or better in the regular grading system. Credit is granted for this course, and it will fulfill college and major requirements, even in cases where a grade of P (passing) does not.***
- ***DCR designation: Credit is given, but this grade may not be satisfactory for certain requirements. Credit is granted for this course, while noting that the student's work would have earned them a D letter grade, had that option been chosen. DCR grades will apply to requirements in the same way that D grades apply in the A-F grading system. Students should refer to the University Catalog to determine whether courses earning D grades will count for prerequisites—e.g., to move from MATH 021 to MATH 022—or count toward a specific major or college requirement.***

- ***NCR designation: No Credit or not satisfactory. Replaces an F in the regular grading system. No credit is granted for this course.***

***Under the CR grading system:***

- ***Faculty will not be able to identify students who have selected the new grading system until after they have submitted their final letter grades. (Once all grades are finalized, instructors and advisors will be able to see a student's grades in Banner, just as they do now.)***
- ***Students will be able to convert to the new CR/DCR/NCR system at any time through the fourteenth week of the Fall Semester which ends on December 4.***
- ***In cases where students request the new CR course grading system, Registration and Academic Services will then convert the reported (A-F) grades to the new grading system, and a student's degree audit and transcript will show either CR (credit for satisfactory performance), DCR (credit, but not satisfactory performance for certain requirements), or NCR (no credit earned) for the relevant courses.***
- ***CR/DCR/NCR courses will not count toward the existing limit of six P/F courses in a four-year degree program, nor will there be a limit on the number of Spring 2020 courses that a student may convert to the CR grading system.***
- ***Courses that receive a grade of CR will fulfill college and major requirements, even in cases where a grade of P (passing) would not. This policy supersedes department and college grading policies.***
- ***Grades of CR, DCR, and NCR will not be computed in a student's GPA. Even if students opt into the CR/DCR/NCR system, letter grades would still be available to the University, and could be used for internal purposes (for example, the pre-health advisor could use them to inform recommendation letters, and they could help inform the Standing on Students Committee in decisions on certain petitions).***

The Provost's communication to the students on the grading options (sent on 11/18/2020) is available at

<https://www2.lehigh.edu/news/111820-grading-system-cr-grading-for-fall-2020>

#### **4. Proposal to Suspend PAR Submission for the Current Year**

Professor Jeremy Littau initiated the discussion. The proposal is available at

<https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/PAR%20Recommendation.pdf>

The following are the salient points made during the discussion.

- The subsequent year's PAR evaluation should be based on a faculty record of 4 years to recognize the efforts this year even if no merit raise is awarded this year. [Professors Mellie Katakalos and Jenna Lay]
- Faculty members are working hard during the pandemic. A separate section to record faculty efforts in the context of Covid-19 must be included in the PAR. Such efforts should be rewarded. [Professors Mellie Katakalos, Jenna Lay, and Jeremy Littau]
- Recognition for efforts during the pandemic should be limited to those who are doing a good job. Some people are not doing a good job. [Professor Clay Naito]
- The Lyterati system should be open for an extended period to allow more time to input the data. [Professor Bridget Dever]
- The teaching load determination in the College of Business is done based on a separate document that is different from PAR. [Professors Doug Mahoney and K. Sivakumar in response to Professor Parveen Gupta's concern about the consequence of faculty not submitting PARs]
- The Department chairperson would have an idea of how hard different faculty in their department are working, and this evaluation can help recognize faculty for their efforts. [Professor Kathy Iovine]
- A sense of the faculty resolution was voted on, and it passed with a vote of 18 for and 3 against.

The approved resolution is at

<https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/Sense%20of%20the%20Faculty%20November%206%20Final.pdf>

## **5. Second Reading: Changes to R&P 1.3.2.2 Graduate and Research Committee**

The proposal is available at

[https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/1.3.2.2%20GRC\\_1.pdf](https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/1.3.2.2%20GRC_1.pdf)

The motion was put to the vote and passed.

The effect of this change is that the Faculty Senate will not have formal representation on the GRC. The rationale is that GRC has representation in the Research Environment and Academic and Student Affairs subcommittees of the Senate. The revised language related to the composition of the GRC is given below.

***The committee consists of fourteen elected faculty members, eleven ex officio members, and four non-voting members. The faculty are elected by their colleges to three-year, staggered terms, four from the College of Arts and Sciences, two from the College of Business and Economics, four from the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science, two from the College of Health, and two from the College of Education. Ex officio members are the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Studies, the Assistant Vice President of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Deputy Provost for Graduate Education, a designated Associate Dean from each of the five Colleges, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Student Life, and two Senators selected by the Faculty Senate. The Registrar or his/her delegate serves as a non-voting member of the Graduate and Research Committee. Two graduate students selected by the Graduate Student Senate, and one undergraduate student selected by the Student Senate, also serve as non-voting members.***

## **6. First Reading: R&P 3.10 Probation Proposal**

The proposal is available at  
<https://facultysenate.lehigh.edu/sites/facultysenate.lehigh.edu/files/3.10%20Probation%20Proposal%2024Oct20.pdf>

The motion for changes was made and seconded. It will come up for a second reading at the next Senate meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 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**