

Faculty Senate Minutes
Thursday, November 19, 2020 Via Zoom, 2:34 PM

I. Attendance

K. Armbruster, V. Brown-Kennerly, P. Davis, E. Fan, T. Foley, E. Goedereis, S. Jensen, J. Lassetter, B. Lynch, S. Mahfood, J. Palmer, M. Preuss, T. Reilly, E. Rhiney, D. Stiles.

- II. a. *Upon motion by M. Preuss, seconded by J. Lassetter, the Senate unanimously approved the minutes of the November 5, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting.***

III. New Business:

1. President's Update: President Lynch thanked everyone for their continued efforts during this difficult time and acknowledged the resilience the faculty models for their students. He explained that the Senate needs to begin figuring out tangible things they can take to the administration in order to work towards shared governance. It is important to understand as we move through the next 18 months there may be times where the conversations will be difficult, yet the Senate must come to a consensus. He said the Senate may disagree on the path forward, but that path must be supported and united for our colleagues. The decisions the Senate will make may not be embraced by all, but every decision we make must be in light of the university's financial situation.
2. Professional Development Pandemic Proposal (Attachment A): Lengthy and robust conversation took place among the Senate concerning this proposal.

The Faculty Senate unanimously agreed upon motion by M. Preuss, seconded by E. Goedereis, to accept the Proposal as received and have discussion concerning its merits. At this time, the Senate will table approving the Proposal and requests that the academic departments and Committee to Review Faculty "establish" standards of performance regarding professional development. In the interim, the Senate encourages faculty petitioners to include a "COVID-19" Impact Statement to be attached to any and all review and evaluation materials.

The Faculty Senate unanimously agreed upon motion by E. Goedereis, seconded by T. Foley, to adjourn at 4:15PM.

We request that the Senate enact the following resolution:

“During the period of time that the pandemic limits professional opportunities and imposes increasing responsibilities in both teaching and family labor, **the Senate requests that academic departments and the Committee to Review Faculty relax their existing standards of professional development in probationary, status, promotion, and annual performance reviews of status-track and stasured faculty.** At a minimum, this period will run from Spring 2020 through Spring 2021. Its conclusion will depend on the length of social disruptions caused by the pandemic. **In addition, the Senate requests that, in future reviews that involve evaluations of the period of time of this ‘pandemic gap,’ departments and CRF recognize that this period of time had relaxed standards of professional development. Therefore, the total sum of PD output by an individual faculty member is likely to be less for the next few years, and faculty should not be penalized for this when coming up for status, continuing status, or promotion.** (For example, this means that a status review taking place in 2023 should recognize that a faculty member’s professional development might be less than normal due to the ‘pandemic gap’.)”

Rationale:

1. This request is in keeping with the principles recently enunciated by the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors, as shown in **bold** below:

in conjunction with the American Federation of Teachers, the AAUP issued [AFT and AAUP Principles for Higher Education Response to COVID-19](#). Principle 12 states, “Tenure-track faculty members whose work is disrupted by the institutional or governmental response to COVID-19 should have the option to stop their tenure clock for the duration of the disruption.” AAUP guidelines for stopping the tenure clock are contained in the [Statement of Principles on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work](#). **As an alternative, department faculty and other faculty personnel bodies may wish to cooperate with academic administrators in adjusting standards for tenure to reflect the impact of the pandemic on teaching, scholarship, and service. Under the AAUP’s [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#), “Faculty status and related matters are primarily a faculty responsibility; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.”**

2. Many, if not all, faculty have seen their professional opportunities disappear since March 2020. Conferences have been canceled, archives have closed, travel to research destinations has been blocked, theatre and music performances have been canceled, etc. Problems of this sort are so widespread, and thus it is impossible to hold faculty responsible for engaging in academic/performance work that simply doesn’t exist at the moment.

3. Teaching demands have increased significantly since March 2020. The absolute need to move in-person teaching into online and remote formats has required an enormous investment of time. This fact was graciously recognized by the Administration and the Board last spring, when they thanked the faculty and enacted a salary increase. But the time demands on teaching labor did not end in May; faculty spent the summer retooling their classes to make them available in a wide variety of formats. Furthermore, the ongoing demands of these various formats demand a great deal more time from faculty than standard in-person classes, as teachers work tirelessly to reach out to individual students so that they remain engaged. It is well established that online and remote teaching demand more time in the best of circumstances; in a time when students are under enormous stress and learning in new ways, the time pressures on faculty are immense. Thus, even if professional opportunities were available, teaching demands have so escalated that there is time for little else.

4. It has been recognized in publications such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The New York Times* that these increased teaching pressures have coincided with enormous family demands. Parents are providing fulltime caregiving, and also acting as fulltime educators of their children. Furthermore, faculty with aged parents or those having partners with compromised health similarly have been overtaxed. These burdens disproportionately fall upon women, who tend to do much more of the caregiving within our society. Yet, given that these burdens do not fall exclusively on women, our proposal applies to all stasured/status-track faculty

5. As so many faculty members are affected by the problems discussed above, the most equitable and the simplest solution is to relax professional development standards across the board, recognizing that 'pandemic time' has made a great deal of PD work impossible, while simultaneously requiring a pivot toward new types of labor-intensive teaching and family work.

Kristen Anderson

Robin Assner-Alvey

Joanna Battles

Mary Ann Drake

Anne Geraghty-Rathert

Gloria Grenwald

Morgan Grotewiel

Gad Guterman

Susan Heady

Robin Jefferson Higgins

Amanda Kracen

Yin Lam Lee-Johnson

Allan MacNeill

Sue McFarlan

Anne McIlhaney

Kate Parsons

Kelly-Kate Pease

Beckah Reed

Jody Spies

Molly Stehn

Emily Thompson

Bruce Umbaugh

Gwyneth Williams