

Faculty Senate Minutes
Thursday, December 3, 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, L. Risik, D. Stiles. **Guests:** G. Williams, K. Parson, A. MacNeill

- II. a. *Upon motion by E. Rhiney, seconded by M. Preuss, the Senate unanimously approved the minutes of the November 19, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting.*

III. **New Business:**

- a. **President's Update** - B. Lynch

President Lynch reported that he attended a President's Council meeting where there is more candor in conversations, gratitude from the administration and honest conversations about where Webster is fiscally. He feels that the Administration and the Senate have a good working relationship and President Schuster is genuinely grateful for what everyone has done and accomplished during this pandemic. The administration feels there is a more collaborative relationship with faculty because of this Senate.

As far as enrollment, the Spring 2021 numbers are much like those of Spring 2020, which included a 10% decrease from FY 2018-2019. Not all international campuses are growing, but they are holding their own. The administration is taking a comprehensive audit of both the domestic and international portfolios. They appear to be less concerned with closing individual locations, but looking at making specific areas into markets, meaning there would be a director for an area instead of directions at individual sites. They have found that the greatest number of online students are located where there is a physical campus.

President Lynch would like to invite the administration to the January 14, 2021 Senate meeting in order to discuss the progress in the above areas.

- b. **Multicultural Studies Committee (MULC) update** - E. Fan

Senator Fan said the committee discussed the purpose and mission of the committee at their last meeting and they have decided to reimagine MULC. They have revised the Webster University Policy Handbook language concerning MULC and would like to change the name of the committee to the ***Racial Equity Committee***. The new language outlines the goals, intent and structure of the committee.

President Lynch pointed out that MULC is still MULC at this point. The Senate will have to look at their proposed new Handbook language, delete MULC from the Handbook and adopt the new committee through proceedings. This will be taken up in the new year.

- c. **University Grievance Committee** - B. Lynch

President Lynch explained that there have been changes in Title IX and changes in the Cleary Act. Therefore, compliance changes have been made to the Grievance Committee. They now require seven (7) faculty members, seven students, seven staff and 7 administrators to serve on the committee. President Lynch called for volunteers from the Senate to serve on this committee. Twelve (12) senators volunteered, and President Lynch will choose seven from that group and provide their names to the Chief of Human Resources, Cheryl Fritz. He explained that if they are called upon to serve on a Grievance hearing, only a pool from the entire membership will be called to serve.

d. Dean and Administrator evaluations – K. Armbruster

Senator Armbruster explained she was approached by a colleague asking if the members of the College of Arts and Sciences performed evaluations of Deans and other administrators. A Senator said that this was the practice for years and she did not know why it stopped.

President Lynch stated that it is the sense of the Senate that the previous practice of review of deans should be engaged. The Senate will need to consider language in the University Policy Handbook for possibly five-year reviews.

Senator Armbruster also discussed issues that some faculty were having with Canvas. They wished to be able to access Canvas early in order to enter their spring classes, but the Academic Resource Center (ARC) would not allow it.

President Lynch reported that changes to the Webster intranet will be happening in January and that if faculty are having issues with the new Webster website to please contact Rick Rockwell in GMC.

IV. **Old Business:**

a. Professional Development Pandemic Proposal (Attachment A) – G. Williams, K. Parsons, A. MacNeill

K. Parsons sees the Proposal as reinforcing the University non-sexist policy. Studies indicate that research and professional development are most difficult to be completed by female professors due to lack of childcare during the pandemic, caring for parents, or due to helping older children with online learning as examples.

G. Williams states that women are experiencing a disproportionate load of caregiving during the pandemic. She feels that the Proposal addressing professional development to be the least disruptive of all University systems. She feels it irrelevant that some people are able to stay on track with PD, but that does not mean that there are those who are disadvantaged. Language from the AAUP mentions tenure standards. Webster also has FDL and annual performance pay reviews. There is a clear signal from the faculty that this is the right thing to do and appropriate during the pandemic. She states they want to follow the AAUP best practices. She also stated that there have been at least three salary studies in the past showing that Webster consistently paid women less than men.

In support of the Proposal, A. MacNeill states there are studies showing economic inequality among men and women. There is the ‘motherhood’ penalty wherein women make 69% of what fathers make. Fathers make more than single men. The length of time to become a full professor is shortest among married men and the longest among married women. He said the pandemic has made these discrepancies worse and that women are losing jobs at a higher rate than males. We know that Webster did not cause this problem, but it exists.

President Lynch asks if the Senate has any questions. There are none and the guests exit the Zoom meeting.

The Senate unanimously agreed upon motion by K. Armbruster, seconded by P. Davis, to consider the resolution concerning the Professional Development pandemic proposal as written and undertake discussion of said Proposal.

The Senate unanimously agreed upon motion by E. Goedereis, seconded by S. Jensen, to call the question “does the Senate defeat the resolution concerning the Professional Development pandemic proposal as currently drafted?” The Senate defeated the resolution.

The Senate unanimously agreed upon motion by K. Armbruster, seconded by T. Reilly, to endorse and draft a Covid-19 statement which will capture the spirit of the resolution concerning the Professional Development pandemic proposal.

B. Lynch will perform an email vote and/or a Zoom vote of the Covid-19 statement early next week.

- b. Correction Action Plan update - B. Lynch
President Lynch informed the Senate there will be a meeting on December 18, 2020 to discuss the CAP. She has the Senate’s and the Assembly proposals and language. The President of WSA, John Link, will be participating in the meeting as the CAP affects everyone.

The Senate unanimously agreed to adjourn upon motion by V. Brown-Kennerly, seconded by JP Palmer.

Meeting adjourned: 3:58PM

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 stused/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