



OFFICIAL MINUTES

Faculty Senate Meeting November 13, 2023

Call to order: Senate President Brandon Dupont called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

Approval of Minutes: A **motion** made by Allison Giffen (and seconded) **to approve** the minutes of October 2nd 2023 **passed** with four objections and one abstention. Minutes of October 30th were approved as written by general consent. Minutes of the October 24th ACC meeting were accepted as written.

Reports and Announcements

Brandon Dupont, Senate President reported that:

- Meeting recordings will no longer be posted to the website but will be kept for archival purposes.
- An email went out regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence on campus. Senators are encouraged to respond with any feedback by the end of Fall Quarter so concerns can be discussed as an agenda item at the beginning of Winter Quarter.
- Becky Johnson will begin in her role as Faculty Senate Specialist on December 1st.

Peter Pihos, UFWW President reported that:

- Many faculty members have expressed concern regarding how University Administration has communicated about the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Steps are being taken to ensure faculty concerns are represented and addressed.
- Concerns regarding potential threats to physical safety, academic freedom, or first amendment rights should be directed to Peter Pihos and are regarded as a high priority.

Gabe Wong, Associated Students Senate President reported that:

- The AS Senate is looking to appoint Graduate Senators by November 20th.
- The AS Senate plans to put forth a resolution to the Faculty Senate regarding a University commitment to decouple from the use of fossil fuels.
- Western Academic Workers United (WAWU) was recently in a hearing with the University regarding settling student government out of the bargaining unit in exchange for student technology center employees.

Presentation

Follow Up on Budget Presentation: Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President, and Joyce Lopes, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, addressed questions that were not answered at the previous Senate meeting. Lopes reported that as of 2023, the University's total outstanding debt is \$152 million. In 2021, Moody's Investor Services rated the University and assigned a credit rating of A1, indicating low credit risk. Moody's has since completed a re-review of the University following a change in their rating process. The updated credit rating for University auxiliaries (dining and housing) is A2. Lopes stated that this new rating will not have a significant impact on the University. Senators asked whether the ratings done by Moody's are performed at a cost to the University. Lopes stated she would find this information and report back. Senators asked whether there was a relationship between the bond rating and the 3% cut. Johnson stated that there was no relation.

Senators expressed questions about when the current outstanding debt is expected to be paid down. Lopes reported that this varies for different facilities and stated that, for example, the debt for dining and housing is projected to be paid off in 2031. Senators questioned whether the amount of outstanding debt is comparable to other universities. Lopes explained that she did not have the data to make comparisons, but stated that the University's debt does not appear to be excessive at this time.

Regarding a question related to tenure track hiring, Johnson stated that 34 tenure track lines are currently being held to avoid the need for further budget reductions. Currently, there are 6 searches in progress. As these searches are still in progress, the University is not yet paying for these lines. Next year, the University will have to consider the number of lines that will need to continue to be held. Johnson stated the University will have a better idea in January of the needs of next year. Johnson explained that there is work being done with the Dean's group to develop a set of metrics around enrollment trends and program costs alongside a variety of contexts including quality, legislative landscape, and financial sustainability. Senators posed questions regarding the use of the term "reallocation" in regards to tenure track lines. Johnson stated that lines are not being reallocated to other departments, and are being held, not erased. Johnson stated that it is possible that Deans will need to make decisions about redistributing lines within their college in the future.

Action Items

ACC Proposal to Revise the PEJ Task Force Charge: Kristi Tyran, ACC Chair, presented a [proposal to revise the PEJ Task Force Charge](#). The charge was originally approved by the Senate in January 2022. The task force was charged to finish their work by June 2022. For a variety of reasons, this deadline was not met. The revision to the charge will allow for a deadline of April 2024 and includes some changes to the task force structure. These changes include the addition of two student representatives, making at large faculty member seats optional, and requiring a chair be appointed to convene the group. Senators expressed concern regarding the comprehensiveness of the charge and whether it further complicated the ability to accomplish the goals of the task force in a reasonable amount of time. Senators questioned the deadline and expressed concern that it allowed

for more time than necessary. Other Senators questioned whether the work would realistically be able to be done in that time frame. Tyran stated that the changes made to the charge, including the deadline, are a response to what did not work well in the previous charge.

A motion made by Troy Abel (and seconded) **to approve** the revisions to the PEJ Task Force Charge with an amendment for a minor wording change **passed** with one objection and one abstention.

Discussion Items

ACC Proposal to Recommend Review of all Permanently Approved Online/Hybrid Courses for Compliance: Kristi Tyran, ACC Chair, presented a [proposal to require colleges to review previously approved online and hybrid courses](#) to be consistent with recently approved college modality policies. Of the college modality policies that have been approved, most of the policies state that all online courses will comply. The proposal is an effort to ensure that this is accurate. If a course is not in compliance and does not make changes to be in compliance with the policy, then the class will be scheduled as face to face only. The deadline for this review is December 1, 2024.

A request was made for more information regarding federal regulations to be provided at the next meeting. Senators asked questions regarding the process of review and were directed to view the proposal for further information. Senators expressed concern regarding the work required of departments. Tyran stated the deadline was extended to December in recognition of the amount of work required.

Voting was delayed to the next Senate meeting on November 27th to allow time for Senators to speak with constituents and gather feedback prior to voting.

Vote on Proposal to Restructure UPRC: Allison Giffen, UPRC Chair, presented a [proposal to dissolve the UPRC](#) and replace it with two positions: a Budget Liaison and Deputy Budget Liaison. Giffen reported that the motion has been updated to address the feedback posed at the last Senate meeting. Senators expressed concerns that the restructure would result in less faculty governance.

Voting was delayed to the next Senate meeting on November 27th to allow time for Senators to offer further feedback prior to voting.

Items from the Floor

University Response to Current Events: Senators expressed concern regarding how the campus climate has been affected by the University Administration's response to the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Senators emphasized student, staff, and faculty rights to freedom of speech. Brandon Dupont, Senate President, stated the Senate Executive Committee will consider this as a future agenda item for the Senate.

Senators adjourned at 5:30 p.m.