



## FACULTY SENATE

### Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2020

**Senators Present:** Ann Abraham, Omid Bagheri, Kathy Bergh, Jeffrey Ciesla, Sue Clement, Tammy Clewell, Alice Colwell, Jennifer Cunningham, Ed Dauterich, Tracy Dodson, Yanhai Du, Jean Engohang-Ndong, Julie Evey, Pamela Grimm, Angela Guercio, Mariann Harding, Todd Hawley, David Kaplan, Edgar Kooijman, Darci Kracht, Cynthia Kristof, Janice Kroeger, Velvet Landingham, Tracy Laux, Cathy Marshall, Mahli Mechenbier, Oana Mocioalca, Deepraj Mukherjee, Abe Osbourne, Kimberly Peer, Vic Perera, Amy Petrinc, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Terri Polanski, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, Murali Shanker, Deborah Smith, Diane Stroup, Robin Vande Zande, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Donald White, Haiyan Zhu, Melissa Zullo

**Senators Not Present:** Jeffrey Child

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** President Todd Diacon; Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley\*; Senior Vice President Mark Polatajko; Vice Presidents: David Dees\*, Paul DiCorleto, Amoaba Gooden\*, Lamar Hylton, Rebecca Murphy\*, Mary Parker, John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Jack Witt; Deans: Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Allan Boike, Ken Burhanna, John Crawford-Spinelli, Tameka Ellington\*, James Hannon, Suat Gunhan for Mark Mistur, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk\*, Eboni Pringle, Amy Reynolds, Denice Sheehan\*, Alison Smith, Deborah Spake \*Interim

**Ex-Officio Members Not Present:** Vice Presidents: Valoree Vargo\*, Willis Walker; Dean Susan Stocker \*Interim

**Observers Present:** Thomas Janson (Emeritus Professor), Claire Jackman (GSS), Thomas Niepsuj (USS)

**Guests Present:** Sue Averill, Tina Bhargava, Kim Cleveland, Jo Dowell, Chris Fenk, Nick Gattozzi, Dana Hansen, Jennifer Hebebrand, Lynette Johnson, Tess Kail, Karen Keenan, Valerie Kelly, Dana Lawless-Andric, Babacar M'Baye, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Jennifer McDonough, Laura Melby, Tiera Moore, Susan Perry, Jennifer Piatt, Amy Quillin, Dirk Remley, Hollie Simpson, Elizabeth Sinclair, Therese Tillett, Manfred van Dulmen, Julie Volcheck, Deirdre Warren

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Grimm called the meeting to order at 3:23 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.

#### 2. Roll Call

Secretary Dauterich called the roll.

#### 3. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Grimm asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made and seconded (Vande Zande/Piccirillo-Smith). The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2020**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the meeting (Piontkivska/Kracht). The minutes were passed unanimously as written.

#### **5. Chair's Remarks**

Chair Grimm delivered her remarks. [Attachment]

There was no time for comments or questions.

#### **6. President's Remarks**

President Diacon said he will send out communication about action items that will be implemented to address the twin public health crises of racism and COVID-19. He looks forward to squaring Kent's core values of kindness, respect, and respect of different opinions and identities with our actions. He thanked all senators and faculty for the caring job they have done with re-opening. He thanked Chair Grimm and the Executive Committee in addition to members of the College of Public Health (Tara Smith, Chris Woolverton, Dean Alemagno, and Melissa Zullo) for serving as previous and current consultants for issues related to the pandemic. He then turned the microphone over to Interim Provost Tankersley for a re-opening update.

#### **7. Re-opening Update**

Interim Provost Tankersley thanked faculty leadership, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Tracy Laux and Deborah Smith (as AAUP FT-NTT and TT presidents respectively), the ad hoc Academic Continuity Committee (ACC), and all of their subcommittees for their continuous work on guidelines and procedures. She then thanked faculty as a whole for their efforts. Moving to the re-opening, she said that 40% of the courses being offered have some in-person component. About 20% are fully in-person. 800 faculty spent the summer in online teaching workshops, and over one thousand have attended these workshops, which were conducted by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). With regard to technology in the classroom, she mentioned that there are audio issues when faculty are both in class and broadcasting to students at home. Information Technology (IT) is working on this. If anyone is having problems, they should contact chairs, directors, deans, or the interim provost herself. Students are doing well and are still excited to be working on their majors, even if they are learning remotely. They are asking for more student/instructor interaction. She directed the audience to look to the Keep on Teaching website, which has links to tools from the CTL that can provide further assistance. She asked that faculty continue to be flexible, equitable, and reasonable with their instruction. She then turned over the microphone to Interim Dean van Dulmen.

Interim Dean van Dulmen said we must be ready to go fully remote at any time. He discussed the availability of testing and PPE and how changes over time can indicate where COVID is heading. The administration is meeting daily with the city's public health director. When we have to reduce campus capacity, they will emphasize Tier I courses as those that will remain in-person the longest. The list of these courses has been shared with academic coordinators who will share this with instructors. An e-mail template will be sent to instructors who need to inform their students.

Each campus may have different risk levels. Kent may have only Tier I in-person courses, whereas other campuses may not have any restrictions. Risk levels differ depending on location. He urged the audience to stay home if they have any symptoms on the daily self-check and asked that they remind students to do the same. He then turned the microphone over to Vice President Hylton to discuss student affairs.

Vice President Hylton thanked Chair Grimm, Interim Provost Tankersley, and the deans and faculty. He focused on residential life, student life activities, and student basic needs. The residence halls are currently housing 3,684 students, which is nearly 60% of their capacity. No student is living with more than one person. Many are living alone. Parts of Centennial Hall and all of Van Campen and Verder have been converted to quarantine halls with 246 isolated rooms, which will still provide living, learning communities that will be engaging and contributing positively to students' academic pursuits. Activities with more than ten people are happening remotely at the guidance of local health officials and the Kent Department of Public Health. The recreation center has redesigned protocols, procedures, and the physical space to follow public health guidelines, so programs have been modified or ended because they cannot be delivered remotely. Many programs and parts of the facility have been discontinued for now. Kent State is not being as harsh with students as other universities. Instead, Kent has worked closely with student leaders to help students follow the Flashes Safe 7. He thanked student government for their work on this issue.

Vice President Hylton also mentioned the university's efforts to support student mental health. The pandemic exacerbated the need to focus on this, and despite the fiscal climate of the university, Kent State has committed 1.6 million general fee dollars to fund a strategy for enhancing student mental health services. Support will include an expansion of telehealth, which has become critical now that every student is not physically on our campus. Clinicians will be added to bring down the wait time. They are also moving toward removing the fee for service for students so that there is not a barrier to paying for student access to clinical care for their mental health, and they plan to establish a centralized center, a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Center, that will be a place where students can come and be pointed to particular resources that will assist them in navigating their basic needs, mental well-being, food insecurity, homelessness, and financial insecurity.

He continued by adding that the university recognizes that emergency funding has been needed and necessary as students have been impacted by this pandemic. Students and their families have lost their jobs, leaving them unable to finance their educational experience, and so the university has created an emergency fund through the federal CARES Act funding and funds raised through institutional advancement. He praised Interim Vice President Vargo and her team for the work they have done in the fundraising. He also thanked Vice President Mary Parker and her team for the collaboration on and development of this funding.

Finally, he acknowledged students' technological needs and said that because of the great advocacy work happening with colleagues including Dean Eboni Pringle, Executive Director Jim Raber, and student leaders, Kent State has 775,000 dollars in emergency funding that is dedicated to providing technology for students to access remote instruction. This is in the form of hot spots, enhanced wi-fi, laptop computers, et cetera. They are aware that they still have students that are in the queue that they have not been able to award, and they are strategizing ways to continue funding students so that we can have adequate technological support and resources. He then turned the microphone back to Interim Provost Tankersley for comments or questions.

Senator Roxburgh asked how the student fund was being advertised.

Vice President Hylton responded that e-mails, social media, and Facebook Live were all used and that they have contacted student government leaders about other ways to contact students. Students have offered other forms of social media and also spread the word among themselves. Parents and families have also been contacted through social media and e-mail.

Senator Engohang-Ndong thanked Vice President Hylton for the report. He then asked about our preparation with regard to international students. He said that many of our local students are native and understand protocols but asked how the international population is being prepared.

Interim Provost Tankersley replied that they have been working with the international students to make sure they understand what is required. The Office of Global Education (OGE) has built great relationships with all international students and knows all of them well.

Vice President Hylton added that as far as housing goes, Kent State has a partnership with University Inn in Kent in case students from other countries have housing emergencies, and they also have some on-campus housing. They also check to see whether students need food or other necessities. They have delivered groceries and meals and gift cards to students to utilize in stores around town as needed.

Senator Kracht brought up a recent *KentWired* article, which showed Kent State football players not practicing the Flashes Safe 7. She asked why the video was posted on official football social media.

Interim Provost Tankersley said that it was being handled through the athletic department.

President Diacon promised to investigate it.

Interim Vice President Murphy said that the football coach issued an apology and promised to do better.

Senator Mocioalca suggested that graduate students should be able to take advantage of tolling as tenure-track faculty can do.

Interim Dean van Dulmen said that time limits were extended one year from the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semester for graduate students. This does not include financial assistance, which depends on the college budget and is a conversation that needs to take place at the college level.

Interim Provost Tankersley agreed with him and said it may be possible in some departments.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **8. Old Business**

### **a. Action Item: Faculty Ethics Revised Purposes and Procedures**

Senator Salaba recapped the state of the revision to the purposes and procedures. A motion was made and seconded to approve the revision (Dauterich/Walton-Fisette).

Senator Mocioalca said she was still unclear about paragraph 4A and what it meant for the complainant wishing to give testimony.

Senator Smith said it was a matter of subject-verb agreement.

Senator Piccirillo-Smith said the whole document should be consistent throughout and said that things would have to be added parenthetically to fix the issue.

Senator Smith said this was a housekeeping issue that should not delay the vote.

Senator Mocioalca agreed and then asked about paragraph 4D and how many days a participant has to file a complaint after the last resolution. She said this seemed to disagree with a previous paragraph.

Senator Salaba explained the issue and made it clear that it was not required to go to any FAC or CAC.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **9. New Business**

### **a. Action Item: Proposed Modification of Summer 2020 and AY 2021 Pass/Fail Policy**

Chair Grimm explained the modification of the policy. Key features were on the chart distributed with the senate materials. A motion was made and seconded to approve the modification (Kracht/Zhu).

Chair Grimm invited questions.

Senator Marshall asked how the policy would work for licensure in architecture. She wanted to know why this policy was being continued when other universities are moving away from it.

Chair Grimm explained that every graduate and undergraduate program can opt out of pass/fail grading. The FAC and/or CAC should discuss this at the unit level.

Senator Walton-Fisette suggested this might not help a student in crisis, but that it could allow flexibility for remote learners. She added that if a student does come into a crisis, that student may need more help and asked whether the withdrawal deadline was being extended.

Associate Vice President Tillett said the withdrawal date is in the tenth week right now, but exceptions can be made if there is an individual crisis.

Senator Laux reminded Senator Walton-Fisette that students do have the ability in a crisis to withdraw from all of their courses up to and including the last day of classes.

Associate Vice President Tillett agreed with Senator Laux.

Chair Grimm added that there was also concern about completion of courses because a withdrawal can have a very different impact on financial aid and eligibility than would a pass/fail. She believes this is one of the reasons why a pass/fail was also an important component of a safety net for a student who might be suffering from undue hardship.

Senator Walton-Fisette thanked the speakers for their comments and clarifications.

There were no further comments or questions.

The proposal passed unanimously.

b. Action Item: Resolution Urging Retraction of Faculty Cuts and Engagement of Faculty in Identifying Solutions that Address Akron University's Fiscal Crisis

Chair Grimm explained the resolution. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution (Kooijman/Smith).

Chair Grimm invited questions or comments.

There were no questions or comments.

The motion passed unanimously.

Emeritus Professor Janson suggested that the resolution be read into the record.

Chair Grimm read the following resolution into the record:

*"Whereas, as a publicly supported institution, the University of Akron's first and foremost responsibility is to its students and the Akron community and that responsibility is reflected in virtually every aspect of the mission of the university and that responsibility is fulfilled by faculty;*

*Whereas, a university cannot operate without faculty, and students cannot learn and fulfill their potential without the knowledge and expertise of the faculty, and the pivotal role of faculty in fulfilling the University of Akron mission is reflected in the fact that they are the primary source of revenue for the university;*

*Whereas, faculty are bearing the cost of a long and painful history of financial problems at the University of Akron that are almost exclusively the result of a revolving door of administrators who have either mishandled or been unable to address previous administrators' mishandling of resources;*

*Whereas, a Board of Trustees has oversight responsibility for an institution and, in the case of all of our publicly supported universities, the Board of Trustees is accountable to the state authorities and the citizens of the state;*

*Whereas, the actions of the Board of Trustees, in proposing the termination of 96 or more full-time faculty, brings into question their full understanding of the university, their ability*

to provide adequate oversight, and their qualification to guide the University through long fomenting fiscal problems that have resulted in the current challenges;

*Whereas*, the situation at the University of Akron is exacerbated by a lack of collaboration and cooperation with faculty – a lack of shared governance; and

*Therefore, be it resolved that* the Faculty Senate of Kent State University urges Governor DeWine and Chancellor Gardner to direct the University of Akron Board of Trustees and President to retract the contract proposal that would terminate 96 faculty and re-engage with faculty to find a creative solution to the university's financial challenges. Faculty know their fields, their students and their programs and are highly motivated to engage with the university to find workable solutions that protect the academic integrity of the University, fulfill its mission and provide a more stable and sustainable financial future for the University of Akron. Should the Board of Trustees and President refuse to re-engage with the faculty, it is our recommendation that the appointments of the members of the Board of Trustees and the President be terminated. New leadership should be allowed to work with current faculty to develop a plan that actually serves the interest of the University of Akron and the communities it supports."

## **10. Announcements/Statements for the Record**

Senator Vande Zande suggested that Chair Grimm expand on the idea of pass/fail as a safety net for students.

Chair Grimm said there was a lot of debate about the policy, but they wanted to find a balance between helping students and not compromising their ability to succeed on the job market. In no case should this be the option of first choice for students. They cannot even elect it until November 5<sup>th</sup>. Students are strongly encouraged to prioritize important courses and not misuse the policy.

Senator Vande Zande suggested that a concise explanation should be provided to individual units.

Chair Grimm said that she would have the provost send additional information and that she would work to provide a document that would help.

Senator Mechenbier said that the regional campuses have no mail courier at this time and wondered whether this was a budget decision.

Interim Vice President Dees said that the previous courier left the university, and that he is looking at other options that would not require a full-time hire. The solution will take a week or two to find.

## **11. Adjournment**

Chair Grimm adjourned the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich  
Secretary, Faculty Senate  
Attachment