



FACULTY SENATE

Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2023

Senators Present: Ann Abraham, Bob Antenucci, Omid Bagheri, Tina Bhargava, Casey Boyd-Swan, Lauren Copeland, Jennifer Cunningham, Mark Dalman, Ed Dauterich, Omar De La Cruz Cabrera, Kimberly DePaul, Mary Ann Devine, Julie Evey, Michele Ewing, Michelle Foster, Claudia Gomez, Tianyuan Guan, Angela Guercio, David Kaplan, Sean Kennedy, Edgar Kooijman, Janice Kroeger, Velvet Landingham, Tracy Laux, Richard Mangrum, Mahli Mechenbier, Taraneh Meshkani, Oana Mocioalca, Vic Perera, Amy Petrinec, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, Deborah Smith, Jennifer Taber, Eric Taylor, Robin Vande Zande, Laurie Wagner, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Sue Wamsley, Christopher Was

Senators Not Present: Vanessa Earp, Michael Fisch, Karen Mascolo, Denise McEnroe-Petitte, Lydia Rose,

Ex-Officio Members Present: President Todd Diacon, Provost Melody Tankersley; Senior Vice President Mark Polatajko; Senior Vice President Eboni Pringle*; Vice Presidents: Sean Broghammer, Michael Kavulic for Doug Delahanty, Amoaba Gooden, James Raber for John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Peggy Shadduck, Valoree Vargo, Crystal Burnett for Willis Walker, Stephen Ward; Deans: Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Allan Boike, Ken Burhanna, James Hannon, Versie Johnson-Mallard, Mark Mistur, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk, Diane Petrella, Elizabeth Piatt*, Matthew Rollyson for Amy Reynolds, Alison Smith, Deborah Spake, Christa Porter for Manfred van Dulmen
*Interim

Ex-Officio Members Not Present:

Observers Present: Ms. Emily Erb (GSS), Kelly Cichy (University College)

Observers Not Present: Emeritus Professor Paul Farrell, Ms. Olivia Eader (USS)

Guests Present: Denise Bartell, Sue Clement, Chris Dorsten, Aimee Dudas, Jennifer Hebebrand, Thomas Janson, Kristina Kamis, Jennifer Kellogg, Valerie Kelly, Dana Lawless-Andric, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Christa Ord, Susan Perry, Amy Quillen, Lashonda Taylor, Therese Tillett, Deirdre Warren, Kevin West, Sonya Williams

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. in the Governance Chambers, Kent Student Center.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Dauterich called the roll.

3. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda (Piccirillo-Smith/Smith). The agenda passed.

4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2023

Chair Laux asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2023, Faculty Senate meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Vande Zande/Bhargava).

The minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.

5. Chair's Remarks

Chair Laux delivered his remarks. He began by quoting the first amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise that thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." He said that this led him to Ohio's constitution, which states that "the people have the right to assemble together in a peaceable manner, to consult for their common good, to instruct their representatives, and to petition the General Assembly for the redress of grievances." The same constitution adds that "every citizen may freely speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects being responsible for the abuse of the right, and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press. In all criminal prosecutions for libel, the truth may be given in evidence to the jury, and if it still appears to the jury that the matter, charged as libel as is true and was published with good motives and for justifiable ends, the party shall be acquitted." He then added a section of the Ohio Revised Code concerning free speech on campus: "Each state institution of Higher Education Board of Trustees shall adopt a policy that affirms the following principles, which are the public policy of this state. Students have a fundamental constitutional right to free speech; a state institution of higher education shall be committed to giving students broad latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, learn, and discuss any issue subject to Division E of this section" and added that it said the university should "be committed to maintaining campus as a marketplace of ideas."

He continued by arguing that it is for a state institution of higher education, individual students, and faculty to make judgments about ideas for themselves and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress free speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose. It is not the proper role of the state institution of higher education to attempt to shield individuals from free speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed. Although a state institution of higher education should greatly value civility and mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect shall never be used by an institution as justification for closing

off the discussion of ideas, however offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed those ideas may be to be some students or faculty. The primary responsibility of faculty is to engage and honest, courageous and persistent effort to search out and communicate the truth that lies in the areas of their competence.

He also connected his remarks to university policies and the Faculty Code of Professional Ethics before explaining his dissatisfaction with the way federal and state legislators have been dealing with issues surrounding divisive concepts. He argued that there are plenty of rules in place already that make it clear what faculty, staff, and students need to do. He urged the audience to contact their state legislators concerning Ohio's SB 83. Finally, he reminded students that we have a staff ombuds, a student ombuds, a new faculty ombuds, Title IX, the Kent State Police, and other alternatives for people to pursue if they feel unsafe on campus for any reason.

He then invited comments or questions.

There were no comments or questions.

6. President's Remarks

President Diacon spoke about the conflict in the Middle East and the budget for the 2025 fiscal year. He said that regardless of the conversation around the issues, we will continue to embrace freedom of speech, kindness, and respect. When these are lacking, it will be addressed to help those involved move forward. He thanked the leadership in Student Life for working with student groups to embrace the core values he mentioned. He also thanked the school of Peace and Conflict studies for moderating an event where 860 students discussed the issue. He thanked the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) president for trying to produce a joint letter from student groups as a whole; although it did not work out, student leadership made a strong effort. He also encouraged members of the university community to continue working toward the exchange of ideas in the future.

He then moved to budget preparation for the 2025 Fiscal year July 1st-June 30. There is a 10-12-million-dollar difference between projected increases in revenue and expenses. A 3.25% reduction in expenses to balance with a 12-million-dollar expected revenue will be needed. He said that he did not predict the scenario changing in the next 5-10 years because of the long-term impact of the tuition cohort model, the political mood in the legislature, and the uncertainty of untapped growth opportunities. 2025 will probably be the last year that we can reduce expected expenditures by doing it in a piecemeal fashion. Things will have to be done more uniformly with regard to space, athletics, workload, and highly paid administrative positions. There will have to be changes. He encouraged leaders to be efficient in their own units. He said we continue to look at our budget realistically as opposed to some other institutions.

He then invited comments or questions.

Senator Taylor asked whether the president had preliminary thoughts about broad changes. He asked what we should try to do.

President Diacon replied that they have a commitment to no new square footage of space. He added that we will also have to reorganize how courses are assigned on the regional campuses. He argued that our workloads need to more closely reflect comparable institutions. NCAA requirements for athletics will also be examined. Administrative positions of 150,00 dollars' worth of salary and above will have to be re-examined.

Senator Bagheri asked how or whether the university is prepared for the passage of SB 83.

President Diacon said that we will have to follow the laws of the state. He is not thinking about subverting the law, but he did say that knowledge of the bill is what should be addressed in public rather than rumors or misinterpretations of the bill.

Chair Laux said that he had heard rumors about FACs changing handbooks to react to the bill, and he has advised them to wait and see what version of the bill is passed, if any.

Senator Bagheri agreed that we should satisfy the law in the way that would do the least harm.

Senator Smith added that although the bill would limit what the university as an institution could take a stand on, it is not meant to affect what faculty can teach. As long as you follow university policy, you can continue to teach as you have been without fear of doing anything illegal.

There were no further comments or questions.

7. EPC Action Items

a. University Requirements and Curriculum Committee (URCC): Diversity Course Requirement—Presented by Dean Alison Smith

Dean Smith explained the proposal. The proposal was to revise the policy to allow automatic approval of the Global Diversity attribute for study-abroad classes. The change would be implemented for the Fall 2024 semester. The approval process for courses without this attribute that are taught abroad to get the credit was a convoluted one, but it was never denied. URCC recommended that it be automatically applied

Senator Smith moved to approve the item.

Dean Smith then invited comments or questions.

Senator Bhargava expressed concerns that the attribute should be about the learning outcomes for the course rather than the location of the course.

Senator Taylor asked how many students per year would be impacted positively.

Dean Smith referred the question to Associate Vice President Therese Tillett.

Associate Vice President Tillett responded that on average over the last three years, 432 students do the international experience at a Kent State University facility, 634 students do the study at another university. 2,806 students have enrolled in a Kent course being offered in another country, and over the past 7 years there have been 56 exceptions filed to get the global diversity attribute. She added that we are now seeing an uptick because we are offering more international experience courses in Florence, Paris, and other locations through fashion, architecture, and business. The increase is expected to continue as more course offerings abroad become available.

Senator Wamsley asked what is currently required for students on the exception form.

Associate Vice President Tillett said that in the current policy, with a dean's approval, students may have global diversity met by completing a study-abroad experience. The student has to go to the advisor, and the advisor has to submit the exception to the dean who submits it to GPS. There are a lot of steps.

Chair Laux asked the deans in the room whether they had denied any requests.

Dean Spake replied that she would approve any such request.

Dean Smith added that there is no record of a dean denying the request.

Senator Walton-Fisette spoke in support of Senator Bhargava, and she added that if nothing is being done with a course to reach outcomes related to global diversity, she found automatic approval problematic.

Senator Abraham asked about how much tuition is being charged and wondered whether students were just getting a free requirement fulfilled.

Dean Spake said that this was already the policy.

There were no further comments or questions.

The motion passed 28-7 in favor of the revision.

b, Office of Curriculum Services: Flight Training Schedule Type—Presented by Associate Vice President Therese Tillett

The proposal was to revise the schedule type in consultation with the College of Aeronautics and Engineering (CAE). The change would be implemented in the Fall 2024 semester. Associate Vice President Therese Tillett presented the item, which fulfilled

requirements of accreditors based on how universities reward credit based on contact hours with students. The FAA revised the contact to credit hour ratio. Therefore, the definition of schedule type needed to be realigned.

Senator Kooijman moved to approve the item.

Chair Laux then invited comments or questions.

There were no comments or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. Discussion: Course Hold and Inactivation (Associate Vice President Therese Tillett)

Associate Vice President Tillett explained the course hold and inactivation policy. She added that the large number of courses recently listed as on hold or inactivated is about four times what it would have been in a past years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in 2019, the courses had not been reviewed, but they are being reviewed again.

Chair Laux then invited comments or questions about the policy or the courses.

Senator Kaplan said that many of them looked like parts of slash courses and wondered how only part of a course was being canceled.

Associate Vice President Tillett said that slash courses are not being put on hold at this time.

Senator Kaplan said that it might be helpful for faculty to get the list every year, so they could bring any explanation to Curriculum Services more quickly.

Senator Vande Zande asked how a course disappears from the list.

Associate Vice President Tillett said to get off the hold list, faculty just need to have the scheduler contact curriculum services and let them know that a course on hold is being offered again. If a class is not offered after five years, it is automatically inactivated.

Senator Piccirillo-Smith asked about cross-listed courses with other departments. She wanted to know what would happen if only one department had it on hold.

Associate Vice President Tillett said that cross-listing would only affect the department that the course was not offered in any longer.

Senator Smith said that one of the philosophy courses on hold is a 60000-level class that had not been offered because there were not enough students enrolled. She said it could be offered as a 40-50 thousand slash course, but they have been offering it as a 600000 course because there is a

university policy that maintains there must be a certain number of 60000 courses. 50% or more of a master's degree must be made up of 60000-level courses.

There were no further comments or questions.

9. Announcements/Statements for the Record

Chair Laux announced that CACs have been created for the University, Honors, and Graduate Colleges. In AY 24-25, they will be able to have senators. Meanwhile, the colleges will have observers. Only University College has an observer currently. Chair Laux introduced Professor Kelly Cichy as the observer.

There were no further announcements.

10. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 4:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate