



FACULTY SENATE

Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2021

Senators Present: Ann Abraham, Omid Bagheri, Tina Bhargava, Jeffrey Child, Tammy Clewell, Timothy Culver, Jennifer Cunningham, Ed Dauterich, Omar De La Cruz Cabrera, Kimberly DePaul, Tracy Dodson, Yanhai Du, 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, Karen Mascolo, Denise McEnroe-Petitte, Mahli Mechenbier, Oana Mocioalca, Deepraj Mukherjee, Abe Osbourne, Vic Perera, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, Murali Shanker, Denise Sheehan, Deborah Smith, Diane Stroup, Eric Taylor, Robin Vande Zande, Laurie Wagner, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Christopher Was, Haiyan Zhu, Melissa Zullo

Ex-Officio Members Present: President Todd Diacon; Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley; Senior Vice Presidents: Lamar Hylton, Mark Polatajko; Vice Presidents: Sean Broghammer*, Doug Delahanty*, Amoaba Gooden, Rebecca Murphy*, John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Peggy Shadduck, Jack Witt; Deans: Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Allan Boike, Ken Burhanna, James Hannon, Versie Johnson-Mallard, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk*, Diane Petrella, Eboni Pringle, Amy Reynolds, Alison Smith, Deborah Spake, Manfred van Dulmen *Interim

Ex-Officio Members Not Present: Vice Presidents: Valoree Vargo, Willis Walker; Dean Mark Mistur

Observers Present: Paul Farrell (Emeritus Professor), Brandon Allen (USS), Claire Jackman (GSS)

Guests Present: Janara Baitugolova, J.R. Campbell, Sue Clement, Chris Dorsten, Jo Dowell, Christopher Fenk, Jennifer Hebebrand, Thomas Janson, Lynette Johnson, Michael Kavulic, Karen Keenan, Valerie Kelly, Dana Lawless-Andric, Michael Lehman, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Bryan Molnar, Christa Ord, Susan Perry, Amy Petrinc, Amy Quillin, Jim Raber, Therese Tillett, Lauren Vachon, Zhiqiang (Molly) Wang, Deirdre Warren, Kevin West

1. Call to Order

Chair Grimm called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m. in the Governance Chambers, Kent Student Center. Attendees were also present 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 (Sheehan/Mocioalca). The agenda was approved unanimously.

4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2021

Chair Grimm asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2021, Faculty Senate meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Roxburgh/Piccirillo-Smith).

The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

5. Chair's Remarks

Chair Grimm delivered her remarks. [Attachment]

She then invited comments or questions.

Senator Smith thanked Chair Grimm. She then mentioned Ohio House Bills 322 and 327, which have the potential to limit free speech in the classroom and possibly punish instructors who violate the bills if they become law. She urged the senate to come up with a statement condemning the bills.

There were no further questions or comments.

6. President's Remarks

President Diacon began by saying that he wanted to focus on student success and the role that fundraising plays in that success. He said when he first came here as provost, he learned from former President Lefton that the biggest challenge was not letting the tyranny of the present block the promise of the future. He said that as he thought about it over the years, it occurred to him how vital fundraising is to public education. He mentioned a \$13 million donation that John and Fonda Elliott donated to build a new home for architecture and environmental design and a \$1 million dollar donation from the Timken foundation, which will help with the addition to the building for aeronautics and engineering. He said that money for projects like these can come from two sources: borrowing or raising donations. He added that the days when the government paid fully for the funding of our library are long gone. He expressed his gratitude to the state of Ohio for continuing to provide some capital funds for projects such as the Design Innovation Hub, and then he stressed that our history and identity as a university are due to access.

He said that the university has a strong focus on degree completion and announced that the 6-year graduation rate has reached 67.5% as opposed to the 50% rate the year he came to Kent State as provost. Reaching 65% was the goal five years ago. Kent State's current rate surpasses several flagship state institutions in other states. He thanked faculty, the Faculty Senate, AAUP, the Division of Student Affairs, the Pandemic Leadership Committee, the Anti-Racism Task Force, the IT department, vice presidents, academic leadership, and the grounds and facilities crews for helping to provide the access that students want and need. He then said that at homecoming, the public phase of a comprehensive campaign to raise funds will be launched with a focus on raising additional dollars for student scholarships and student success. He said this is particularly important because the number one reason that students drop out of Kent State is unmet financial need. He finished by providing the senate with a few stories about actual Kent State students who

had benefited from these efforts and said that each of us helps play a role in raising the funds that will help these students and others.

He then invited comments or questions.

Senator Kaplan thanked the president and said that he was pleased with the increase in the graduation rate, but he wondered whether those rates were based on students who remained at Kent State or whether it included those who went to other universities after their freshman year.

President Diacon responded that the federal graduation rate tracks students who enter our university and remain; if the student moves out to another university, the rate goes down.

Senator Kaplan also asked whether Kent State was doing more to make the city itself more attractive to students.

President Diacon responded that in addition to the previous improvements connecting the campus to downtown, we have a new liaison with the city (Dana Lawless-Andric) who is actively working with city leadership to address those issues. He suggested that we should have her speak to senate.

Senator Vande Zande thanked him for his comments and asked what can be done for assurance that if people donate large amounts of money, they do not expect undue favors or influence.

President Diacon said that naming rights might go with donations, but not unethical influence over academic or other areas of the university.

There were no further comments or questions.

7. Old Business: Action Item: Faculty Ethics Committee Purpose & Procedures Proposed Changes (Susan Roxburgh, Professor for the Department of Sociology and the Faculty Ethics Committee Chair)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the revisions to purposes and procedures of the Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC) (Kaplan/Mocioalca). Senator Roxburgh summarized what was added since the last meeting. The first change was that the number of witnesses that can be called may be increased at the discretion of the chair under some circumstances. The second change involved how administrative decisions will be communicated. If a decision is not to proceed on the part of administration, they need to let the Chair of Faculty Senate know this. The rest of the communication information was included in section 5C of the document provided by Senator Roxburgh.

Chair Grimm invited comments or questions.

There were no comments or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Announcements / Statements for the Record

Secretary Dauterich asked the senate whether any member was willing to volunteer for the EPC Subcommittee – Transfer Credit Committee. He explained the purpose of the committee and invited senators to contact him if they had an interest in joining.

Senator Kracht announced that the Faculty Senate Fall Retreat will be held on Friday, October 29, 2021, from 12:00–2:00 p.m. at Laziza in downtown Kent. Costumes are optional. There will be a costume contest with prizes.

Senator Dodson announced that she has seen ten times the number of COVID-19 cases compared to last March and that 50% of her emergency room patients are COVID positive, some with vaccines but most without. She added that she is seeing many teenagers and young adults coming in with COVID. Students in nursing are feeling a lack of engagement and a sense of exhaustion. She added that she loves teaching face-to-face classes, but we must remain responsible. She reported that one of her classes has 165 students, and some are getting sick and having permanent health consequences.

Dean Burhanna said that this Friday was Constitution Day and added that a free program was being offered in conjunction with the Honors College on Friday at 11:00 a.m. if anyone wished to attend.

There were no further announcements/statements for the record.

10. Adjournment

Chair Grimm adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate

attachment

Chair's Remarks for September 13, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting

Welcome to the September 13th meeting of the Faculty Senate. The last time we met in person in this room was March 9, 2020. That's 18 months in the rearview mirror. I'm not generally one to look backward. But this weekend's look back was longer than 18 months. It was 20 years. On September 11, 2001, I woke up and got ready to go to campus to teach my MBA class. I hadn't put on the TV or radio and knew nothing about the attack on the Twin Towers until I turned on the radio in my car and heard Diane Rehm say "if you're just joining us, two planes have flown into the Twin Towers in New York." I was deeply confused. I got to the office and Rick Kolbe had found and turned on a television in our printer room. I stepped in to watch. I might have said "I don't understand." I still don't.

I went down to my class. We were meeting in the lab that day. I didn't think there was much point in holding class. I told the students that we all needed to think about what it was that caused so many in the world to hate the US to the point of mass violence and then sent them home.

9/11 was and remains among the worst days of my life. I will never come to terms with 9/11. There is no coming to terms for me. I also quickly got to the point where I just didn't want to talk about it, watch the coverage on TV or read about it. One of the few people I spoke to about 9/11 was my friend Claire Culleton, who grew up in Manhattan and whose two sisters were part of two different pipe and drum bands in NYC. She told me about the funerals they were playing, non-stop. For weeks. But we didn't talk about much else.

This past Saturday, as I watched the first hour or so of the ceremony from NYC, it occurred to me that, as a planet, we have learned very little, maybe nothing, since 9/11. But then I realized I personally had learned something.

Many years ago, I remember talking to my friend Jagdish about Narendra Modi, the current prime minister of India. In his rise to power, Modi followed, and I believe continues to follow, a model he developed in his home state of Gujarat. This model is ostensibly about economic growth, but it also involves the promotion of demonstrably vicious right-wing populist politics. The goal was to galvanize the base in order to create a Hindu voting bloc for Modi's political party. It worked.

In my discussions with Jagdish, I remember thinking (and probably saying) how despicable it was that politicians would whip up hatred and sectarian violence for the sole purpose of gaining political power. I thought that would never happen in the US.

In retrospect my sentiments seem extraordinarily ignorant. The US has a long history of whipping up racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance, for the political gain of some. But it seemed so long ago and far away. Until our more recent experiences as a nation.

No longer do you need to be a historian to see what happens when a politician will go to any length to gain or hold political power. We are living through that time. Politicians have equivocated, "puffed" and toyed with "truth" forever. But I have no hesitation in saying that some select elements of the party commonly referred to as Republican have clearly

foregone any commitment to truth, morality, or even simple care for their constituents in order to gain and/or maintain political power. Two things demonstrate that clearly.

The first is the truly pathetic use of a pandemic to energize a political base. Among many Republicans, including those at the very highest level, where leadership was needed, we saw exploitation. Yet, I would also remind everyone listening that, while any number of Republicans have decided to use the pandemic for gain, many, including our Governor, Mike DeWine, have fought the good fight to bring their constituents the best public health response to the pandemic they can. As an Ohioan, I would like to especially thank Governor DeWine.

The second demonstration of this moral vacuum is January 6th. Former President George W. Bush put it eloquently this past Saturday when he described the terrorists of 9/11 and the terrorists of January 6 as “children of the same foul spirit.” However, he neglected mentioning the foul spirits from which these children sprang, the politicians willing to do anything to gain or maintain power.

While there are those who attribute the attacks of 9/11 to American actions, and no doubt we as a nation have engaged in activity that has made us a target, in the 20 years since 9/11, I have learned that there doesn’t need to be any real harmful action, offence or assault to generate hatred at all. That can be achieved simply by repeating lies.

I am so grateful to be at a University that believes in science, that believes in the notion of community well-being and that is committed to acting on its beliefs. But there are two diseases spreading in our broader community. One is COVID.

The pandemic has been and will continue to make its presence felt. We have and will continue to respond with our individual commitments to community responsibility and with the help and guidance of our very own scientists and public health experts.

The more insidious and dangerous disease spreading in our country is a retreat from the fundamental values of democracy. We see it manifested in the active undermining and attempted destruction of the principles and institutions that ensure a vibrant democracy: elections that are free of political interference and processes that ensure voters’ rights, free speech, a well informed and independent press, checks and balances in general and an independent judiciary, in particular.

Being an educator is a wonderful thing. We all have our subjects, our specialties, our intellectual affinity groups, but at the core of who we are and what we do is a commitment to seek truth, to promote discourse, even when we disagree, but to also stand against those who incite fear through the malicious creation, manipulation or denial of fact. As we make our way through the pandemic, I know that you are doing your part to keep our community safe. I would also like to encourage each of you to consider ways in which we can contribute to fostering a healthier democracy. It’s a big ask with no clear answers but I’m making it anyway. I believe in the power of the academy to take on a big ask. I believe in you.

Thank you.
Pamela E. Grimm
Chair, Faculty Senate