

**WCU Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 10.13. 23

**Facilitator:** Israel Sanz-Sánchez, President

**Time:** 3:00pm-5:00pm

**Note Taker:** Selen Razon, Recording Secretary

**Location:** Zoom

**Type of Meeting:** Scheduled meeting

**Attendees**

**Senators**

❖ Benedict, Kristopher	Present	❖ Metz, Stacie	Present
❖ Bolton, David	Absent	❖ Mishra, Vipanchi	Present
❖ Brenner, Jim	Present	❖ Mraz, Megan	Present
❖ Chen, Tianran	Present	❖ Panagiotidou, Eirini	Present
❖ Cherry, Dan	Present	❖ Panichelli, Meg	Present
❖ Childs, Gary	Present	❖ Park, Innhwa	Present
❖ Cooke, Laquana	Absent	❖ Pierlott, Matt	Present
❖ Daltry, Rachel	Present	❖ Razon, Selen	Present
❖ Du, Wei	Present	❖ Ruchti, Simon	Present
❖ Forbes, Dan	Present	❖ Sanz-Sánchez, Israel	Present
❖ Garthwait, Clayton	Absent	❖ Sawyer, William	Absent
❖ Grasseti, Stevie	Present	❖ Schugar, Heather	Present
❖ Guerriero, Tara	Present	❖ Selvarathinam, Priya	Present
❖ Hill, Erin	Present	❖ Smidt, Esther	Present
❖ Hodes, Jackie	Present	❖ Stokes, Jordan	Absent
❖ Houser, Mary	Absent	❖ Tennille, Julie	Present
❖ Junius, Premalatha	Absent	❖ Wade, Michelle	Absent
❖ Kolasinski, Kurt	Present	❖ Watkins, Karen	Absent
❖ Lawton, Bessie	Present	❖ Wiest, Julie	Present
❖ Lightner, Sarah	Present	❖ Wilbur, Veronica	Present

**Representatives**

❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Bill Sawyer	Absent
❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Priya Selvarathinam	Present
❖ APSCUF Representative: Bessie Lawton (Alternate: Julie Wiest )	Present
❖ Student Government Association Representative: Caleb Winters	Present
❖ Graduate Student Association Representative: Amah Ensume	Absent
❖ ROTC Representative: Salamatu Dumbuya	Present

**Senate Proxies**

❖ Edelblute, Heather	Not present
❖ Howard, Rick	Not present
❖ Kaulback, Michelle	Present, no proxying
❖ Mohajeri, Orkideh	Not present
❖ O'Brien, Lia	Present, proxy for Michelle Wade
❖ Owens, Jackie	Not present
❖ Patriarca, Ashley	Not present
❖ Tully, Greg	Not present
❖ Van Liew, Maria	Not present

- ❖ Whidden, Melissa
- ❖ Matthew Kruger-Ross

Present, no proxying  
Not present

### Guests In Attendance

**David Thomas:** Director, Office of Educational Accessibility(OEA)and Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies + Academic Support Programs

**Susan Gans:** Professor, Psychology, co-chair, Committee for Advising Excellence. second co-chair: Courtney Lloyd, Associate Professor and Interim Director, Exploratory Studies

**Megan Harth** (Psychology major) and **Joseph Harkins** (German + Supply Chain Management major), Coordinators, The Period Project

### Agenda

Welcome to Senators, Proxies, and Guests

**Guest: David Thomas:** Director, Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) and Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies + Academic Support Program

The guest presented an overview of the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) that is now more accurately reflecting the services provided as well as the mission of the office, moving away from the medical model of disability. The accommodating system which has been out for about nine weeks may have experienced some hiccups this year, but they are starting to disappear and work themselves out. The accommodations themselves haven't changed too much this semester but the website is completely revamped. To that end, the faculty resources section currently does have step-by-step instructions for how to use the accounting system and how to navigate around it. The office is also working on an issue to turn the student's tab back on because this is another popular feature.

Important to note, that the way the accommodations have been delivered has changed. Rather than students receiving an e-mail and forwarding that to faculty, an accommodation letter is issued through the accommodation system. This way the system is a lot more secure and centralized to keep track of the documentation, making the process more efficient for everyone.

In response to questions asked, the guest clarified that the modified attendance agreement is still the student's responsibility to initially bring up. The faculty is not responsible for putting anything in place until the student says that they would like to do so. Following this, the faculty fills out the online form by logging in and answering questions. In short, the responsibility and the applications remain mostly the responsibility of the student.

In relation to attendance, there are no hard and fast rules but there are some guidelines for attendance flexibility. For instance, for a 15-week course that meets once a week, no more than two total absences might be reasonable. This is something that OEA is still working on pulling together as well as other guidelines related to assignment flexibility that will consider the learning objectives etc. Another set of guidelines currently worked on is reasonable extensions to assignments. These guidelines will be available in the portal within the documents library as well as the website of the office. For 100% online classes, the guidelines would depend on the structure of the course so if the course is an online synchronous course most likely a lot less accommodation will be necessary since they can self-accommodate.

In response to another question about testing centers and the difficulties related to finding a spot, the number of students needing accommodations has substantially increased, i.e., from the Fall of 2020 when around 690 students registered with the office and now around 12132 students. At this point, approximately 80% of the faculty have received an accommodation letter. Additional testing space on the day of the exam is sometimes a possibility to make happen but not always. The office needs more space.

In relation to field courses, they have more specific requirements and a lot of flexibility with attendance might not be reasonable for these. For instance, especially in programs where student teaching is a statutory requirement, missing these and making up for missed time may or may not be feasible. Clinical situations are also less likely to have as much flexibility. There is a need to consider the specifics but a lot of times the modified attendance may not be reasonable for these courses.

Currently, more documents and materials are uploaded in the accommodate system. In this phase, faculty can also receive emails from the office to make sure that everything gets back to them promptly. At some point soon, the system is expected to operate smoothly and even more efficiently.

**Guest: Susan Gans:** Professor, Psychology, co-chair, Committee for Advising Excellence (second co-chair: Courtney Lloyd, Associate Professor and Interim Director, Exploratory Studies – *not present*).

The Committee for Advising Excellence is made up of two faculty from each college or school appointed by their deans and the idea is that this is a university committee with representatives from various offices around the campus who have an interest in advising of the students. There are also a couple of student representatives. As such, one of the most important things the committee does is advisor training which was originally brought together in response to the feedback that there may be a lack of homogeneity in terms of advising relationships and that there are challenges to the incredible diversity of advising loads right across campus. These advising training sessions are provided face to face with online access modules including short quizzes, and short answer questions, to finally receive a certificate saying that you have gone through the training. The training is self-paced, and there are no deadlines. The next training starts on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. The committee plans to provide hands-on workshops so that people can learn how to use navigate and ask questions about other systems such as RamPortal. After people finish advising training eligible to apply for advising awards which are issued one for each college and school and one overall excellence in advising award is also issued separately for one applicant in the pool.

The guest added that the committee also has a subcommittee for advising assessment where the members developed an instrument to assess advising. The goal here is to assess the departments and see what departments are doing, their experiences, and practices. Ultimately, the committee aims for the results of these assessments to also benefit the training. Currently, training has expanded quite a bit on navigating as well as the new portal banner.

Course advising is one place where faculty can try to reduce equity gaps in students and work toward best practices then the rationale for being flexible in approaches and modifying them as best practices are identified. Recently the committee has also been asked to work with the Academic Support and Advocacy (ASA) Center. The center was designed by Megan Jerabek to increase student enrollment and provide better advocacy to students for timely and successful graduation from their programs. Enrollments and advocacy are kept separate in the center. In this conversation about the ASA Center, the Committee for Advising Excellence represents faculty interests with regards to reducing advising loads, providing students of very large departments with enough advising tools and guidance. Faculty feedback towards this design of this input is welcomed and appreciated.

To a question regarding how the ASA is linked with Moon Shot as well as another one about potentially differing levels of advising needed by our students (i.e., high touch student vs. more independent students etc.), and how the center will handle it, the guest responded that ideally the development of the ASA Center could have waited for the Moon Shot process and its eventual suggestion that students have emergent needs but the ASA Center was established before that process had a chance to come to fruition. Therefore, one goal of the committee is also to insist that the center remains flexible and able to respond and redesign itself based on suggestions for best practices that come from the Moon Shot initiative which is happening over time.

To the second question with regards to differing student needs, the guest responded that the center is designed to address students with varying levels of needs, but a challenge could be to define what a student needs. The hope here is that Navigate is going to provide some data that will allow to prospectively understand if a student is likely to benefit from extra support. Related to this notion, another goal is also to work toward making this center not feel punitive but truly supportive and inviting so it can have the ability to make students feel like they are valued

members of the committee. The goal is to try to retain and support rather than calling individuals. The capacity of the center is somewhat limited now since they have not done a ton of hiring yet and the advocacy side is understaffed so right now that piece is focusing on students who are about to be dismissed, who are on academic probation, and who need some extra support as they try to build their GPA backup, enrolling to classes that can help them with that goal and so forth.

To another question as to whether graduate students are included in the conversation, especially regarding the advocacy piece, the guest responded that it is not the case yet, but hopefully eventually. The point is that the center first focuses on the undergraduate population and then would hopefully work with graduate departments to figure out what would be most helpful for their students which would be a way to potentially expand the reach of the ASA into the Graduate School.

A positive development is that the ASA Center is now within the University College which wasn't the case before. Additionally, to a comment that the program appears to be a way to save money by not having enough faculty do the advising that is part of the ASPCUF contract, the guest responded that there is likely no question that this is the direction things are going, so faculty can talk and share these thoughts and feelings but that if the university has its way there will continue to be this professional advising staff which is not necessarily a bad thing especially for departments that carry a disproportionate burden of student advisees. That is, if the university does not hire more faculty, help with advising must come from somewhere, so the goal of the Committee for Advising Excellence is to make sure that the faculty have a way to be involved, at least to know what is going on with the students. A question can then be how different departments can weigh in on the kinds of support that they want for their students so that this is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

To a comment highlighting the importance of the advocacy part and that the counseling center is seeing a lot of students with issues with financial aid, housing, and food insecurities which in turn affect their learning, the guest responded that the ASA Center is going to be a centralized place to continue to refer students to resources that already exist and those resources that are currently underfunded understaffed will need to be boosted for this overall effort to be successful. The idea is that the Center needs to have something to refer the students because students cannot just be tossed back into the vacuum where there is nothing to help them. Therefore, again, if the university is committed to this as a success model, they will have to bolster those resources, and that includes bolstering both the learning resources and the survival resources such as cleaning, housing situation, etc. which will all require money. To that end, a comment was also made that students are enduring significant financial hardship and from the advocacy perspective, things got to be relational, reducing the middle people so to speak, and structures that that give students a run around because it needs to be more efficient, or we will continue to lose them because they system is not efficient.

As for the centralization of the office, the guest commented that this is a currently debated topic with several departments pushing back against the physical centralization of the office because the students may not necessarily want to go to another place once they are in their department to seek help. Therefore, balancing the desire for centralization requires thoughts and the faculty is welcome to provide it. This can also play out on a department-by-department basis, and everyone can decide whether they want to have that person within their walls or if they're OK with that person existing somewhere else

As to how the program will function in tandem or will fit with other similar programs (i.e., athletic mentoring program, etc.), the guest commented that again centralizing support might be helpful instead of students being pushed into all different directions. The thinking is that there will probably going to be a mix bearing in mind that a new initiative should ideally expand and address most student needs. The ASA Center is not expressing whether they want to overtake those other initiatives around campus or moving them under their umbrella. This said, there might be a place in the future where having this one sort of umbrella place for student support would reduce the need for so many of the smaller programs and streamline the ability of the university to provide support to one centralized student support mechanism, but we are not certain that this is the direction-even though this is a goal of the Moon Shot mission.

The guest also added that related to student financial needs, one of the things that can make students the most successful is giving them a little bit of money for specific needs that arise. To that end, having a small grants program can be helpful even though this not happening as a piece of the ASA Center. There are however some pockets on campus where that kind of financing is becoming available in a very limited way and the hope is to see these initiatives grow. For questions about the Committee for Advising Excellence, send an e-mail to [sgans@wcupa.edu](mailto:sgans@wcupa.edu).

**Guests: Megan Harth** (Psychology major) and **Joseph Harkins** (German + Supply Chain Management major), Coordinators, The Period Project

The project was founded by alumni Katie Kerr who based her capstone project on "*Tampons versus Toilet Paper*" which emphasized the need for menstrual equity at WCU. The present guests took over the project in September 2022 and from September 2022 to now, 22 bathrooms on campus were distributed over 5000 menstrual products. Recently, a first dispenser was also installed by the company *Aunt Flow* which is a female-founded and run company.

The guests elaborated on the notion that WCU's undergraduate student body is primarily female and not meeting the need of menstrual equity is not skipping an important equity requirement. Guest also suggested that 51.1% of undergraduate students based on their research face financial hardship because of having to purchase menstrual products. At this phase of the project, a recommendation for a solution is to install dispensers of female sanitary products in every bathroom across campus. To that end, the guests asked Senate to help them connect with key decision makers, so this proposed solution may be on their desk and ideally ratified by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

To a question whether the guests had already presented this idea and proposal to the university administration, the guests responded that they had not yet been successful in reaching out to the administration and that the hope is for the Senate to help make that connection. To another question as to whether the guests have worked with Student Government, they responded that they have received a grant of \$3000 from Student Government and that they hope to do more work with them in the future.

A final question to whether the required amount (based on the documents provided) of about \$9800 is yearly, the guests responded that given the infrastructural needs and the dispensers needed, this initial solution will cover 37 bathrooms that would include the highest traffic bathrooms across campus and that that would come out to about for the yearly cost based on current data and research.

### **Senate Business and Announcements**

1. Approval of minutes from Faculty Senate meeting on 9.8.2023.

Minutes approved.

2. Meeting updates:

Meeting summaries for Meeting with Interim Provost Osgood and Interim Deputy Provost Bacon: Monday, Oct. 1, 2023, 10:00-11:00, in person (attended by Julie Wiest and Israel Sanz)

Meeting with President Fiorentino: Oct 10, 11:00-12:00, Zoom (attended by Selen Razon, Vipanchi Mishra, Julie Tennille, Israel Sanz)

#### **2.1. Summary of summer and fall enrollments, budget implications**

President/Deputy Provost mentioned that summer enrollment was down a little bit, not too much to impact the budget. Fall: 17,076 (400 more than predicted). Part of it is the incoming class is slightly larger, but it was mostly

retention at 82.2 > 84.3%. Graduate enrollment was a little less of a decline than expected, which was good. The expectation was that it'd be down because of the economy, but now a downward trend in employment, so we expect graduate enrollment to go up. That's a \$3.5 million net add to the budget (pushing out the remaining 20% for the budget). The future projection is 17,000-17,300, to stabilize around that, with more solid graduate enrollment (we will be growing the programs that we already have or creating certificates. The only exception is that the College of Education and Social Work want to create a BS in Educational Studies, so students don't get put down to another area and not be able to pursue an education degree because of GPA), focusing on student success.

President mentioned that Summer was down a little bit in comparison to projected numbers (15% less undergraduate enrollment than last year). This was partially intentional. Students are shifting to summer enrollment, so the university wanted to make sure we would have enough classes for the academic year. The summer is basically about meeting student demand. So, offerings are increasingly online, so they do not go to other schools. We are not interested in all online graduate programs, that is not the market that we are in, but his successor might do something different.

The fall was very strong, with 500 students more than expected, and the final enrollment was almost 17,100 (vs. 16,600 that had been projected). Largest first-year class in history, with 3,087 students. Enrollment increase was mostly fueled by retention, we were at 82% first-to-second-year retention last year and this year we are at 84% (much higher than the national average, which is at 70%).

Budget-wise, the summer has no consequences (we don't rely on the summer for budgeting), but the increase in the fall has brought us an additional \$5 million. This is all good news in anticipation of what might happen starting in 2025-2026, when the decline in high school graduates is expected to worsen. We need to prepare for that scenario, being careful with budget, balancing graduate vs. undergraduate enrollments. "WCU is going to be fine, but some of the other schools around PASSHE maybe not so much."

## **2.2. PASSHE/PennWest updates (system budget, WCU implications, etc.).**

President/Deputy Provost mentioned that PennWest came in high in terms of enrollment, which is good. We ended up with a 10% increase in the WCU budget because of the formula.

President made a point that there is a mixture of news. Overall enrollment continued to decline in some universities from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023, and it has increased in others. Increases were registered in East Stroudsburg, Indiana, Cheyney, and Shippensburg, and decreases in all the others. WCU registered a small 200-student decrease from the last fall, but this is in the context of an increase in retention and first-year students, so they are not concerned. The consolidated campuses lost quite a few students: Commonwealth lost 8% and PennWest lost 11% of total enrollment. On the other hand, first-year classes increased quite a bit in some of the universities: East Stroudsburg increased by 21%, Cheyney and IUP increased by 15, and WCU increased by 2.7% (4% increase in out-of-state students). Commonwealth's 1st-year cohort increased, and PennWest's decreased. Link to Inquirer report: <https://www.inquirer.com/education/pennsylvania-state-universities-enrollment-passhe-west-chester-cheyney-20231009.html>

The President also added that one of the things that is helping us is keeping our tuition flat for several years (and there is a recent legislative plan to mandate flat tuition for 2024-2025). It makes us more competitive vis-à-vis other universities in the area, like Temple. We have the lowest cost of attendance in the state, even vs. other PASSHE universities, because they have higher room and board, or higher fees: "Each year I have made everybody justify any increases in student fees." "WCU programs have a stellar reputation."

## **2.3. Moonshot updates**

President/Deputy Provost mentioned that there is nothing new. Working on ASA, but no updates. The speech 2 weeks ago by a guest presenter (20 September: Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, Austin Community College, presented on retention and student support strategies) was great. Link to presentation: <https://wcupa.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d99b8d07-996e-4cd6-a777-b08901439a34>

## **2.4. Updates on student housing and facilities**

President/Deputy Provost mentioned that there are no plans to reconvert Wayne to a dorm. It was considered but there are no concrete plans (they were trying to respond to the housing crises). They'd rather build a new residential facility: it is not on the radar to reconvert Wayne to dorms.

President reiterated that converting Wayne Hall back to dorms, whether the whole building or partially, was considered an option but is not being entertained any longer because it does not solve the problem. A new idea: building additional housing on South Campus, where we own land, perhaps graduate student housing. All these solutions will involve conversation with the adjacent municipalities because of increased traffic, sewer needs, etc.

The long-term student housing need is being addressed as part of the plan with Ewing Cole (the construction engineering firm that the university has signed a \$759,000 contract with has been signed with to design a facilities plan). The facilities planning process will include two phases: Phase 1, where the firm will identify solutions and locations for student housing (before the end of the year), and Phase 2, which is the overall, longer-term facilities plan, and which will include feedback and commentary from the whole community. This report will have to consider our projected future needs (e.g., does the library need all that room?). The President also shared the report of campus improvements over the summer (sent to all Senate with the agenda).

## **2.5. Burdensome research processes update (update on recommendations?)**

President/Deputy Provost brought up that a focus group was held that included the Provost's Office, ORSP, and a group of faculty (Frank Fish, Jessica Sowa, Marc Gagne, Kurt Kolasinski, Stevie Grasseti, and Brandon Mitchell): The discussion leading to some tangible steps: e.g., taking AWA from PASSHE ratio (if somebody's AWA is paid with their grant and it doesn't go against the 25% WCU, this will allow us to grant unlimited AWA unless it brings us beyond the 25%, but it won't be limited by the 60-AWA limit received by ORSP), post-award staff person funding [a return to what we used to have?], travel and reimbursement changes, expanding federal work-study to make available to faculty to help with research. Osgood will draft a letter to share with faculty next week summarizing this information.

## **2.6. Presidential search process: responses from the community?**

President/Deputy Provost emphasized that they kept an ear to the ground (some negative feedback about the process and not the person). Greenwood Asher and Associates will keep 75,000 for the first part (i.e., Laurie Bernotsky's candidacy) and at least 75,000 (for the second part, if we get to the second part) (all within the 1/3 of the president's salary range agreed as compensation for the firm). Ad will be drafted based on feedback collected by the firm during focus group meetings earlier this month, and the committee will put together an ad by Oct. 9, Laurie will get the prospectus by Oct. 12, and she'll have to get back to them before Oct 23 to confirm if she is a candidate (she still isn't as of the time of our meeting with Osgood and Bacon). Osgood reiterated his intention not to be appointed Provost.

## **2.7 Administrative perspectives on faculty presence on campus**

President/Deputy Provost offered that presence benefits cohesion, not necessarily the same criterion as APSCUF. This has consequences at other levels: for instance, facilities may not be needed if fewer faculty are on campus and all office hours are online. If you're on campus once a week, maybe you don't need your own office. Departments also have a lot of self-governance power to mandate presence for meetings and other events. There will probably be a side letter that will be signed after the CBA is approved to specify expectations for office hours.

President mentioned that he is on the bargaining team, so he is close to the conversation. He has questions about the recent interpretation of the CBA as meaning that all faculty office hours can be on Zoom. To him, there is a broader issue beyond office hours – the question is, how are you equitable to everybody and maintain a culture of engagement when people are on campus less? For instance, in this scenario of no mandated faculty presence beyond in-person classes, we could hire faculty who live outside PA, teach online classes, have office hours on Zoom, and

are never on campus. Are we going to be ok with faculty teaching their classes and then not being on campus for anything else? “This scares the hell out of me, and I’m nervous about this tendency to avoid presence on campus”. Some middle ground needs to be reached, and he believes the majority of faculty want to be on campus anyway. Article 4 specifies that faculty are expected to engage in the life of the campus, but now participation looks very different from a few years ago. So ideally there will be some articulation that recognizes the importance of being on campus and that does not force us to go into a mandate culture where presence for all sorts of events (commencement, games, concerts, student events, etc.) will have to be mandated, or where deans will have to start policing how often faculty come to campus.

Response to manhunt, and communication of safety measures to the campus community. Safety in and around the Philadelphia campus.

President/Deputy Provost offered that they learned some things from this experience – for instance, the fact that they are not able to lock all buildings electronically, and this admittedly was unclear in the communication that went out. Changes in this area would imply a shift in culture across campus. For instance, active shooter training is optional, not mandatory (people don’t want mandatory training). ID wearing is not mandatory either, do we need to change the culture? The notification that went out to faculty the day the campus was closed because of the manhunt, stemmed from a false tip that the guy was seen at the Microtel, and the measure was taken out of caution. Faculty should also make sure to sign up for text alerts (this is the emergency preparedness link added to all syllabi). In the Philadelphia campus, police officers have been hired, unlimited escorting is offered to their cars and the train station... not much more that can be done short of shutting off the campus. You must swipe in at night to come into the campus. They have tried to make campus access as secure as possible within the area.

President added that throughout the whole episode, the University administration was being kept informed by State authorities. He was afraid the escaped prisoner might make it to South Campus through the woods and take a hostage. The Friday when classes were canceled, it was based on the tip they received that the guy was close to the campus – that was then determined to be unfounded, but by then it was too late to resume classes. The following week, the decision to require electronic access confused many people (many students and faculty did not have their ID cards, some of the doors were locked electronically, others were not) and it wasn’t clear that the measure was protecting anybody, so they reversed it. Overall, they never thought there was much risk to the community during this episode. There is a certain level of risk we need to live with, but besides that, we need to think whether a specific investment in safety (e.g., requiring card access for all buildings) would have the desired safety effect.

For active shooter situations, the University does have a strategy. Some changes have been implemented under Fiorentino’s leadership (e.g., all classrooms can be locked from the inside), the electronic notification service is available if people sign up for it, and active shooter notices on classroom walls. There is also a police presence that is not visually identifiable (there are more police than it seems). The primary plan is still “run away if you can, the active defense only if people are trapped”.

## **2.8. Process to announce administrative changes (e.g., Josh Auld as Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and now also new Senior Associate Vice President).**

President/Deputy Provost stated that Josh Auld oversees the Associate Provosts: Angela Howard, Naomie Nyanungo, Cherly Neale-McFall, Josh Auld, Megan Jerabek (Associate Provosts). Josh Auld is above other vice provosts, but his renaming is a consequence of academic reorganization and a way to acknowledge his role while allowing him to keep his tenure. The Provost’s Office will be creating a new org chart. We asked Osgood to start announcing these changes to Shared Governance members, to keep track.

## **2.9. Two-year strategic plan updates: Process for collecting feedback**

President explained that the document is open for comments from the community up until Oct. 20. Faculty Senate informed him that we may be sharing feedback as a group – he thought it’d be a good idea.

## **2.10. Graduate center (current and future use)**



President mentioned that we own the Graduate Center off route 202 (1160 McDermott Dr., West Chester, PA), but depending on future demand, we may be selling it (it's a convenient building with parking, etc.). We lease the facility off Route 30 (the previous home of the Nursing department) – the Exton campus.

### **2.11. Staff ombudsperson: Status?**

President offered that this was thought of at about the same time as the faculty and student ombudsperson positions, but he believes the HR office plays that role for the staff. “The question is, what is the need behind it?”. Faculty Senate mentioned that HR and an Ombudsperson might not fulfill the same functions for staff (just like, for instance, APSCUF and the Ombudsperson do not fulfill the same functions for faculty). He will keep asking to see if there is a need for it.

**2.12. Senators’ comments in response to meetings’ minutes:** Senators briefly discussed that students who are coming to evening classes brought up an interest in getting card access or some sort of parking arrangement for facilities. A point was also made that the cards can be costly for some students to buy, and that they may/should receive funding toward that. Additionally, there were comments regarding CBA’s stipulation regarding office hours for online and face-to-face faculty. What was emphasized was that APSCUF is still trying to clarify this issue. Overall, the reduced faculty presence on campus was discussed and the administration being averse to this practice was brought up. The general concern that there should be heightened faculty presence and engagement around the campus was also mentioned.

### **Final announcements:**

1. There was an e-mail from the president's office that came out on October 5th and that e-mail had an attachment to a draft of the strategic plan. The strategic plan team is asking is that that the community share feedback with them by October 20<sup>th</sup>. Some of this feedback can be shared as feedback that is coming from the Senate. The Senate has already put together a couple of suggestions. If any time over the next couple of days senators were asked to take a look at this and see if anything is missing. Comments were asked to be shared with the Senate president by Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>.
2. If anybody is interested in serving as a liaison with the Office for University Advancement and External Affairs, they were asked to contact the Senate President. Also, for questions for the forum with the University on October 31<sup>st</sup>, Senators were asked to send these them to the Senate President by October 25<sup>th</sup>
3. Senators were asked to look out for an e mail for the official hire of the new Dean of the College of the Sciences and Mathematics.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Membership & Elections** (*Dan Forbes*)

No report.

### **Communications** (*Julie Tennille*)

No report.

### **Faculty Welfare** (*Eirini Panagiotidou, Ronnie Wilbur*)

No report as of yet. Eirini

### **Student Welfare** (*Dan Cherry*)

No report as of yet, but I do have a request - if anyone has a recommendation for student organizations that we should be in contact with (in addition to SGA), could you please let me know? Thanks, Dan.

### **Research & Creative Activity** (*Gary Childs, Sarah Lightner, Stevie Grassetti*)

In spring 2023, this group collaborated with ORSP (and other groups) to launch a faculty survey about research. Responses from 172 full time faculty (27% response rate). Some highlights of from aggregate data:

- Of faculty who reported publishing in the past 3 years, 39.61% indicated that publications included student authors.
- 75.74% of respondents said “yes” there are currently barriers that impact research/creative activity productivity
- 4-4 teaching load and cumbersome administrative responsibilities ranked as biggest barriers to research productivity
- Peer reviewed publications, conference presentations ranked as the highest metric by which the dept evaluates research and creative activities
- Faculty most frequently endorsed these as resources for grant work that would be most helpful: administrative support for budget expenditures, grant writing workshops writing/editing services, and mentorship from experienced faculty

Both Gary and Stevie are working with ORSP on GrantForward launch (expected November 1—the new “pivot”).

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## LIAISON REPORTS

**ADA Committee** – Sen. Matt Pierlott

No meeting yet.

**ADA Digital Accessibility Committee** – Sen. Dan Forbes

No report. Committee has not met recently.

**Alumni Association** – Sen. Bill Sawyer

No report

**APSCUF Exec Representative** – Sen. Bessie Lawton (alternate: Sen. Julie Wiest)

APSCUF is having discussions with management on the following issues:

1. Concerns about accommodations, which might lead to extra work for faculty as well as appropriateness for particular fields. Some high school accommodations are being transferred in without consideration of whether they are still suitable for college.
2. Concerns about how the OEA is overworked and needs additional staffing
3. Title IX procedures
4. HVAC in CBPM, UNA buildings
5. Role of ASA center vs faculty advising

In preparation for a possible strike (since we’re currently out of contract), APSCUF leaders are encouraging member solidarity, as well as recruitment of non-members. Look for and consider participating in solidarity events, such as the monthly lunches in the SECC faculty & staff lounge, button-wearing campaigns, and other upcoming events.

**Budget Review Committee** – Sen. Kurt Kolasinski

Has yet to meet.

**Sustainability Advisory Council** – Sen. Kurt Kolasinski

Join us in person at noon (Sykes Student Union 255 A/B) or via Zoom at <https://wcupa.zoom.us/j/91259797459>, password 194422 for the **Fall 2023 Sustainability Research and Practice Seminar**. Many of these presentations will be recorded and archived on our [Digital Commons website](#) as have dozens of previous presentations over the past four year.

Next Seminar: 10/18/23

Professor Zeinab Baba, Public Health Sciences - *Epidemiologic Understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*

Join the team from the Francis Harvey Green Library's [Bicycle Lending Library](#) every Thursday between 5 and 7 pm to learn how to keep a bike in top running shape.

Learn more about the Gordon Natural Area at the [GNA Biota webpage](#) to see what other amazing species and relationships are found in the Gordon. Check out the [GNA YouTube channel](#).

**Campus Climate Intervention Team** – Sen. Simon Ruchti

We haven't met yet.

**Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence** – Sen. Ronnie Wilbur

We have not met yet

**Faculty Mentoring Committee** – Sen. Innhwa Park

No report

**IS&T and LMS Advisory Committees** – Sen. Dan Forbes

LMS Advisory Committee still has not met. IS&T Faculty Advisory met on Oct. 4 but I was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.

**LGBTQIA+ University Caucus** – Sen. Julie Tennille

Co-chairs

Beth Shearn (Staff)

Meg Panichelli (Faculty)

Mission

The mission of the LGBTQIA+ University Caucus is to promote the equity, empowerment, and success of LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff by fostering a safe campus environment; developing, suggesting, and supporting inclusive policies and curriculum; supporting LGBTQIA+ recruitment and retention initiatives; and promoting social and educational opportunities to meaningfully engage with the University community.

One of the organizing principles for this academic year (2023/2024) is to pull down silos among other university groups with shared interests. The LGBTQIA University Caucus seeks to enhance collaborations with the Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy (CTQA), Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) club, and other campus organizations such as the Women's Commission. For example, Dr. Casey Bohrman and Dr. Meg Panichelli and others have collaborated with facilities personnel on ensuring the creation of non-binary changing rooms on South campus.

First meeting held on 9/13/2023

Subcommittees to be activated:

- Event Planning
- Gender Affirming Services
- Affinity Space Planning
- Division of University Advancement
- Curriculum/Syllabi

**Military Veterans Coordinating Committee** – Megan Mraz

We have not met yet, there is no report at this time.

**Multicultural Faculty Commission** – Sen. Innhwa Park

The FMC held an Active Listening and Onboarding Workshop for faculty mentors and mentees in September 18, 19. An updated handbook including various resources was shared with all participants. Monthly check-ins with the participants will be conducted via email. Sub-committees are planning for various events (e.g., cohort mentoring sessions for adjunct faculty).

**Philadelphia Campus** – Sen. Meg Panichelli

No report

**President’s Commission on the Status of Women** – Sen. Michelle Wade

The Women’s Commission had its first meeting on Oct. 3 and established its project teams for the year: student & community engagement, recruitment and retention of women of color staff and faculty, inclusive facilities, and the caregiving report. Each project team will establish its goals for the year.

**Student Government Association** – Caleb Winters

No report

**Graduate Student Association:** Amah (Ensume) Dunor

No report

**ROTC:** Salamatu Dumbuya

- The WCU ROTC and Veteran Center will be having their Military Scholarship on November 11, 2023.
- ROTC is having their ACFT on October 24, 2020
- The ROTC Military Ball will be on December 2, 2023.

No report

**Ad-hoc liaisons:**

**Vice President for Student Affairs search** – *Search to be restarted after June 2024.*

No report

**Dean of College of Science and Mathematics search** – *Sen. Julie Wiest*

This search has concluded. We brought three candidates for on-campus interviews, and the committee’s first-choice candidate recently accepted, with a start date in the Spring 2024 semester. Look for an official announcement soon.

**SIS Advisory Board** – *Sens. Sarah Lightner and Simon Ruchti*

Simon was teaching during last meeting so couldn’t attend.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

- ❖ President – Senator Israel Sanz-Sánchez
- ❖ Vice President – Senator Dan Forbes
- ❖ Recording Secretary – Senator Selen Razon
- ❖ Corresponding Secretary – Senator Julie Tenille
- ❖ At-Large Members – Senators Rachel Daltry and Vipanchi Mishra
- ❖ Immediate Past President – Senator Julie Wiest
- ❖ Past Presidents – Senators Bessie Lawton, Jim Brenner, and Heather Schugar

**Senate Meetings 2023-2024**

**Fall 2023:**

Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Sept. 8 (in person, SECC101A)  
Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Oct. 13 (on Zoom)  
Open Forum with administrators: 2-3 pm. Tuesday, Oct. 31 (Zoom webinar, link will be shared)  
Senate meeting: 3-5 pm. Friday, Dec. 8 (on Zoom)

**Spring 2024:**

Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9 (in person, SECC101A)  
Open Forum with administrators: 3-4 pm. Monday, Feb. 26 (Zoom webinar, link will be shared)  
Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, March 29 (on Zoom)  
Senate meeting: 3-5 p.m. Friday, April 26 (on Zoom)