

WCU Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, September 6, 2024

Facilitator: Israel Sanz-Sánchez, President

Time: 3:00pm-5:00pm

Note Taker: Dan Forbes, Recording Secretary

Location: Science & Engineering Center 101A

Type of Meeting: Scheduled meeting

Attendees

Senators

❖ Benedict, Kristopher	Present	❖ McInnis, Daris	Present
❖ Bolton, David	Present	❖ Mishra, Vipanchi	Proxy
❖ Campillo-Fenoll, Marcos	Present	❖ Mohajeri, Orkideh	Present
❖ Chen, Tianran	Present	❖ Mraz, Megan	Present
❖ Cherry, Dan	Present	❖ Panagiotidou, Eirini	Present
❖ Childs, Gary	Present	❖ Panichelli, Meg	Absent
❖ Daltrey, Rachel	Present	❖ Park, Innhwa	Present
❖ Du, Wei	Present	❖ Pierlott, Matt	Present
❖ Forbes, Dan	Present	❖ Razon, Selen	Present
❖ Garthwait, Clayton	Present	❖ Ruchti, Simon	Present
❖ Grasseti, Stevie	Present	❖ Sanz-Sánchez, Israel	Present
❖ Guerriero, Tara	Present	❖ Schugar, Heather	Present
❖ Hill, Erin	Present	❖ Smidt, Esther	Present
❖ Houser, Mary	Present	❖ Stokes, Jordan	Absent
❖ Junius, Premalatha	Present	❖ Tennille, Julie	Present
❖ Kaulback, Michelle	Present	❖ Wade, Michelle	Present
❖ Kolasinski, Kurt	Present	❖ Watkins, Karen	Present
❖ Lawton, Bessie	Proxy	❖ Waymouth, Heather	Present
❖ Lightner, Sarah	Present	❖ Wiest, Julie	Present

Representatives

❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Bill Sawyer	Present
❖ Adjunct Faculty Representative: Priya Selvarathinam	Present
❖ APSCUF Representative: Bessie Lawton (alternate: Julie Wiest)	Proxy
❖ Student Government Association Representative: Avery McKnight	Present
❖ Graduate Student Association Representative: Matheeha Majeeth	Absent
❖ ROTC Representative: Cadet Augustus Fadden	Present

Senate Proxies

❖ Asempapa, Bridget	Absent
❖ Brenner, Jim	Absent
❖ Howard, Rick	Present

❖ Jussaume, Timothy	Present
❖ O'Brien, Lia	Absent
❖ Owens, Jackie	Absent
❖ Patriarca, Ashley	Proxy for Bessie Lawton
❖ Tully, Greg	Absent
❖ Whidden, Melissa	Absent
❖ Wolff, Dominik	Absent

Guests In Attendance

Priya Selvarathinam (proxy for Vipanchi Mishra), Megan Donnelly, Cassie Striblen, Tom Kwiatkowski, Nene Okunna, Sabina Samipour-Biel, Laurie Bernotsky, Avery McKnight, Augustus Fadden

Agenda

Welcome to Senators, Proxies, and Guests

- Welcome to new Senators, Senate proxies, and student liaisons! And welcome to faculty guests!

Senate Business and Announcements

1. Approval of minutes from Faculty Senate meeting on April 26, 2024.
2. Meeting updates
 - a. With Interim Provost Jeffery Osgood (Mon, Aug. 26—attended by Senators Julie Wiest and Israel Sanz) and with President Laurie Bernotsky (Wed., Sept. 4—attended by Senators Julie Wiest, Kurt Kolasinski, and Israel Sanz)
 - i. Israel: We asked about enrollments. We were told the summer was “soft” for the fall—goal was 17300, hit 17100. This is related to the national financial aid delay and the transition to Banner. They are confident that they will close the gap. They will not cancel any student schedules for nonpayment until Sept. 16. They are asking for attendance information by Sept. 10. The university wanted to loan students money to be paid back when financial aid came through, but this was not allowed by state law. They are considering increasing the tech fee, as it is set locally. This is a way of indirectly increasing tuition.
 - ii. Israel: Laurie reported that graduate enrollment as a whole has declined; she does not think it is market-based, as enrollment is going up elsewhere. She wants to have a conversation with programs and deans concerning this. She agreed that there are ways to be more transparent with programs about enrollment targets.
 - iii. Israel: We asked about university budget. Jeff said we are in good financial shape.
 - iv. Israel: Student housing and facilities—It will take \$500M over next twelve years to renovate existing housing and add new. They are prioritizing fixing what we have. They are fixing the Business building; the budget was \$2.2 million, and brought it in under budget at \$1.7 million.
 - v. Israel: Chancellor search—they will probably be looking for a sitting university president. Chris Fiorentino has no intention of running for that position.

- vi. Israel: Megan Jerabek has collected 15 single-spaced pages concerning lost functionality in Banner. It will cost \$500K to restore functionality, and the university will be asking PASSHE to pay for it. Faculty are encouraged to continue to send feedback. Because we are in a cloud-based environment it is harder to code this system. Jeff appreciates faculty and staff's work in navigating the change.
- vii. Israel: There is a new vice-chancellor for academic and student affairs at PASSHE, Dr. Diana Rogers-Adkinson.
- viii. Israel: We are coming up on a new Carnegie designation cycle; we asked if there was interest in keeping the R2 designation. Jeff said they would like to because it aligns with our teacher-scholar model.
- ix. Israel: CSM got Linux support—a big deal for them.
- x. Israel: Administrative changes—Laurie will continue to advocate with the state legislature for additional funding for the university. There is no plan to retain the deputy provost role. No administrative hires this year unless someone resigns. We asked about an org chart; Laurie will hold the listening tour first, and then develop an org chart in the spring. Megan: The org chart is important for accreditation for some programs. I'm glad you're still advocating for that.
- xi. Israel: Student advising—we're seeing a lot of advising changes with Navigate. Jeff said the ASA center director (Jamin Bartolomeo) left; Amanda Corsi is now interim director. They reached out to Susan Gans to help. We are advocating for helping faculty to understand the overall landscape of advising across the university.
- xii. Israel: AI concerns—Jeff notes that Naomie Nyanungo will be running workshops, and they're considering turning off the Turnitin AI detection because it's not reliable nor legally defensible. Jeff says that AI is valuable for cybersecurity; GreyCastle Security is the cybersecurity service used by WCU, and they use both human staff and AI tools. DUO will be upgraded soon to require a three digit code for an upgraded multi-factor authentication process. Erin: I've found the Turnitin detection helpful—it's at least something. Israel: Jeff was emphasizing legal issues—such as expelling a student from a program. A: The detection tool can start a conversation, but it also tends to disproportionately flag neurodivergent writers. Israel: Laurie encourages faculty not to be too alarmed.
- xiii. Israel: Strategic plan—we asked if there would be a new one. Laurie said that we need to reassess what these strategic plans do in higher education, and wants to collect more information from the listening tour.
- xiv. Israel: Constructive Dialogue Institute workshops were held over the summer, and some faculty were concerned. Jeff found an article in the *Chronicle* and shared this with the Ombuds and the Council of Chairs. They did not know of the connection with the Heterodox Academy, which has engaged with speakers with controversial perspectives. The response of faculty who participated in the workshops had positive experiences; the administration makes this available as a resource for faculty to choose whether or how they want to use it.

- xv. Israel: Demographic data on Asian and Asian-American students and faculty is not being reported. Jeff said that PeopleSoft created limitations on this sort of data, and Banner may be easier to use to get this data.
 - xvi. Israel: Borough relations—burglaries of student cars was in the news. We asked about Borough relations. Laurie says that the relationship with the Borough depends on its leadership; currently it is somewhat tense. WCU police cannot patrol beyond campus.
- b. No shared governance meeting updates (no meetings yet this academic year)
3. Announcements
- a. Call for Ombudsperson (Spring 2025-Spring 2027)
 - i. Israel: Currently it is Joan Woolfrey; it was supposed to be a two-year position, but it was extended to four. The position will start in the spring, last two years, and be renewable. The advertisement for the position is unclear about AWA, or what should be submitted for the application. We advocated for Joan to serve on the search committee. Senate played a role in bringing the position about, so we remain committed to it.
 - b. Deceased faculty policy/guidelines
 - i. Israel: Last week several announcements went out from different groups and with different formats. We drafted a policy, which Joan Woolfrey shared with HR, and we are waiting to hear back.
 - c. OEA letters of accommodation: changes and updates for this year
 - i. Email from David Thomas, Director of the Office of Educational Accessibility (included in meeting agenda)
 - 1. Israel: There are updates to letters of accommodation. There have been questions about how these determinations are made and what room there is for faculty to be involved. David Thomas wrote an email responding to questions, and the email was reproduced in the agenda.
 - d. Filling vacancies in Senate liaison roles
 - i. Israel: We have some vacancies in liaison roles. We are looking for volunteers to fill these roles. These include the ADA Committee; the Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence; the IS&T Advisory Committee (vacant for 2024-25); the LGBTQIA+ University Caucus; and the Multicultural Faculty Commission.
 - 1. Senator Heather Waymouth has volunteered to serve as liaison to the ADA Committee.
 - 2. Senator Daris McInnis has volunteered to serve as liaison to the Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence.
 - 3. Senator Simon Ruchti has volunteered to serve as liaison to the IS&T Faculty Advisory Committee.
 - 4. Senator Julie Tennille has volunteered to serve as liaison to the LGBTQIA+ University Caucus.
 - 5. Senator Orkideh Mohajeri has volunteered to serve as liaison to the Multicultural Faculty Commission.
 - e. Senate Standing committee chairs/co-chairs

- i. Israel: Please meet with the standing committee you would like to serve on this academic year, and select co-chair(s).
- f. Other announcements
 - i. Gary: The EBSCO database search interface was changed just before the start of the semester and works differently now.

Guest 1: Lorraine (Laurie) Bernotsky (President, West Chester University)

1. Laurie: Thank you to faculty in shared governance roles—it speaks to the collaborative work we do that there are so many faculty involved.
2. Laurie: I've been meeting (and re-meeting) groups. I was gone for about two years at Penn West. During that time I was disengaged from WCU, not involved in leadership, was very busy with Penn West. I feel like I'm returning with a fresh perspective. My role at Penn West was a great opportunity; the faculty there were amazing people, working in challenging circumstances. I started at Executive Vice President and Operating Officer, and then served as President. I'd hoped to apply for the job at WCU. I'm better equipped to do this job because of my time at Penn West. It was really eye-opening, and I've brought back a broader perspective.
3. Laurie: Dan Greenstein, the PASSHE Chancellor, is leaving; Chris Fiorentino will be the interim Chancellor. Dan is voluntarily leaving, with an undisclosed wonderful opportunity that is national in scope, and it surprised a lot of us; I learned a lot from him, and he did a lot for our system in terms of funding. He changed the conversation for the benefit of public higher ed in the Commonwealth. His last day is October 11; the Board of Governors has recommended that Chris begin as interim at that point. The search for a permanent replacement will start in the next few weeks, get candidates established in the spring with hope that they are ready to begin on July 1.
4. Laurie: PASSHE asked for 6.5% increase on appropriations, and got 6%. This doesn't cover inflationary costs. WCU has significantly greater enrollment than other institutions, so we have more money from tuition than others, and so we are not benefited as much as other institutions. We won't be doing a lot of initiatives as a result. We will be focusing on housing, and it needs to be addressed immediately. We have waitlists for housing, unlike other schools. We had 800 on the waitlist a few weeks ago. So cash reserves will be focused first on housing. We have plans for 128 beds of temporary housing, and it can only be used a few years.
5. Laurie: The Welcome Back Address is September 19; please come! People have a lot to say about their aspirations for the institution, and I want to listen. I want more voices at the table, and we'll do a listening tour. I can see a clear role for Senate, other leadership groups, and individual faculty. We want to set some key priorities, talk about those in the spring to start working out a strategic plan. I don't have a fully-articulated vision because I've been gone for two years.
6. Q: Welcome back! Laurie: I am very happy to be back and home! The communities served by Penn West are food deserts, and it's important to protect higher education for them.
7. Gary: Retention is important too; we need restrooms accessible to folks with mobility issues. I saw someone in a wheelchair trying to get into a restroom and struggling with the door. Laurie: I tore my meniscus root and spent four months on crutches; it is hard to open doors that way. These are things that should be brought up on the listening tour.
8. Julie W.: Examples of what you've found impressive? Laurie: There's new leadership—a new CSM dean I had not met, for example. New VP for Student Affairs I've met. I don't have a full understanding of what has changed in the view of what constitutes student success. I asked for

statistics about progress surrounding MSE, which is one the most important things we've taken on. It's meant to identify and remove barriers for *all* students—raising all boats. We've seen some narrowing of achievement gaps, and simply recognizing some barriers. We have amazing faculty—not just research, creative and scholarly work, but passion about teaching. This building—I was part of the grand opening and then left two weeks later! I'm still getting to know it.

9. Simon: I'm hearing that there's no prospect of downsizing departments right now; some take on a lot of general education load and have difficulty building up majors. Is there any talk of consolidating departments? Laurie: No. We did do some of that at Penn West because their enrollments were low. We did what we did to preserve faculty jobs. We reduced numbers of departments and colleges to cope with large enrollment declines. We did that with faculty involvement. But our size protects us from that sort of situation. Faculty members wanted to see numbers, which I like to do! They were expecting retrenchment, and I committed to not doing that. That can be done by being strategic about retirements, for example. PennWest had seventeen geoscientists with no major; we used gen ed to help them so they did not get retrenched. But we don't have that sort of problem here.
10. Heather Schugar: Will you be taking the role of budgeting? Laurie: The budgeting will live with Jeff as Executive Vice President, but I'll be involved in those conversations. Heather: So he's keeping that role? Laurie: Yes.
11. Kurt: How will we set priorities for facilities other than housing? Laurie: We'll use the listening tour to learn more about what faculty would like to do.
12. Q: Can you talk about student ratios given our R2 status? Laurie: The faculty ratio tells you the largest personnel expenditure against the largest revenue generator (enrollment). How we respond to changes in enrollment informs our budget, with the aim of maintaining stability. Are we trying to save money to do more things? The ratio is just one lens for looking at this. The ratio has stayed pretty flat despite enrollment increases. If we have some faculty who want to do things that require more course buyouts, we need to look at how to balance that out.
13. Stevie: I am amazed at research going on across campus. But there have been so many leadership changes. How do you envision WCU moving forward? Laurie: We can talk more about this in the listening tour.

Liaison Reports

1. ADA Committee – Currently vacant
2. Alumni Association – Adjunct Faculty Representative Bill Sawyer
 - a. No report.
3. APSCUF Exec Representative – Senators Bessie Lawton and Julie Wiest
 - a. APSCUF has some questions about new accommodation language from the OEA, similar to Senate concerns.
 - b. APSCUF is continuing to follow up on how the ASA center works with faculty and how these roles align with the CBA.
 - c. There is concern that the teaching modalities on CIM do not match the new modalities laid out in the CBA.
 - d. APSCUF is following up on the cultural diversity award specified in the CBA.
 - e. There are issues with the timing and process of scholarship disbursement funds.

- f. Some faculty, especially Lenovo users, are getting computers that have a lot of problems.
 - g. There is inconsistent and contradictory guidance on RamPortal requests.
 - h. APSCUF is concerned about the lack of communication with transfer students regarding the WRITE, math, and foreign language placement tests.
 - i. Non-bargaining employees continue to teach FYE.
 - j. WCUPA website has dead/inaccurate pages.
4. Budget Review Committee – Senator Kurt Kolasinski
 - a. Has not met yet.
 5. Campus Climate Intervention Team – Senator Simon Ruchti
 - a. Has not met yet.
 6. Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence – Currently vacant
 7. External Relations – Senator Michelle Wade
 - a. No report.
 8. Facilities Master Plan Steering Committee – Senator Julie Wiest
 - a. The committee met with EwingCole consultants most recently on Aug. 28, 2024, in addition to monthly meetings throughout the summer on May 22, June 10, and July 17. (Much has happened over these months, so I will hit the highlights here and can be contacted with questions and/or for more details.)
 - b. At this point, the Plan has mostly moved out of the information-gathering phase (save meeting with one more “stakeholder group” of WCU alumni) and is now focusing on potential project prioritization (among 100+ identified) and strategizing the co-location of related student services (i.e., grouping together those focused on academic support/student success, residential life, and student life). As previously reported, student housing is the highest priority, and the current recommendations include: razing Lawrence and building anew, full renovation or razing/building anew for Tyson and Goshen, razing/building anew for Killinger, full renovation with new entry addition for Schmidt, and both new suite-style housing and renovated existing housing at South Campus. Next steps for housing include a financial analysis of the recommendations and an integration plan with other facilities priorities (e.g., dining access and options, traffic and parking, student program utilization and needs, etc.).
 - c. The August meeting focused on three specific projects: rebuilding Lawrence, expanding Sykes, and creating a Welcome Center. The new Lawrence will primarily be a residence hall, but the first floor will also be used for some student services (current recommendations include the Counseling Center, Academic Support, Res Life & Housing, and the Resource Pantry), and there also likely will be a small convenience store (perhaps like the Amazon-style walk-in/walk-out kind) and an adjacent café. The Sykes project would include expanded event spaces, expanded dining, expanded student services (especially the Center for Women & Gender Equity and Dowdy Multicultural Center), expanded commuter lounge, new general lounge, satellite Resource Pantry, and a new parking structure (net of 182 new spaces). A new Welcome Center could be part of the Sykes expansion, but renovating Old Library for this purpose is considered an equally good option, with the College Arms site seen as a (distant) third possibility. The additional parking with the Sykes expansion would provide spots for the

Welcome Center if it's housed in either of the first two proposed locations (i.e., Sykes or Old Library).

- d. Our next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 2.
9. Faculty Mentoring Committee – Senator Innhwa Park
 - a. No report.
10. IS&T Advisory Committee – Currently vacant for 2024-2025
11. LGBTQIA+ University Caucus – Currently vacant
12. Military Veterans Coordinating Committee – Senator Meg Mraz
 - a. No report.
13. Multicultural Faculty Commission – Currently vacant
14. Philadelphia Campus – Senator Meg Panichelli
 - a. No report.
15. President's Commission on the Status of Women – Senator Michelle Wade
 - a. No report.
16. SIS Advisory Board – Senators Sarah Lightner and Simon Ruchti
 - a. Meeting was canceled.
17. Sustainability Advisory Council – Senator Kurt Kolasinski
 - a. Has not met yet.
18. Student Liaisons:
 - a. Student Government Association – Avery McKnight
 - i. No report.
 - b. Graduate Student Association – Matheeha Majeeth
 - i. No report.
 - c. ROTC – Cadet Augustus Fadden
 - i. No report.

Committee Reports

1. Faculty Welfare/Ethics – Not convened at time of meeting
2. Student Welfare – Not convened at time of meeting
3. Membership & Elections – Senator Kurt Kolasinski (chair)
4. Communications – Senators Julie Tennille (chair)
5. Research and Creative Activities –
 - a. Report from Senator Stevie Grassetti
 - i. Charles Graham=New post award staff member hired this summer at ORSP!
 - ii. Please spread the word about the [RAM research directory](#). Faculty should regularly update their profiles so that students can access up to date information. Students and faculty can use this tool to find research mentors and collaborators.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee

- ❖ President – Senator Israel Sanz-Sánchez
- ❖ Vice President – Senator Kurt Kolasinski
- ❖ Recording Secretary – Senator Dan Forbes
- ❖ Corresponding Secretary – Senator Julie Tennille

- ❖ At-Large Members – Senators Rachel Daltry and Gary Childs
- ❖ Immediate Past President – Senator Julie Wiest
- ❖ Past Presidents – Senators Bessie Lawton and Heather Schugar

Senate Meetings 2024-25

Fall 2024

(First meeting of semester in-person; all other meetings via Zoom)

- ❖ Friday, September 6, 3-5pm
- ❖ Friday, October 18, 3-5pm
- ❖ (Open Forum) Wednesday, November 6, 2-3pm
- ❖ Friday, December 6, 3-5pm

Spring 2025

(First meeting of semester in-person; all other meetings via Zoom)

- ❖ Friday, January 31, 3-5pm
- ❖ (Open Forum) Tuesday, February 25, 11am-12pm
- ❖ Friday, March 28, 3-5pm
- ❖ Friday, April 25, 3-5pm