

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes
April 3rd, 2023

Please email corrections to Faculty.Senate@nau.edu.

1. Call to order – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis calls the meeting to order at 3:01pm.

Those Present: Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, John Georgas, Maribeth Watwood, Kate Ellis, Gioia Woods, Jon Lee, Tarang Jain, Rodrigo De Toledo, Blase Scarnati, Lisa Tichavsky, Gretchen McAllister, Pete Fule, Andrew Stevens, Monica Brown, Emily Manone.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

Motion to approve the 4/3 Agenda. The agenda is approved. Motion to approve the 3/6 FSEC meeting minutes. These minutes are approved.

3. Faculty Senate President’s Report – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis gives her report.

- The next upcoming Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) Meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, April 19-21.
- In this ABOR meeting they have changed their agenda format, there will now be 2 separate public sessions, and there will be sessions on Thursday and Friday morning.
- The Arizona Faculty Council (AFC) will be meeting on Thursday, they have recently been looking at revising their current bylaws.
- University of Arizona has recently voted and passed a no-confidence vote against the President and several high-level leadership positions in response to the concerns around safety due to the shooting and murder which occurred on campus last fall.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis sent a letter regarding masking on campus. The request is to give students the ability to request faculty and students in the classroom to be masked. This does go against CDC guidelines and university policy. Professor Ellis suggests that we send a letter at the beginning of next year to be respectful and follow CDC guidelines regarding masking on campus.
- Provost Pugliesi responds to this by recommending that anyone who has a medical condition that may put them at a higher risk, should reach out to disability resources for assistance and resources.
- Participation in Senate Meetings is discussed. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Senate do not have their camera on and are not actively participating. Frustration is shown regarding the lack of engagement with the teaching portfolio document in the previous meeting. President Ellis suggests potentially requiring those at the Flagstaff campus to attend in person unless they have special accommodations.
- Parliamentarian Blue Brazelton brings up a concern for privacy in requesting these zoom links.
- These problems aren't necessarily focused on lack of members attending in-person, but a lack of engagement regarding senate topics.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods states that this is a problem which many departments, colleges, and other areas around the university are struggling with. A culture change is needed to increase participation and input from senators.

- Senator Gretchen McAllister suggests giving people the benefit of the doubt, due to classes often being scheduled during the time of the meetings. Also, collecting data regarding these topics is extremely beneficial.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis will send out an email to the FSEC to see who wants to take on the project of collecting data and improving Senate Engagement.
- All 3 Universities (ASU, U of A, and NAU) have passed statements supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in higher education.
- The Workload Policy was approved to move to the full faculty for a full vote.
- There are concerns regarding a proposed change for the next meeting. If there is a proposed change, then it must move back to the FSEC, Senate and Provost Office.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods suggests that we try and collect amendments before the meeting that could be voted on and approved by the senate, making changes easier.
- Provost Pugliesi suggests that we should not really allow amendments, we have been editing this document for the previous 2 years. At this stage, the policy has been edited and changed to the point where it just needs approval.
- When this vote is sent out to faculty, there will be a verification process to ensure no faculty votes twice and all of those who vote are eligible.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis states confidence in the document and the ability to defend and reason it in the Full Senate discussion and vote.
- We are looking to try and get this vote out later this week.
- 30% of Faculty are needed to vote for the results to be counted, this equates to around 370 faculty votes.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods gives her thanks to Senate President Kate Ellis in here responsiveness and actions in these recent group settings.
- There will be two summer senate meetings. The dates for these meetings are June 5th and July 10th.

4. Provost's Office Report – Karen Pugliesi

Provost Pugliesi gives her report.

- With commencement upcoming, Dr. Brusi and President Cruz Rivera will be hosting a pre commencement reception on Friday, May 12, and Saturday, May 13th.
- We are looking for final approval from ABOR on a new program, a Doctorate of Medical Science and Physician Assistant Studies.
- We finally have results regarding the FESI and NESI surveys that were taken last year. A task force has taken a close look at these results and created a report. This will be distributed to the Senate in the future.
- Also, a suggestion that Amy Rushall and the Teaching & Learning Center look at the report, and potentially host a forum for faculty members on this data and how to implement it into teaching practices.
- Some highlights of this report are:
 - Faculty consider high impact practices to be extremely important.
 - Faculty believe internships are very important.

- Faculty believe that learning communities and studying abroad are less important.
- Faculty expect students to spend more time and effort in their class than is reported.
- Faculty reported their average time distribution:
 - 21 hours weekly in teaching activities.
 - 4 hours weekly in advising.
 - 6 hours weekly on research
 - 10 hours weekly on service.
- Students want more career relevant information and guidance, especially in the first year.
- First year students would benefit more from direct discussion with faculty about academic performance.
- Students perceived that they have more opportunity for interaction with diverse people than faculty think they do.
- Provost Pugliesi mentions an upcoming report from Monica Brown and the Ombuds Program. She is working with the university to expand this program and create outlets where both Staff and Graduate Students have Ombuds to meet with.
- We have reached the second round of the RFP, which is the initiative of funding groups through the Elevating Excellence Plan. 8 out of 90 submitted proposals will be funded.
- Recently there has been a draft revision shared with the Faculty Senate regarding the Faculty Search Process. In this revision it simplifies the search process and creates a more flexible approach to what we call selection and screening tools, creating a process that is streamlined and provides transparency for those conducting the search.
- Some subcategories that will also be focused on are:
 - Meets demands of the population.
 - Revenue positive.
 - Distinctiveness.
- More information regarding the NAU Online report will be shared at the Academic Leadership Collaborative meeting in June.
- Vice Provost John Georgas mentions changes to the historically established timelines between the end of finals weeks and when grades are due. We are working to find a way to accelerate the registrar's office processes, so they can also have a week of vacation during holiday closure like other staff and faculty. The submission of final grades will be moving forward two days to help complete the grade submissions before the holiday closure. Unfortunately, the duty of the Registrar's office is to reach out to faculty members who have not submitted grades before the deadline thus creating more work for them to complete after this deadline.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods states that she often hears that faculty are not given enough time after the finals to submit grades.
- Dr. Georgas also gives an update on changes to the institutional excuse policy. There are 3 new categories that now merit institutional excuses:
 - Medical
 - Bereavement
 - Observance of religious and cultural events

- Provost Pugliesi also gives information regarding student retention. The interactions that faculty have with students, especially first year students, are very important for retention.
- The retention rate from fall 2021 to fall 2022 has recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- One important topic that has come up regarding this retention is providing more feedback to students with regards to how they are doing academically. In this feedback there are so many resources that faculty members can give to students to help improve their experience.

5. Faculty Senate Bylaws Revisions – Blue Brazelton

Parliamentarian and chair of the Bylaws Committee Blue Brazelton gives an update on suggested changes to the Bylaws.

- He suggests that we think about this for the next year, as we will most likely have to move these revisions for next Fall.
- The focus of this committee has been the process of reviewing our current processes and deciding how do we want to operate in the future.
- There are suggestions that the Council for Professional and Lecture Track is changed to Career Track Faculty.
- There is discussion on the change of title for the Council on Statewide, Online and Personalized Learning Education.
- Dr. Brazelton states that if he were to be elected as Chair and Parliamentarian again, he would like to run an audit on the Councils of the Senate to see if they are fulfilling their purpose for their designated group.
- There is a proposal to strike the summer senate as people are compelled to volunteer their time when not on contract.
- Senator Gretchen McAllister states that she supports summer senate and shares that it is extremely valuable to be able to check in with administration throughout the summer.
- Provost Pugliesi suggests potentially there be a smaller meeting that occurs, so all senators are not compelled to attend.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis suggests potentially changing the Summer Senate Meetings from two meetings to one meeting per summer.
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds shares information that NAU Yuma can be considered a separate entity that needs faculty senate representation. NAU North Valley and Tucson do not function as unique units and their faculty and located in colleges.
- Suggestions on moving Senate Elections earlier so that faculty can submit them to their SOEs.
- Discussion is brought up regarding the recording of Senate Meetings. Currently, they are being recorded for the Meeting Minutes, but not distributed to anyone.
- If anyone would like to become a member of the Bylaws Committee for the next Academic Year, please reach out to Blue Brazelton.

6. General Studies Committee Report – Emily Manone

Director of the General Studies Program Emily Manone gives a report.

- The General Studies Program collaborated with the other State universities (U of A and ASU) in a Tri University Assessment. This assessment looked at student's written communication skills.
- Next year, this assessment will look at students and their quantitative reasoning skills.
- The objective for this assessment is an increase in accountability for all universities writing programs, and to ensure that we are adhering to the NAU institutional philosophy for continued improvement amongst students.
- There was data collected from this assessment for both early career students, and late career students.
- A focus group was convened to review these assessments and create a report with suggestions on how to understand these results and implement changes to improve them.
- Some trends that were shown in the results:
 - Late career students scored higher than early career students.
 - Male students performed lower than female students.
 - BIPOC students scored lower than white students.
- This assessment was the first of its kind in the state of Arizona, because of this it was very exploratory.
- A recommendation that has been made by the focus group is to engage more faculty in the Interdisciplinary Writing Program; they can receive training in teaching effective writing.
- Another suggestion made was to diversify course material to create a more inclusive environment.
- There is currently writing support for both Faculty and Students. There is the writing ambassador program and the University writing commons.
- The most significant suggestion is to enhance communication regarding writing and the resources offered to improve it. Sharing these resources can help improve their utilization.
- As for the quantitative reasoning for next year, currently samples are being collected in preparation for data analysis. After the semester ends, there will be faculty members trained to rate these pieces of data.
- The general studies program has a new perspective regarding the Indigenous peoples. In preparation for the launch in fall of 2025, an Indigenous People's Teaching Seminar has been created this spring. These seminars will also continue into next year.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis suggests that Emily Manone attends the New Faculty Orientation to share this information.

7. Ombuds Report – Monica Brown

Monica Brown, the Faculty Ombuds, is stepping down after 3 years. She gives her report regarding the past 3 years of the Ombuds programs.

- Last year was the highest utilization of services provided by Faculty Ombuds.

- There has been upward of a 200% increase in usage of the Ombuds program over the last 5 years.
- Dr. Brown gives a brief summary of what Ombuds offers to Faculty:
 - Provides a space for compassionate listening.
 - Can help generate guidance for faculty.
 - Can help solve problems with many different departments on campus.
- Dr. Brown suggests that any faculty member with skills and interests that align with the Ombuds Program should apply for this position.
- She offers her thanks to all administration for supporting this program and working to expanding this program.
- Expanding this program to Graduate Students is extremely important, as they can be a vulnerable population.
- Two trends needing to be addressed are Promotion and Tenure, as well as conflict that falls under the categories of legal, regulatory, financial and compliance issues.
- These also apply to continued “micro” aggressions related to protected statuses of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, gender expression, etc.
- Many of these aggressions do not rise to the legal definition of harassment.
- Many FSEC members and administrators voice their gratitude for Monica’s leadership in this position and how many people she has helped.

8. Campus Master Plan – Hold Time

This is a hold time for the Full Faculty Senate Meeting.

9. Council and Committee Reports – Rodrigo Bastos De Toledo

Council on Learning Chair Rodrigo De Toledo gives a short summary of the Teaching Portfolio that was shared at a previous meeting. He then asks the Senate for their endorsement of this document.

- The goal of this document is to create a transparent and somewhat universal way of assessing “teaching activity” for all faculty members.
- In creating this portfolio, it can give faculty an idea of best teaching practices and increase the weight of these practices in review for promotions and retention decisions.
- Uniformity in these processes can increase equity amongst all faculty members. With approval it will be sent to chairs and deans to review and use next year.
- This is a guide, and not a policy, implementation is up to the units.
- Dr. De Toledo asks to set up a meeting with Roger Bounds and the Teaching and Learning Center to discuss how to distribute the Portfolio Guide.
- He also states that the language of “Portfolio” may cause some bias which may cause faculty members to not want to use the document.
- Faculty Senate president Kate Ellis suggests that the Teaching Academy be cautious when creating an implementation plan.
- Provost Pugliesi shares the importance of creating an understanding that this document is a framework on best practices to help support faculty.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis recommends that this should not be shared on Monday, due to lack of time and timing of the meeting in relation to the end of the school year.
- The focus for the coming Senate Meeting will be on the Workload Policy. This will be shared with the academic chairs to learn more, then presented at the final senate meeting.
- Professor Ellis shares her excitement for this document, which is why such caution should be in place for implementation.

10. New Business/Old Business/ Adjourn—Kate Ellis

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:37 pm.

Motion to Adjourn Approved.