

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes October 23rd, 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 Attending: Kate Ellis, Michael Smith, Roger Bounds, John Georgas, Michael Leverington, Will Mahan, Marco Cabrera Geserick, Amy Rushall, Stellar Kolasinski, TS Amer, Miriam Espinoza, Michelle Thomas, Laurie Dickson, Emily Cope, Paul Bakke, Kara Attrep, Blake Rayfield, Aimee Quinn, Karen Sealander, Devon Burr, Donna Simon, Michelle Mack, Jessie Finch, John Lynch, Eric Cerino, Melissa Lawton, Christy Arazan, Blue Brazelton, Victoria Damjanovic, Ashley Vaughan, Yiyan Li, Karina Collentine, Sara Rinfret, Robyn Hanson, Jill Navran, Abby Fisher, Mary Harmon, Jennifer Russell, Gioia Woods, Maribeth Watwood, Mike Bouck, Mahendra Joshi, Ian Wischmeier, Stephen Meyer, Katie Tullman, Devon Randall, Kaitlyn Davis, John Tingerthal, Hal Tagma, Astrid Klocke, Laura Umphrey

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

The 10/23 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 9/23 Faculty Senate meeting minutes are voted on and **approved**.

3. Faculty Senate President’s Report – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis gives her report.

- Vice President Kamala Harris visited the NAU campus last Tuesday, Senate President Kate Ellis and a few other senators had the privilege of meeting her when she was on campus.
- We will begin to start the cycle for the next upcoming Arizona Board of Regents meeting in Tucson.
- Discussion will continue regarding Generative AI and the UN statement later in this meeting.

4. Provost’s Office Report – John Georgas & Roger Bounds

Vice Provosts John Georgas and Roger Bounds fill in for Provost Karen Pugliesi and give a report from the provost Office.

- Collaboration between the provost Office and the academic leaders across campus are important related to a variety of issues.
- Vice Provost Bounds also suggests that the Senate participate in several projects around campus.
 - There will be a group focused on getting Faculty Development into FAAR and SOE’s so that faculty members are encouraged to participate.
 - There will be a group focused on looking at the annual review process and streamlining it. Also, offering effective feedback on Faculty member’s work, specifically teaching, is important.

- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods states her support for these two projects, and requests that they have different perspectives on those projects to facilitate good conversation that supports different parts of campus.
- FSEC Member At-Large Pete Fule offers his support and suggests they look at FAAR to make processes more efficient.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis states that an examination of Annual Review processes is important for both the annual review committees and the faculty members being reviewed. Currently, our process is extreme and has created a large amount of work for committees and faculty generally.
- Vice Provost John Georgas mentions the focus that the President's Office has placed on Student Momentum.
- The First Year Learning Initiative (FYLI) will be enhanced to promote unit completion and retention among first year students.
- The Registrar's Office will be looking at the policies that often shape student progress through curriculum. They will look to remove barriers and intersections of policies to help support students.
- The provost office will also look at the Faculty to Students communication system (F2S) and working to improve this and integrate it into Canvas.
- They will also be focusing on prerequisites for classes, and how to reduce the barriers that are in place which cause delays for students in completing their required courses.
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds mentions the "Culture of Care" that is an upcoming focus for staff and faculty. In this, students feel connected to, and cared for, by NAU Faculty & Staff, thus improving their experience.
- Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer Josh Mackey will be assembling a team to support this Culture of Care.
- Academic Unit Leaders will also be asked to look at their programs and courses to support Student Momentum. Course Completion rates will be analyzed, and strategies will be developed to improve these rates.
- Vice Provost Georgas also states a trend regarding student choice in classes. Students seem to struggle with program curricula that has little choice of classes and options and also struggle when there is too much choice and little direction offered. This is particularly important in the online programs and curricula.
- We have an opportunity to address the high expenses that student face when paying for textbooks and required course materials.
- Currently, 1 in 10 students are unable to access their materials in their courses due to price. This impacts their ability to succeed and even participate in the course. Often, students also select certain classes to enroll in based on the expenses of the course materials.
- In data collected by the provost office, students on average spend over \$800 a year on textbooks and required class materials.
- Due to this high cost, the provost office has begun to look at ways to reduce this cost for students.
- Currently we are looking to implement a program titled "Equitable Access" that has been implemented in many other institutions around the nation.

- This program is used to establish agreements with bookstores and affiliates and allows the university to offer a flat rate for students to pay per semester for their required materials.
- This set price would be \$250 a semester at NAU and can be supported by financial aid. Any books and supplies needed for a course would be covered under this cost. For example, both the books for a biology course and the supplies for an art course would be covered.
- Students also have an option to opt out of this flat rate, so if their materials are below \$250 in a semester, they won't have to participate in the program and pay the higher amount.
- Faculty choice of books would not be restricted in this program.
- This program would be a bridge between now and efforts to transition the university to become an entirely Open Educational Resource Institution (OER). We will review the success of this program 3 years after it is implemented.
- Currently, there are no moves to implement this for Graduate students, it is only focused on undergraduate students.
- One concern about this program is that faculty members will have to submit their required materials and texts by a specific due date. This has previously been a struggle.
- We will have to develop systems to create reasonable reminders and warnings so that faculty members can submit these materials in a timely manner.
- OER will continue to be a focus, but this program will complement this for the upcoming years.
- ASNAU representative Stellar Kolasinski, asks for clarification regarding the date to Opt-in and Opt-out.
- Vice Provost John Georgas states that they are looking to give students the flexibility to see their course prices, then decide. Also, if they have costs that raise after they have opted out, they will have an opportunity to opt back into the program.
- The goal is to implement this program next academic year, starting in Fall of 2024.

5. **Bylaws – Blue Brazelton**

Faculty Senate Parliamentarian and Chair of the Bylaws Committee gives an update regarding changes to the Senate Bylaws.

- We are close to finishing up the edits on the Bylaws. The Senate will use this time to voice any concerns regarding these changes.
- The Bylaws committee has been focused on 3 main goals when revising the Bylaws.
 - Update the Bylaws so they align with the update made to the Constitution.
 - Update the Bylaws to reflect the current operations of the Senate.
 - Propose new operations that can better meet the needs of the Senate.
- There is a proposed update to move college elections so they are completed by March 1st. In so doing, senators will be better positioned to negotiate their SOEs with chairs regarding class times and allowing senators to not have time conflicts with senate meetings in the coming academic year.

- There is also a proposal to change the apportionment of Statewide Faculty members represented by the senate. Currently, there is no requirement for statewide faculty, leaving the possibility of no representation for this population.
- Michael Smith raises concern regarding the current number of committees and councils that the Senate has not fully staffed. If there is any way to remove some of these committees would be beneficial.
- Parliamentarian Blue Brazelton states that many of these committees and councils hold value and are important to staff and charge moving forward.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis brings up the removal of the Part Time Faculty Issues Council. This council has been removed because there is limited participation in the council due to the lack of service for part-time faculty. Their concerns will be addressed and supported by the Council on Faculty Rights & Responsibilities. A short-term task force can be created if there is a specific need for a committee beyond R&R.
- There will be a vote on these changes in November, only Senate approval of updated bylaws is needed.
- Parliamentarian Blue Brazelton recommends that if Senators see any potential changes or questions regarding the Bylaws over the coming month, please reach out to Blue so that they can be addressed.

6. **AI Statement, UN – Kate Ellis, John Tingerthal & John Georgas**

Chair of the Council on Learning John Tingerthal, Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis, and Vice Provost John Georgas discuss the AI statement released by the UN and next steps regarding Generative AI.

- President Cruz Rivera was contacted regarding a [statement from the United Nations](#) (UN) on the use of Generative AI in higher education.
- This statement can be viewed in the following link:
https://www.elon.edu/u/imagining/event-coverage/global-igf/igf-2023/higher_ed_ai_statement/
- President Cruz Rivera was asked about becoming a signatory of this statement. After discussion with Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis, there was a decision to bring this to the Senate for discussion.
- There are six principles associated with this statement.
 - People are at the center of our work.
 - We should promote digital inclusion.
 - Digital and Information literacy is an essential part of a core education.
 - AI tools should enhance teaching and learning.
 - Learning about technologies is a lifelong process.
 - AI research and development must be done responsibly.
- FSEC member at large Pete Fule, shares his support for these principles and raises concerns regarding potential replacement of Faculty members in the future due to Generative AI
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis states that we do not know what or how AI will develop, but these principles are a starting point for educators across the country and

AI is here to stay. Also, the first principle of “People are at the center of our work” will be used to protect teachers.

- A vote to endorse this statement is called.
- **The UN Statement is endorsed by the full faculty senate.**

7. Ombuds – Laura Umphrey & KT Thompson

Laura Umphrey & KT Thompson introduce themselves as the new directors of the Ombuds Program.

- The Ombuds Program is put in place for Faculty Members, Staff and Graduate students to come and speak about difficulties that they are experiencing and to develop solutions for these problems.
- Currently, the Ombuds Office follows the International Ombuds Code of Ethics.
- The Ombuds Office supports the facilitation of process in resolving issues.
- Director Laura Umphrey asks senators to reach out to her regarding meeting departments to share information on the resources that the Ombuds Office offers.
- The NAU review shared an article regarding the Ombuds Office.
- The Ombuds Office is looking on improving their current scheduling system to provide and easier experience for those to set up an appointment.
- Workshops are being developed to help Faculty, Graduate Students, and Staff.
- Currently, 49 individuals have visited the Ombuds Office already this year, in comparison to 75 in total last year.

8. GSG – Diamond Bracey

President of the Graduate Student Government Diamond Bracey was unable to attend today’s meeting. The Senate will look to have her present at a future meeting.

9. Changes to Councils and Committees – Kate Ellis

Council and Committee Reports are shared.

- Currently, we are working with ASU to try and transfer over a course on Generative AI created for faculty.
- The provost, in alignment with the goals of student momentum, has requested that we look at the Teaching Expectations. The Council on Learning will be focusing on this topic.
- The Budget and Planning Committee is looking at changes made to raises associated with promotion and have been tasked with determining if they want to propose any changes to the Senate.
- The Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee will be looking at the Faculty Handbook.
- The HERI Survey review committee needs one volunteer from the Senate.

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

Meeting is adjourned at 4:34pm.