

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes November 20th, 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, Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, John Georgas, Michael Smith, Will Mahan, Deborah Mariage, Kara Attrep, John Doherty, Blake Rayfield, Christy Arazan, Maribeth Watwood, KT Thompson, Donna Simon, Stellar Kolasinski, Kaitlyn Davis, Katie Tullmann, Lisa Bliss, Melissa Lawton, Amy Rushall, Yiyang Li, Jessie Finch, Gioia Woods, Abby Fisher, Tarang Jain, John Lynch, Michelle Thomas, Aimee Quinn, Eric Cerina, Ashley Vaughan, Jill Navran, Blue Brazelton, Victoria Damjanovic, Emily Manone, Karen Jarratt-Snyder, Steve Meyer, Paul Bakke, Devon Burr, Michael Leverington, Michelle Mack, Andy Wang, Karen Sealander, Diamond Bracey, Jennifer Russell, Mary Harmon, Mahendra Joshi, Karina Collentine, Laura Bounds, Cindy Ivy, Devon Randall, John Tingerthal, Corrine Gordon.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

The 11/20 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 10/23 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.

- There have been discussions behind the scenes focused on academic freedom and freedom of speech. This should lead to messages coming forward from academic leadership to respond to faculty member’s concerns.

4. Provost’s Office Report – Karen Pugliesi

Provost Pugliesi gives her report.

- Provost Pugliesi recognizes those who are Golden Axe award teachers of influence and offers her thanks to all of those who support the students at NAU. An announcement for who received these awards will be highlighted in an upcoming newsletter.
- The behind the scenes planning for the College of Nursing has commenced in preparation for the upcoming fiscal year.
- In a private meeting with ABOR (Arizona Board of Regents), NAU updated the board on our current financial status, along with a presentation on the NAU Health Initiative.
- Provost Pugliesi addresses the news regarding the financial situation at the University of Arizona. This situation is unique to University of Arizona and in no way reflects the current situation of NAU or ASU. ABOR has requested that U of A gives an update regarding the plan to rectify the cash flow for the upcoming years.
- This incident will, in turn, raise the scrutiny given to all three universities regarding financial health. Thus, NAU will be proactive and continuously consider how we are

investing our resources and how those investments play out, in relation to how we operate financially.

- Recently the Carnegie classification criteria regarding university research rankings has changed. With this change of criteria, NAU is forecasted to fall into the R1 category in 2025. This is due to the criteria recognizing a broader range of doctoral degrees. This expected reclassification will not change our current priorities and action plans.
- Currently we have no slots for Regent's Professors, so we will not be requesting any nominations for the upcoming Spring.
- 100% Career ready has been progressing, and we recently hired three new career development coordinators in CAL, SBS and CEFNS.
- Vice Provost Maribeth Watwood has also been working on creating a university subscription with LinkedIn so that we can have more information on what NAU students pursue after they graduate.
- Cody Canning & Michelle Miller have been tasked with co-leading a refresh for the First Year Learning Initiative (FYLI). This will begin in January and the first task will be assembling a group of faculty members as an advisory group.
- The provost office will begin to conduct workshops with faculty members and academic leadership on curricular complexity. This workshop focuses on aspects of curricular design that create complexity and obstacles that prevent students from progressing.
- The Arizona Attainment Alliance (A++) will be launching a new academic pathway in collaboration with Pima Community College, and the College of Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Sciences. It is a Bachelor of Science focused on Engineering Technology. This will be fielded simultaneously on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus and at Pima Community College, with expectations to offer this partnership to other community colleges in Arizona.
- Last week, academic leaders from Pima Community College met academic leaders from NAU to use this program as an opportunity to prototype a supported pathway for students to begin their college education at Pima and finish their degree at NAU.
- We have also progressed in creating a partnership program with Arizona Western College focused on Dental Hygiene.
- The provost office is looking to receive feedback from part-time faculty on how we recruit, onboard, and provide feedback to part-time faculty around campus.
- There is a Freedom of Information Act Request that has been sent to the university. These requests will be tasked to NAU's communications team and NAU's general counsel.
- NAU recently was ranked sixteenth in the country for promoting freedom of speech, this information and ranking is from FIRE.

5. Faculty Senate Bylaws (Action Item) – Blue Brazelton

Faculty Senate Parliamentarian and Chair of the Bylaws Committee Blue Brazelton has the senate discuss and vote on the changes to the Bylaws.

- Last month, the Senate reviewed the changes to the Bylaws. In this previous meeting there was little discussion so there is now an opportunity to discuss the changes further and vote on the approval of the Senate Bylaws.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis explains that the change for these bylaws is due to procedural drift, as the bylaws are outdated in some areas and do not reflect our current practices.
- The major changes for these Bylaws are shared:
 - Update to reflect how the senate is represented and ensuring that statewide and online are represented.
 - Looking at the purpose of our standing senate committees.
 - A new reporting structure for committees and councils.
 - A new way to store data and files for the Faculty Senate.
 - Changes to move the college senate elections earlier.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods offers her thanks to the Bylaws Committee. She asks that Parliamentarian Blue Brazelton explain any changes to the Summer Senate.
- Dr. Brazelton states that the changes to the Summer Senate were mostly cleaning up the language. Summer Senate consist of two voluntary senate meetings that occur in June and July. These meetings are completely voluntary and it is not required for any senators to attend.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods also asks a question regarding requests to be on the agenda for future meetings. The Bylaws change requires that the request must be placed 14 days prior to the meeting.
- Dr. Brazelton states that this is due to the requirement of reading and analyzing resources before the senate meetings, thus it is important that senate and FSEC members have ample time to review all resources to the upcoming meetings.
- There is also a request to keep this document updated, thus if any senators find changes that could be made to reflect current practices, please notify the Bylaws Committee.

Motion to approve the changes to the Bylaws is moved. 34 yays, 0 nays, and 1 abstention. The Senate Bylaws changes are approved.

6. Equitable Access, Follett – John Georgas

Vice Provost John Georgas gives an update on the Equitable Access Program.

- Course materials are a significant concern for students and directly impact their financial, academic, and personal well-being.
- In Fall 2024, NAU is looking to launch an equitable access program in which students have an option to use flat charge that would cover all their undergraduate course material costs for that semester. Students will have the option to opt-out or opt-in on semester-by-semester basis.
- This relates directly to student momentum, as data is shared that reinforces the fact that student academic struggles can relate directly to the cost of the required resources for a class. For example, 38% of students report they earned a poorer grade in a course due to lack of materials and 18% have dropped a course due to the costs of materials.

- Reducing these costs will reduce barriers for students to access and pursue their academic passions.
- The diversified strategies to address these barriers are stated:
 - Open educational resources (OER): Freely available learning materials that can be modified and re-distributed.
 - Centralized textbook purchasing: Library-purchased textbooks available to students.
 - Equitable access; Flat-cost models for all course materials, similar to inclusive access models at the course level, and an emerging trend among universities.
- U of A recently released a version of this equitable access program last fall and has received positive results.
- This model is a digital first model, meaning a digital copy of the required class material would be the text supported by the equitable access program. If there is no digital counterpart to this text, then the physical copy can be supported.
- \$250 is the current flat rate that students would have to pay a semester for all required materials.
- Students have flexible access to this program and can opt-out before the add/drop deadline of each term, with the ability to opt back into the program later.
- This will benefit students by provide transparent and predictable costs, expand access and success, and provide a flexible and affordable option for students based on each term's needs.
- It is also important that faculty provide the textbook adoptions for their courses on time, so the bookstore can properly obtain the inventory needed for the upcoming semester.
- Financial Aid packages would include the Equitable Access rate of \$250.
- This program will help improve the stability of resources for students in the short-term, long-term we will continue to support OER and their progression to obtain materials for students to use.
- Digital access to homework platforms and resources would also be provided under the flat cost of this program.

7. NAU Online – John Georgas

Vice Provost John Georgas gives an update on the NAU Online program.

- Vice Provost John Georgas states that the administration is thinking carefully about NAU's Online Portfolio and what programs are currently offered to online students.
- ABOR has set high expectations for us regarding what they would like our online portfolio to look like and how we can achieve long-term financial stability in the online program.
- The focus is to shape the online portfolio to strongly align with the workforce demands of the state.
- A search for the new Vice Provost for NAU Online has begun, along with a new director for the team of Online Instructional Designers.

- There will be an assessment of technologies for instructional design tools to further improve and invest in Instructional Design and better provide tools to improve online learning.
- In the future there will be top to bottom refreshes in our online curricula. In this, a program will be selected, and all the courses in the program will be examined for quality assurance, then refreshed to provide a high-quality experience for online students.

8. GSG President – Diamond Bracey

President of the Graduate Student Government Diamond Bracey introduces herself to the Faculty Senate.

- GSG President Diamond Bracey offers her thanks to the Senate for allowing her the time to share the GSG's goals.
- Currently, the GSG has 3 focuses for the upcoming semester.
 - Focus on transparency for Graduate Students at NAU.
 - They will be disseminating over \$45,000 worth of stipends to support graduate students with professional development and travel.
 - Focus on bridging the gap between graduate school programs, to help better improve the sense of community throughout the university.
- Diamond Bracey also mentions the importance of increasing the visibility of the GSG, so graduate students can know where to search for support and resources.

9. Councils and Committee Reports

Council and Committee Reports are shared.

- Chair of the Council on Learning, John Tingerthal, gives updates on the Councils current progress.
 - The Teaching Portfolio Guidelines has received a lot of feedback, so the Council will begin to make changes and revisions to improve this document.
 - Conversations regarding Generative AI have slowed down.
 - A goal the Council has is to create a definition of what constitutes minimum expectations for teaching at NAU. Dr. Tingerthal asks if this language of “minimum” should be changed.
- Senate Treasurer and Chair of the Budget Committee, Blake Rayfield, gives the Committee's update on examining Faculty raises associated with promotion.
 - Recently there has been a senate charged committee assembled to look at changes to faculty promotion pay.
 - About a year ago, there were changes made to faculty raises and how much money faculty members would receive when promoted.
 - Vice Provost Roger Bounds explains three fundamental goals of the provost office: Raise the minimum salary of all Faculty, better clarify, and implement the standards we use to set faculty salary (CUPA benchmarks), better look at promotion raises.
 - These practices were implemented to promote transparency and equity for faculty members. Due to this focus on balance and equity, faculty raises were

changed to a flat amount, rather than a flat of percentage amount, whichever was greater.

- Treasurer Blake Rayfield speaks regarding the work of the Committee and questions that they have.
- They ask, is there an alternative to this change?
- Provost Pugliesi adds to Dr. Bound's information discussing CUPA benchmark changes and where the money for these changes comes from. These changes were strongly endorsed and supported by academic leadership and the resources supporting them are provided from the academic division of the provost office.
- The Budget advisory board recommended, due to NAU's current financial status, that the 3% raise to all faculty salaries occur in June 2024, instead of January 2024.
- Treasurer Rayfield clarifies that the Committee is not focusing on the CUPA benchmark raising, but only focused on examining the change to faculty promotion raises.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis recommends that the next step for this committee is to determine if they wish to create a proposal to return to a flat raise or percentage raise, whichever total is higher for the faculty member, or if they would like to propose another alternative.
- There is concern that percentage increases can lead to an increase in differentiation of salaries.
- Any proposals from the committee would come to the Senate for review, discussion, and a vote.

10. New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis
Meeting is adjourned at 5:01pm.