

**Summer Senate Meeting
Minutes
July 1, 2024**

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 3:31pm.

Those Attending: Kate Ellis, Roger Bounds, Shelly Thomas, Juliana Suby, John Georgas, John Tingerthal, Morgan Ruff, Sara Rinfret, Jennifer Duis, Maribeth Watwood, Kerry Thompson, Emily Manone, Michael Smith, Theresa Bierer, Carmin Chan, Victoria Damjanovic, Eric Cerino, Crystal Diaz, Lisa Bliss, Bettie Coplan, Kristin Greenwalt, Karen Jarratt Snider, Hillary Stowell, Jill Navran, Melissa Lawton, Tarang Jain, Miriam Espinoza, Scot Raab, Jemaine Martinez, Michael Rulon, Andrew Stevens.

2. Approval of Agenda – Kate Ellis

The 7/1 Agenda is voted on and **approved**.

3. Faculty Senate President’s Report – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis gives her report.

- The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) meeting was held at NAU on June 19th-21st.
- At the ABOR meeting the following program approvals occurred:
 - Approval of a bachelor’s program in Philosophy, Politics, and Law.
 - Approval of a bachelor’s program in Arts, Cultural Management & Comparative Cultural Studies.
 - Nine various bachelor’s degrees were approved for NAU’s statewide campuses.
- The Arizona Faculties Council’s (AFC) chair rotates every year. The chair of this council sits with the Board of Regents at every public meeting and provides a report regarding the work and concerns of the faculty at the three universities. At the June ABOR meeting, the AFC report raised concern regarding a bill that passed the Arizona Senate on June 12th that would limit faculty member’s participation in university decision-making. Since then, this bill has been vetoed by Governor Hobbs.
- Starting on 7/1/2024, Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis will serve a year long term as the chair of the AFC.
- President Ellis has received a request that the Council on Learning and the Senate look at the current student opinion survey tool and consider creating or finding a new survey tool that better aligns with our values surrounding inclusive excellence. This will be discussed in the August FSEC meeting.
- The Faculty Senate will also be working on the creation of a new Faculty Code of Ethics & Conduct.

4. Provost's Office Report – Roger Bounds

Vice Provost Roger Bounds & John Georgas give their report.

- Vice Provost John Georgas shares that there were 37 grant proposal submissions for the mini grants focused on effectively integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into courses around the university. Ten of the proposals will be funded and the proposals selected will be shared soon.
- Changes will be made in the coming year to the structure of the Academic Leadership Collaborative. These include a title change to Expanded Deans Council (EDC), and the expansion of the collaborative to include deans, associate deans, and other stakeholders in academic leadership.
- A change has been made to the grading window for the Fall Semester. To prevent the Registrar's office & Academic Affairs business analyst team from working through the holiday closure, grades will now be due on the Monday following finals week, cutting off two days from previous practice.
- Faculty Senator Juliana Suby notifies Vice Provost John Georgas that due to this change many faculty members may look to give their finals on Reading Week. President Ellis suggests that Dr. Georgas communicates with faculty about what work is allowed to be given to students during reading week.
- Faculty Senator Karen Jarratt Snider raises concern about how this change will impact faculty who are teaching four courses and don't have grading assistance. Due to grades being due the following Monday after finals, it creates an inherent inequity for these specific faculty members, as most will have to work through the weekend to submit grades before the deadline.
- Vice Provost John Georgas addresses recent questions regarding the impact that state budget cuts will have on the university. He shares that currently there is no clear answers to these questions and the provost office will need more time to assess how the budget cuts will impact academic affairs. Vice Provost mentions two programs that have received cuts, the Arizona Teacher's Academy and Arizona Promise Program.
- Vice Provost Georgas states that NAU's top priority is the continued investment in the staff and faculty across the university.
- Undergraduate student retention has gone up 4% compared to the previous year.
- Due to changes to previous practices, many incoming NAU students have not completed and submitted the FAFSA.
- There has been an increased growth of new online students to NAU.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis suggests that the provost office communicate to faculty that the budget is under control and give updates regarding employment security. As in previous administration, this communication was not present, leaving faculty to be distrustful of administration. Vice Provost John Georgas states that the provost office absolutely does not anticipate engaging in any work that would result in faculty members losing their jobs.
- Vice Provosts John Georgas & Roger Bounds offer thanks to all faculty members for their good work. Although our current undergraduate enrollment trends may be flat, compared to other universities, NAU is doing quite well which is a testament to the great programming and curriculum work done by faculty across campus.

- Due to these budget constraints, there will be increased difficulty regarding new hiring and filling vacant faculty positions.

5. Discussion: Proposed Annual Review Process: Calendar and Periodicity of Reviews – Kate Ellis, Roger Bounds & Sara Rinfret

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis leads a discussion regarding proposed changes to the Annual Review Process.

- The provost office has worked on editing the statement of expectations to include professional development, as it was passed by the Faculty Senate in Spring. These changes will now be reflected in FAAR as a new template.
- Associate Vice Provost Sara Rinfret gives her thanks to the Faculty Senate for providing feedback on the Annual Review Processes. With the feedback collected, the provost office made some slight edits to the proposed changes.
 - The timeline for the new comprehensive review calendar will be released in Spring.
 - Discontinued the requirement of an annual review in the same year as a promotion review.
 - Tenure decisions now occur before sabbatical decisions, so we know if a faculty member qualifies for sabbatical before the decision is made.
 - Promotion, tenure, and sabbatical decisions are now a Fall process with comprehensive reviews transitioning to a Spring process.
- Senate President Ellis states her support for the calendar changes as it reduces the pressure and workload of completing all reviews in one semester.
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds clarifies that when faculty members come back and see the new review schedule, they may be concerned due to workload. It is important to note that this change was implemented with the fact that now faculty have a comprehensive review in years one, three and five, before promotion, and every three years after promotion, thus drastically lowering the number of reviews that must be completed each year.
- FSEC member Michael Smith shares his support for these changes and suggests that the provost office communicates these changes with faculty as soon as possible.
- With no changes implemented in the upcoming year, 1,148 annual reviews would be conducted. With the changes of comprehensive reviews in years one, three, and 5, for pre-promotion faculty, and every 3 years for post-promotion faculty, there would be 390 reviews conducted next year.
- Faculty Senator Juliana Suby asks a question regarding one-year contracts and how the changes to comprehensive reviews may impact whether they are renewed. Vice Provost Roger Bounds responds that there is a separate process in place called retention recommendations which directly relates to whether a faculty member is renewed. This process is still required every year, but is not required to be a lengthy, robust, peer review process.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis also mentions a concern voiced by Senator Juliana Suby. The point is that with the proposed calendar changes, if a faculty member is not renewed by their chair or dean, they will have much less time to appeal that decision because the retention recommendations would be held in the Spring.

- Vice Provost Roger Bounds states that there must be ongoing engagement within the department. Many units have internal professional development and other processes in place to provide faculty members with ongoing feedback. Therefore, it is important that chairs & deans communicate with faculty members in gap years where comprehensive review is not held, in order to provide formative feedback.
- It is also clarified that any faculty members that receive a score of one in the comprehensive review process must have another comprehensive review the following year. Departments are also able to decide whether a faculty member must have an additional comprehensive review conducted during a chosen academic year.
- Senator Karen Jarratt Snider raises concern regarding the potential for a faculty member to be blindsided by a non-renewal, because they would have not had a comprehensive review and were less likely to receive constructive feedback.
- Vice Provost Roger Bounds shares that the provost office would support additional comprehensive reviews for faculty in need of developmental feedback, as that is a focus of the comprehensive review process. He also mentions the new rating system, and how it better supports a culture of growth and feedback given to faculty members.
- Senate President Ellis also clarifies that the focus of the department review committees will be primarily providing feedback. This gives the committees the ability to provide more honest and beneficial feedback. A faculty member can also request a comprehensive review to get more feedback on their development and progress. That said, if a department/school wants the committee to rate all faculty in a department, that can happen. The new proposal, however, allows for department review committees to focus exclusively on providing meaningful, comprehensive feedback.
- Revisions to CoFS are currently being reviewed by NAU's General Counsel. If there are no issues found regarding the revisions, it will be uploaded to the University Policy Library.

6. Information and Discussion Item: Proposed Changes re: Materials for Curriculum Proposals – Kerry Thompson

Kerry Thompson gives more information regarding a proposal to update the curriculum process and what faculty submit to curriculum committees.

- The following proposal is shared with the Faculty Senate.
 - [Course Syllabus Proposal](#)
- The proposal supports the change to the syllabi currently submitted to the curriculum committees. As it stands, faculty are required to send a full syllabus that contains information that is not needed by the curriculum committees. The change would allow faculty to submit an abridged syllabus that specifies that faculty-approved course purpose and course learning outcomes, without containing information regarding class assignments, grading, and scheduling.
- With the time saved by omitting the information stated above, we can improve the current assessment process of these syllabi.
- Faculty Senator Karen Jarratt Snider offers her thanks to Kerry for the hard work she has put into this process. Dr. Jarratt Snider does raise concern saying that this

proposal would not streamline the process for courses that would go through the Inclusive Curriculum Committee. She states that many individuals do not provide enough information on the course proposal form, which requires the committee to examine the detailed syllabus to see if the course meets the eligibility requirements. With the lack of a detailed syllabus, there may not be enough information to conclude that a submitted course meets those stated requirements.

- Faculty member Michael Rulon agrees with Senator Karen Jarratt Snider that this lack of information provided may lead to committees having to reach out to faculty who submitted course proposals for more information.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that she has heard numerous faculty who have submitted a proposal complain about the request of books and readings, specific assignments, and attendance policies by curriculum committees. Faculty members believe that this is interfering with their academic freedom.
- Kerry Thompson responds by saying our current practices require frontloading faculty time and effort in course design, while not providing enough time and effort to have a thorough assessment process for the proposed courses.
- Director of the General Studies Program, Emily Manone, offers her thanks to Kerry Thompson regarding all the work on streamlining this process. She states that there is a need to enhance relations and communications between faculty submitters and unit leaders. She also shares that in the current General Studies Committee & Inclusive Curriculum Committee's bylaws, there is a section that requires they review the course design to ensure that it aligns with NAU's syllabus template. This alignment is also reflected under NAU's Degree Program Expectations document, #6 Strategic Course Design. If we were to move forward with this proposal, we would have to change the NAU syllabus template, change the General Studies & Inclusive Curriculum Committee's Bylaws, and potentially change NAU's degree program expectations.

**7. New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis
Meeting is adjourned at 5:03pm.**