

# Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes September 23rd, 2024

Please email corrections to [Faculty.Senate@nau.edu](mailto:Faculty.Senate@nau.edu).

## 1. Call to order – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis calls the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

**Those Attending:** Kate Ellis, Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, Tarang Jain, Jermaine Martinez, Karen Jarratt-Snider, Jennifer Duis, Juliana Suby, Igor Steinmacher, Karl Krotke-Crandall, Laura Umphrey, Jill Navran, Corey Oshikoya, Hillary Stowell, Emily Manone, Andrew Stevens, Shelly Thomas, Jennifer Lee, Marco Cabrera Geserick, Marinela Golemi, Michael Rulon, Rachel Starks, Samantha Clifford, Karli VanderMeersch, Jennifer Lee, Sarah Negovan, Robert Cannon, Blue Brazelton, Miriam Espinoza, David Castellano, Jessie Finch, Michael Smith, Abby Fisher, Kevin Tague, Victoria Damjanovic, Eric Cerino, Lynn Jones, Mahendra Joshi, Patricia Nelson, Melissa Lawton, Katherine Tullman, Bettie Coplan, John Tingerthal, Jennifer Russell, Crystal Diaz, Bonita Switala, Katy Yanez, Jasmine Garani, Ashley Vaughan, Sandy Heath, Carmin Chan, Claudia Rodas, Kristin Greenwalt, Sara Maier, Brandie Reiner, Aimee Quinn, Jenny Holzapfel, Dale Cummings Christine Arazan, Lisa Bliss, Jane Marks, Eyal Bar, Cornel Ciocanel, Sara Abercrombie.

## 2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

The 9/23 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 8/26 senate meeting minutes are voted on and **approved**.

## 3. Senate President’s Report

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares her report.

- ABOR will be having their meeting at NAU from September 26<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup>.
- The Arizona Faculties Council (AFC) will be having a working lunch on September 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the report that will be shared to ABOR.
- Items on the AFC report will include expanding student wellness, especially in student mental health and wellbeing. There will be a discussion regarding steps that universities are taking to ensure public safety on campus. Finally, student regents will also be sharing statements regarding support for students who are looking to vote in the upcoming election.

## 4. Government Affairs, Election Guidance – Katy Yanez

The Vice President for Government Affairs, Katy Yanez, gives the senate some guidance surrounding the upcoming election.

- Arizona law states that State Employees cannot use any state resources to influence the outcome of an election or ballot measure. This means that NAU emails, telephones, university materials, services, or buildings cannot be utilized to influence the election. Also, state employees are not allowed to attend political or campaign events while on the clock at NAU.

- Forums and Events are allowed at the university, but NAU remains impartial and abides by the requirement for equal opportunity for all viewpoints to be expressed.
- Vice President Yanez shares that candidates have come to NAU campus before. State law provides spaces for these private entities to hold events only if they rent out facilities, therefore none of these events or candidates are sponsored by the university.
- She also shares the importance of recognizing that Arizona is a battleground state and will have increased focus in the upcoming election, therefore we must be cautious and mindful of the Arizona statutes and laws.
- Vice President Yanez also states that we should carefully consider having other entities, such as NAU Votes Coalition, in your classroom. It is allowed to recommend, in a non-partisan way, that students vote, but faculty members need to be careful about how to word these recommendations. She recommends that students speak with members of the NAU Votes Coalition outside of classroom time.
- FSEC member Juliana Suby asks if there is a set policy regarding attendance on Voting Day. Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that Voting Day attendance decisions are up to each individual faculty member.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that ASNAU is working on a resolution regarding students not attending class to vote on Election Day.
- Faculty members are not allowed to offer extra credit for voter registration or attending civic engagement events.
- FSEC member John Tingerthal recommends that administration sends out a response that can be shared with inquiries regarding voter registration for students.

## **5. Council and Committee Reports – All Senate Committee & Council Chairs**

The Chairs of the various senate committees and councils share their current council & committee reports.

- Senate Vice President Tarang Jain & the Elections Committee have sent out the senator assignments to each committee.
- Senate Parliamentarian Blue Brazelton shares that the bylaws committee has recently worked on revising the University Graduate Committee Bylaws.
- Chair of the Council on Learning John Tingerthal reports that the council will continue to work on revising the teaching portfolio guidelines.
- Chair of the Council on Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Michael Smith shares that the council is still in the organization process and will be meeting in the upcoming month. He also suggests that senators attend the Faculty Town Hall on September 30<sup>th</sup> that focuses on Academic Freedom. He will share the Faculty Code of Conduct and Ethics at an upcoming Senate Meeting.
- Chair of the Council on Career Track Faculty Issues Jill Navran shares that the council will be sending certificates to last year's Career Track Faculty Spotlight recipients and will work with Andrew to update the website. The faculty members that won the award are Sneha Vissa, Ali Conant, Jeff Rushall, Amy Armstrong-Heimsoth and, Kara Ahearn.
- Chair of the Council on Distance Education, Donna Simon, has been meeting with Carmin Chan and Yvonne Luna to discuss the needs of the statewide and online faculty.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that she will be convening a small task for discussion and examination of our student opinion surveys.

## **6. Annual Review Process – All FSEC Members**

The Senate discusses questions regarding proposed changes to the Annual Review Process.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that she has received several comments regarding the Proposed Annual Review Process Changes.
- The first concern that she addresses is a question that the policy is not required of all departments, that they can choose what they do. President Ellis states that the proposed changes apply to all departments/schools/colleges and the proposal outlines the minimum required for annual review for all faculty and departments around campus. If a department or faculty member wants a comprehensive review during an “off” year, they must request and will be granted that.
- The second concern mentioned is regarding the effectiveness of the proposed rating scale change. Currently, the perceived problem is that a majority of faculty score the highest rating. The concern shares that a change in the language of the scale does not address that faculty who are performing far above expectations are receiving the same rating as good, but not excellent performers. Excelling faculty are not being recognized for their work.
- A third concern that is mentioned is that if pay raises are not connected to the rating then why is there a need for an exceeds expectations category.
- There is a question around the expectation that the comprehensive review be copy/pasted directly into FAAR rather than attached as a PDF. Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that feedback must be put into FAAR in order to give the university (from chairs to the provost’s office as well as external constituencies) records of our work and the review process and allow access to it in the future.
- A concern is raised regarding the fact that one rating number, provided by the chair, is the only number representing their performance review, especially if there is no feedback provided from the chair. Vice Provost Roger Bounds shares that comprehensive feedback is required for all ratings, so faculty should/will have the information needed to demonstrate continuous improvement. President Ellis also states that faculty should be aware that the only rating that stays with the faculty member is that provided by the chair of the department/school. Peer Review Committees may provide a recommendation for a rating as part of the comprehensive review.
- Senate President Ellis mentions a concern regarding the proposed changes shifting the retention recommendation (RR) process for all faculty, but career track faculty specifically. The concerns state that faculty may not receive any feedback or reviews in the RR process. Vice Provost Roger Bounds shares that proposed changes would not lead to change in feedback provided or the previous RR process. If career track faculty are working toward promotion and not progressing, this information will show up in the comprehensive review process. Senate President Ellis also states the importance that departments develop their yearly progression towards promotion review process for all faculty who are pre-first and second promotion, as required in the proposal, regardless of comprehensive review schedule.

- In the FSEC, there was a robust discussion regarding the rating system. Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that FSEC believed there was still room for discussion and consideration around this part of the proposal and a motion was put forward to vote on the proposed rating system changes, and the proposed annual review rotation and schedule, separately. She shares that if the faculty senate believes that the rating system is not ready, there is power in voting no on the proposed changes. Then we can continue to work on the system to find the best solution. If it is voted down, the current rating scale (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, meritorious, and highly meritorious) will continue to be used.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis proposed to add explicit language that faculty can request and ARE granted a comprehensive review during a year when it is not required. In the current proposal, it states that they can request a review, but not technically required to be granted. The senate discusses proposed language and adds that the faculty must notify their chair in writing of this request by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- FSEC member Michael Smith shares that he did not initially like the proposed scale but shares that he believes that it is a better solution and will be voting to approve these changes.
- FSEC member Marco Cabrera Geserick shares his concerns regarding the wording of the proposed scale. With the changes, the highest category would be “Exceeds Expectations,” with the second highest category as “Meeting Expectations.” If a faculty member meets their expectations and does 1% more, then technically that would be exceeding expectations. There is a very small gap between these two categories and there should be a range developed that can help separate them.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that this proposal started with a recognized need to reduce the large burden in workload placed on peer review committees and chairs surrounding annual review. The reduction in the number of formal comprehensive reviews completed each year is central to reducing this workload.
- Senator Jennifer Russell asks if it would be beneficial for individual departments to create the deadline for a comprehensive review request. Vice Provost Roger bounds shares that it may lead to faculty being disadvantaged if their department chair creates a deadline for all requests to be submitted in September, leaving faculty little time to decide. The universal date for this comprehensive review request is November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis thanks the senate for their work, feedback, and discussion on the proposed changes to the Annual [Comprehensive] Review system.

A motion is presented and seconded to vote on the approval of the Comprehensive Review changes in two different sections.

The first section is regarding changes to the comprehensive review schedule, which focuses the cycle of comprehensive reviews and recommended calendar. The senate votes and these changes are **approved, with a vote of 34 yays, 3 nays, and 5 abstentions.**

The second section is regarding the changes to the rating system of the comprehensive review. The new four-point scale has the following titles, 1 as Needs Improvement, 2 as Approaching Expectations, 3 as Meets Expectations, and 4 as Exceeds Expectations. The

senate votes and these changes are **approved, with a vote of 18 yays, 15 nays, and 8 abstentions.**

## 7. **General Studies Report – Emily Manone**

Director of the General Studies Program, Emily Manone gives an update regarding the program's implementation.

- Director Emily Manone shares [infographics regarding the General Studies Program](#).
- The General Studies Program makes up almost 25% of an undergraduate student's education.
- Chair of the General Studies Committee Jermaine Martinez shares information regarding the General Studies Committee. The General Studies Committee is a peer review committee that helps assess a proposed course's alignment with the general studies requirements. This is done by analyzing the syllabi of proposed courses and either approving the course or providing feedback for revision that would align the course to the general studies program. The time from submission to approval completely depends on the work submitted by the faculty member. In some cases, the course proposal can be approved right away, and in other cases it may take multiple work sessions or revisions to best align the submitted materials with the goals of the General Studies Program.
- The upcoming General Studies Program requires undergraduate students to complete 34 units of general studies courses.
- Co-chair of the Inclusive Curriculum Committee Karen Jarratt-Snider shares information regarding the committee's processes. The Inclusive Curriculum Committee is a peer review committee that reviews whether a submitted course aligns with one of the four inclusive perspectives that are present in the general studies requirements. Upon review, the committee will either request more information and provide feedback or approve the course. The committee also offers one-on-one support to faculty who have submitted a course that was not initially approved.
- Co-chair of the Inclusive Curriculum Committee Michael Rulon shares that the Inclusive Curriculum Committee should be used as a resource to help support faculty members throughout campus.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis offers her thanks to these committees for their hard work on course proposals and other topics.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that when presenting general studies course crosswalk to ABOR, there was a positive response with only a couple questions regarding alignment.
- Director Emily Manone shares that the deadline for course proposals for next year is October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- FSEC member Michael Smith shares the importance of General Studies Programs, as it ensures students receive a well-rounded education when attending NAU. He also shares that he thinks the review process does well in ensuring that all courses in the General Studies Program align with the program's learning outcomes.
- Director of the General Studies Program Emily Manone invites faculty to reach out to her if their respective department would like more information on the General Studies Program.

**8. ASNAU, GSG, & SAC – Karli VanderMeersch, Jennifer Lee, & Sarah Negovan**

Presidents of ASNAU, GSG, & SAC introduce themselves to the FSEC & share their priorities for the upcoming year.

- ASNAU President Karli VanderMeersch shares that ASNAU will be focusing on creating a Voting Day resolution that supports students having the opportunity to participate in the democratic process. They will also work on community-of-care initiatives and collaboration with departments across campus.
- GSG President Jennifer Lee shares that GSG will be focusing on ABOR level institutional neutrality. They will also focus on the graduate studies and professional studies programs with hopes of receiving more support and resources for these programs. The final focus is securing more resources and support for graduate students to travel and hold events.
- SAC President Sarah Negovan shares that SAC will be focused on employee recognition. They will also focus on giving staff members the opportunity to lead and attend NAU sponsored clubs. Sarah also mentions the importance of looking at the similarities between staff and faculty and finding ways for these groups to connect.

**9. Provost Report – Karen Pugliesi**

Provost Pugliesi gives her report.

- Provost Pugliesi shares that NAU has been approved to rename the Bachelor of University Studies to the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies. This change will be valuable in communicating what the nature of the degree is.
- There was a Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committee meeting to discuss how the university can align higher education with workforce demands and societal shifts. The information from this meeting will be shared with the faculty senate in the future. A large portion of this meeting was spent discussing the public perception of the value of higher education. The 100% Career Ready Initiative directly relates to and addresses these concerns. We will also continue to monitor and change our program portfolio to provide the most valuable programs and degrees to students.
- NAU has begun recruiting for the upcoming Regent's Cup that will be held at NAU in April of 2025.
- Last week, the provost office sent out a portfolio that showcased the many new faculty at NAU. Provost Pugliesi suggests that as faculty leaders, senators should read these bios and potentially reach out to the new faculty to form connections.
- Next Monday, 9/30, will be the Faculty Town Hall regarding freedom of speech on campus. Erwin Chemerinsky, who is the dean of UC Berkeley's College of Law, will be presenting to the faculty. Following this presentation, there will be a panel discussion with faculty and university leaders. This event will be in the DuBois Center Aspen A/B, and via zoom.
- Provost Pugliesi gives an update surrounding enrollment and shares that we are up around 1% compared to last year. NAU Yuma has had a 22% growth in enrollment due to the focus and expansion of programs at the statewide campus. This increase in enrollment has also been due to the growth of our population of international students.

- Retention of students at NAU has also gone up by 5% compared to previous years. Provost Pugliesi offers her thanks to faculty members around campus, as this large increase is due to their hard work in supporting students.
- To follow up further on the President's Convocation surrounding Strategic Finance, the university will continue to work on strengthening our academic programs and sustaining academic momentum for students.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that we will focus on analyzing how we currently invest our resources in ways that best align with the university's strategic goals. A draft of this plan will be released to the FSEC and faculty leaders in the upcoming months.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that the provost office will be working with the deans on each college's budget and how budget restrictions will affect the hiring of new faculty for the upcoming year.
- Provost Pugliesi confirms that faculty raises will occur this year, but the timing of when these raises will be implemented has not been released yet.

**10. New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis**  
**Meeting is adjourned at 5:05pm.**