

# Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes October 21st, 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, Hillary Stowell, John Georgas, Chris Sthultz, Jasmine Garani, Michael Smith, Juliana Suby, Karl Krotke-Crandall, Corey Oshikoya, Igor Steinmacher, Andrew Stevens, Shelly Thomas, Laurie Dickson, Karli VanderMeersch, Gioia Woods, Rachel Starks, Donna Simon, Theresa Brier, JMichael Cruz, Roger Bounds, Brandie Reiner, Laura Taylor, Tori Damjanovic, Mark Ruppert, John Tingerthal, Melissa Lawton, Claudia Rodas, Kevin Tague, David Castellano, Jessie Finch, Sara Maier, Miriam Espinoza, Bonita Switala, Melinda Treml, Sara Abercrombie, Marinela Golemi, Andrew Stalker, Eric Cerino, Jenny Holzapfel, Bettie Coplan, Kristin Greenwalt, Corrine McCawley, Deedee Perez-Grandos, Michelle Cook, John Lynch, Dale Cummings, Oaklee Rogers, Laura Umphrey, Jill Navran, Jennifer Russell, Ashley Vaughan, Natsha Dmitrieva, T Noecker, Amy Rushall, Emily Manone, Eyal Bar, Abby Fisher, Jane Marks, Morgan Ruff, Samantha Clifford.

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

The 10/21 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 9/23 Senate meeting minutes are voted on and **approved**.

## 3. Senate President's Report

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares her report.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that she has been receiving reports from the senate college caucuses and recommends that these groups share comments and concerns to their respective college dean.
- The next ABOR meeting will be at the U of A in late November. Information from this meeting and the AFC will be shared in upcoming meetings.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods shares her support for the separation of performance appraisals from merit pay criteria. She asks the senate and provost office to think about how will we judge who gets merit pay.
- Two different task forces will be convened in the upcoming weeks. The first will look to discuss and develop a universal undergraduate student attendance policy. The second task force will be focused on reviewing current student opinion surveys. These task forces will provide recommendations to the senate in early Spring.

## 4. Council and Committee Reports – All FSEC Committee & Council Chairs

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

- Chair of the Council on Learning John Tingerthal reports that the council is completing the final stages of the draft Teaching Portfolio Guide. This document will be reviewed by the FSEC in November.

- Chair of the Council on Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Michael Smith shares that the council met last Wednesday. During this meeting they discussed minor changes to the Faculty Code of Conduct & Ethics Document and improving faculty relationships with departments on campus, such as travel teams.
- Chair of the Council on Distance Education, Donna Simon, has been meeting with Carmin Chan & Yvonne Luna to discuss the needs of the statewide and online faculty. She shares that the committee has received a partial list of all statewide and online faculty and will be sending a survey to these individuals to collect more information on concerns.

##### **5. Elevating Excellence Goals for 2030 – Laurie Dickson**

NAU Vice President for University Strategy, Laurie Dickson, shares a presentation about NAU's strategic goals for the upcoming years.

- VP Laurie Dickson shares that the goal of this presentation is to give an update on the Elevating Excellence Plan.
- The Elevating Excellence Plan was created to provide information to the Arizona Board of Regents regarding NAU's strategic plans and the consolidation of previously developed initiatives.
- VP Laurie Dickson shares three points surrounding the strategic roadmap.
  - The strategic roadmap is a three-year plan, which is very short for an institutional roadmap.
  - The initial descriptions of the strategic priorities were very broad. It was a statement of "this is who we want to be as a university."
  - The strategic roadmap provided no metrics on how to measure our success; since then we have worked to develop metrics for these goals.
- During President Jose Luis Cruz Rivera's convocation, he shared that we need to sharpen our focus and set vision level goals into our strategic roadmap. These goals will be in a five-year cycle and will have success indicators to monitor our progress.
- The first drafted goal is: Accelerate Equitable Educational Attainment and Career Preparedness.
- The second drafted goal is: Propel Economic Mobility & Social Impact.
- The success indicators for the first goal are: Broaden access for underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation students, boost persistence rates, and award high value credentials.
- VP Laurie Dickson clarifies that persistence rates means the students either graduate or continue to stay enrolled at NAU.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods asks how one would determine a "high value" credential. VP Laurie Dickson agrees with Gioia, and shares that there has been discussion on the goal, and the phrase "high value" may be removed.
- VP Laurie Dickson shares that broadening access will look at the enrollment metrics of our minority, low-income, and first-generation students, and compare to previous years to measure growth.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that a major component of broadening access is partnering and supporting children in K-12. VP Laurie Dickson shares that NAU has been developing the FACS Program, which helps address this issue. This

- program is still being developed and won't be large enough to solve this problem yet, so more programs will be developed to address the challenges surrounding this issue.
- FSEC member Michael Smith shares a concern that the goals are mainly surrounding inclusion and have little measurement surrounding the excellence of NAU. He suggests that including goals and metrics surrounding scholarly excellence could help bring more students to NAU.
  - Senator Chris Sthultz asks if there will be work on equitable education attainment in the university. VP Laurie Dickson shares that she does not know what those issues are, but in solving them, it would help perpetuate NAU toward their goal. She also clarified that she does not know what the strategies are for all of these goals, just the metrics and outcomes if we succeed in these goals.
  - VP Laurie Dickson also shares that we will be collecting qualitative data through campus climate updates and other strategies.
  - The success indicators for the second goal are: Graduates employed in AZ three years post-graduation, the number of Healthcare and Behavioral Healthcare degrees awarded, and research that addresses critical issues facing Arizona, especially related to health and the environment.
  - VP Laurie Dickson shares that the State of Arizona has been heavily investing in the healthcare programs at NAU. This is why there is a focus on metrics surrounding healthcare degrees in the success indicators.
  - Ex-Officio Gioia Woods suggests that the goal surrounding the health and environment in Arizona, include humanities jobs and concerns.
  - VP Laurie Dickson also shares that these goals will assist us in internal discussions and aligning our future processes and investments.
  - This presentation will also be shared with the Graduate Student Government, the University Budget Advisory Board, the Staff Advisory Council, and ASNAU.

#### **6. Faculty Code of Conduct & Ethics – Michael Smith**

Chair of the Council on Faculty Rights & Responsibilities, Michael Smith, leads a discussion regarding the Faculty Code of Conduct & Ethics.

- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares that the discussion today is to provide Michael Smith with any feedback regarding the document. This feedback will be reviewed and potentially added to the document prior to the Faculty Senate meeting in November. President Ellis states that the goal is to vote on this document in November but can go into January or February.
- Senate President Ellis shares that NAU's General Counsel, Michelle Parker, was very impressed with the document after reviewing it. Any changes made to this document will have to be reviewed by her.
- FSEC Member Michael Smith shares major changes that have been made to the document.
- A purpose statement has been created for the document to provide context of what the document covers.
- Section 5 surrounding freedom and responsibility of expression has been expanded and mentions some of the content previously discussed this semester.

- FSEC Member Michael Smith also shares that all sections have multiple bullet points that focus on what faculty members should do, rather than focusing on what they should not do.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis thanks the large number of individuals who worked on the revisions of this document.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods shares that it would be extremely beneficial in sharing the uses of this document and where it can be utilized. Vice Provost Roger Bounds suggests that this be shared to new faculty to communicate expectations and values of the faculty at NAU.
- Vice Provost John Georgas shares that chairs can also use this document to help coach faculty and improve teaching throughout the university.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis instructs faculty senators to read this document and formulate any feedback or changes to further discuss in November.
- All feedback can be emailed to [Faculty.Senate@nau.edu](mailto:Faculty.Senate@nau.edu) or [Michael.E.Smith@nau.edu](mailto:Michael.E.Smith@nau.edu)

#### 7. **ASNAU Resolution re Support for Student Voting – Karli VanderMeersch**

ASNAU President Karli VanderMeersch shares information regarding a proposed ASNAU Resolution regarding support for student voting.

- ASNAU President Karli VanderMeersch is asking for the endorsement of the Faculty Senate regarding a resolution that supports student voting.
- Four years ago, ASNAU passed a resolution asking faculty members to provide a day for students to enact their civic duty of voting.
- This year, ASNAU is looking to pass a resolution that recommends that faculty provide students with an accommodation that allows them to miss class to vote, with the understanding that faculty work with the student to make up the work missed.
- NAU has the highest percentage of students who are registered to vote compared to the other in-state universities but scored significantly lower in percentage of voter turnout on election day. In the resolution, data is provided from students showing that a major reason why they are unable to vote is due to conflicting class times.
- This support for student voting is a tri-university stance, and representatives from U of A and ASU also support this resolution.
- ASNAU is non-partisan and will not be providing any input on who students should vote for, only advocate for their ability to go and place a vote on election day.
- ASNAU President Karli VanderMeersch shares that she has been collaborating with the Student Regents regarding this request.
- Senator Chris Sthultz asks if providing students an accommodation to vote violates the recommendation that the NAU administration shared to the senate in the September Senate Meeting. Senate President says that this is not the case. The accommodation request expects students to fulfill the work that is due, and they should plan ahead and speak to their faculty as soon as possible.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods also shares that ABOR supports and encourages students to engage in their civic duty and vote.

- Senator Jennifer Russell asks if this will be advertised, or just an accommodation made to specific students. Senate President Kate Ellis responds by saying that the resolution is not a blanket statement for students to take the day off, but a request that faculty work with students to find an accommodation if they need to travel to vote. Faculty can choose to follow this resolution or not.
- Senator David Castellano raises concerns as he already provides students with unexcused absence days. ASNAU President Karli VanderMeersch thanks Senator Castellano for providing students with unexcused absences and encourages him to look at what the students are using their excused absences for. If it is for medical emergencies or other issues, then it may be beneficial to still offer them flexibility in case they needed to vote. Senate President Kate Ellis also clarifies that this suggestion is optional and that faculty do not have to provide this, although it is recommended.
- Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis also recommends that students reach out to faculty regarding this request 5-days prior to voting day.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods shares that this is a unique and powerful opportunity for the Faculty Senate and ASNAU to collaborate, and she recommends that we adopt this resolution.

The Full Senate votes and **endorses** the ASNAU resolution surrounding student voting.

#### **8. Crowdfunding The Dream, US Scholars – JMichael Cruz**

JMichael Cruz shares information regarding a crowdfunding effort for a group of students at NAU.

- JMichael Cruz shares a [PowerPoint presentation](#) on this topic.
- NAU works with a national scholarship organization called TheDream.US (TDUS). TDUS works with NAU to help support undocumented students and their ability to succeed and attend NAU.
- NAU is contracted to recruit ten students per year to receive this scholarship.
- The students recruited are undocumented. Although TDUS covers the tuition and fees at the university, many of the students need support in paying for living costs and food. A majority of these students do not qualify for financial aid and need support from outside sources.
- A fund has been created with the NAU Foundation in which faculty can donate money to support these students.

#### **9. Provost Report – John Georgas**

Vice provost John Georgas gives his report.

- Vice Provost John Georgas thanks senators for participating in the Faculty Town Hall on September 30<sup>th</sup>. He invites the Faculty Senate to share any feedback on the event. FSEC member Juliana Suby states that she appreciates that some parts of the Town Hall were slightly off topic and that the members of the panel and the crowd responded well. Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis clarifies that Erwin Chemerinsky is an expert on constitutional law and that the information he shared was based on law and not his opinion.

- The Teaching and Learning Center, provost office, and the Faculty Senate will be working on hosting a second Town Hall in the Spring Semester.
- Vice Provost John Georgas encourages faculty to share information with their students surrounding the upcoming Regent's Cup that will be held in Flagstaff.
- Based on information collected by the NSSE student surveys, students share an increase in satisfaction surrounding university advising and the quality of services provided to students. Students also report an increased satisfaction surrounding the availability of faculty and more inclusive environments created by faculty. These surveys reported that we need to work on explaining the importance of the General Studies Program to students. Increased opportunities for internships will also need to be focused on in the upcoming year.
- Job postings for the Generative AI cluster hire will be posted in the coming weeks. These hires will work with departments to find ways to best utilize Generative AI. Vice Provost John Georgas shares that the university will look to improve the communication surrounding faculty and staff work on Generative AI to best share information and collaborate across the university.
- As mentioned in previous senate meetings, the university will be thinking carefully and strategically about faculty hiring this year. This is due to declining enrollment in recent years, as well as the university's focus surrounding strategic finance. Compared to Fall of 2019, we are down 8% in student headcount and up 2% in faculty headcount.
- The most recent results of the NSSE & FSSE survey have been received and analyzed. The provost office is looking for one to two representatives from the senate to participate in a working group to analyze the data and create a report to share out to all faculty. These results can also be used to analyze and make changes to policies to best support student success. Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis recommend that any interested senators reach out to [Faculty.Senate@nau.edu](mailto:Faculty.Senate@nau.edu)

**10. New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis  
Meeting is adjourned at 5:04pm.**