

Faculty Senate Minutes
Thursday, October 22, 2020, Via Zoom, 2:34 PM

I. Attendance

J. Bohus, V. Brown-Kennerly, P. Davis, E. Fan, T. Foley, E. Goedereis, S. Jensen, J. Lassetter, B. Lynch, S. Mahfood, J. Palmer, M. Preuss, T. Reilly, E. Rhiney, D. Stiles.

- II. a. *Upon motion by S. Jensen, seconded by E. Goedereis, the Senate unanimously approved the minutes of the October 8, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting.***

III. New Business:

- a. Update on Student Struggles - John Buck, Dean of Student Services**

Dr. Buck began by stating the students are experiencing three major struggles at this time – economic, racial and Covid related problems. He reported on the steps his department is taking to assist the students as follows:

1. Counseling - at this time, there are two full-time counselors, three externs, and seven interns in the Counseling Department to assist students with their needs. Students are being referred, if necessary, to other mental health practitioners in the St. Louis area. Webster also has Dr. Dale Anderson, a psychiatrist, on retainer which students can get into see within a two-week waiting period.
2. Residence Halls - these have been de-densified by having only one student per room. The students are feeling isolated because of this. However, there is only an 8:1 ratio instead of 16:1 ratio of student to hall advisors virtually cutting possible Covid outbreaks in half.
3. Justin Barton is heading up Connection Leaders who have been assigned a group of students to follow up with on a weekly basis to check in with each one.
4. Fletcher Ferguson is enforcing the Student Conduct rules of masking and no visitors. He has sent out over 25 warning letters to students. Students will be suspended for 14 days for repeated violations. However, there have only been 10 positive Covid19 cases on campus since August 2020.
5. Dr. Buck said they have been engaging with parents and families on a weekly basis via Zoom since June 2020. We offer them different speakers who address issues concerning their students. The parents have given great feedback and are very supportive of Webster's guidelines.

Senators followed up with a few questions. Dr. Buck responded by stating the University has no plans at this time to hire more counselors. He is going to wait until after the end of the semester to re-evaluate the situation. He stated that students need to be getting out of their rooms to walk around campus and make sure they are eating healthy. He would like to be able to have groups of 15 students to do activities, but the St. Louis County guidelines forbid that at this time. He stated that professors may hold classes outdoors, weather permitting, while guidelines are followed. Students who are in need of financial aid can apply for Gorlok Now monies; there is an emergency loan program; and they should talk to the Financial Aid office who may be able to work something out for them. The Metro bus pass program is no longer in existence as it was too costly.

If a student is in need of transportation via Metro, they can contact Collette Cummings in the MCISA office, and she can help them.

b. President's Update:

President Lynch reported that he has been in touch with Cheryl Fritz regarding the CAP (Corrective Action Policy). She has come up with changes and is providing President Lynch a rough draft. Once he has the draft, the Senate CAP committee will meet with John Link, President of the WSA and Cheryl to go over it.

Salary and Fringe Benefits Committee has met with the administration. They have a few things they feel are within the purview of the Senate. President Lynch will be meeting with the Committee next Thursday to discuss these issues.

There was a joint meeting of the Chancellor's Cabinet and the President's Council. They spoke of fundraising, tuition generation, human resource issues and program related issues. There were 30 minutes of break-out groups with very forward-thinking questions for consideration. President Lynch stated that he is making sure the Senate stays involved in these discussions as conversations concerning the state of the University become very serious.

President Lynch had a meeting with department Chairs on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. It was a very positive meeting. They shared their concerns about lack of student, faculty and staff counseling and a lack of a sense of community. He feels that faculty can continue to have meetings and lunches, etc., as long as they are done in a responsible manner. He said that at this time, the Spring 2021 calendar will be followed. Spring break will happen, students will begin the semester on time and exams will happen on time.

President Lynch stated he had been asked about filling open positions within the University. He explained that because of the fiscal challenges of the Universities, he did not know when or if open positions would be filled.

President Lynch requests permission from the Senate to give kudos on behalf of the Chairs and Senate to the OTC and OLC for their technical help over the last seven months. The Senate agrees.

President Lynch requests permission from the Senate to thank the Chairs on behalf of the Senate for taking on not only faculty issues, but also for addressing student concerns and to let them know they are being heard. The Senate agrees.

IV. Old Business:

a. Fall Institute Update:

President Lynch thanked everyone for the fabulous presentations offered on three different dates. The Institute committee is in the process of gathering feedback data through a survey. This is just the beginning of the next steps to continuing the conversations concerning institutional racism.

- b. President Lynch reported that he spoke with VP Hellerud regarding how many students are considered annually for Honors and she told him roughly 10 students. He then spoke with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee about possibly taking on the role of the Honors Board as it would not take much time to consider ten candidates per year for Honors. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee does not feel it can take on any more responsibilities at this time.

- c. Concerning his attempts to disband the Speaker's Committee, President Lynch reached out to Academic Affairs and the Finance Department. He would like to obtain a written affirmation that any monies allocated to certain departments in the past will continue to receive those funds in the future.
- d. Open Committee Seats:

The Senate unanimously approved a motion by Bill Lynch, seconded by Mary Preuss, to appoint Paul Davis to the open Leigh Gerdine College of Fine Arts seat on the Committee to Review Faculty through May 2021.

The Senate unanimously approved a motion by Elsa Fan, seconded by Victoria Brown-Kennerly, to appoint JB Kwon to the open College of Arts and Sciences seat on the Global Citizenship Program Committee through May 2021.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:50PM