Faculty Senate Minutes

May 11, 2021

**Virtual Meeting**

*Primarily paperless, wou.edu/facultysenate*

# 3:15 - 3:30 p.m.

*Better Know a Colleague* (informal gathering, optional)

# 3:30 – 5 p.m.

# *Business Meeting*

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# 1. Call to order

# 2. Call of the roll (by typing your name into the chat)

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# 3. Corrections to and approval of minutes from previous meeting (see website)

* Minutes approved as posted

# 4. Institutional Reports

# 4.1. Faculty Senate President

* Report available on the Faculty Senate website

# 4.2. University President

* Report available on the Faculty Senate website

# 4.3. University Provost

* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Question**: Do we have any information about the interim president search?
* **Provost Winningham**: Haven’t received an update; while on the search committee, I can’t talk to anyone about any decisions. I believe it is in the hands of Board of Trustees, but President Fuller or Ryan Hagemann may have more information. This now requires Board action, and there will be a meeting with public notice, so look out for that meeting TBA and who will be announced.
* **President Fuller:** To echo this, the advisory board has finished its work and the Board is looking this, so expect this to be completed in early June (before we finish the year). Just waiting for the process to be finalized.

# 4.4. IFS Report

* No report on the Faculty Senate website
* **Tad Shannon**: IFS is currently discussing approaches to reopening on various campuses around the state, but no updates or recommendations at this time.

# 5. Executive Committee Business

* 5.1 Nominating Committee (Kristin Latham-Scott, Chair/Past President)
* **Stewart Baker**: The nominations for at large are: Lars Soderlund, Alicia Ibaraki, and Earlene Camarillo (incumbents), and Chloe Hughes.

We are also looking for an IFS senator; we need to elect in May to shadow for Fall term. One person is thinking about this, but please nominate someone or self-nominate for this position if interested. We will hold elections on May 25th elections. We can also take nominations from the floor (for at-large or IFS) or take IFS nominations after the meeting.

# 6. Consideration of Old Business:

* 6.1 Proposal to Revise S/NC Grade Policy (Amy Clark and Niki Weight)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Question:** With regard to whether students can petition, like with the S/NC option, would there be a process and would they have a way to know (if they got an NC) if they got an actual passing grade.
* **Amy Clark:** Yes, they can petition. Faculty submit a letter grade because they submit, so students can get that information or a verification letter from admissions.
* **Question:** So they have to go through that process to know if they got a D?
* **Amy Clark:** If they got an S or NC, unless they are told by professor, they can get the information from admissions with picture ID.
* **Question:** For 36 credits, would that be inclusive of the S/NC grade or separate?
* **Amy Clark:** They would be separate.
* **Question:** Concern about inconsistency...not sure if other divisions had same concerns? Amy said this was chosen because other universities use this policy but still unsure why there’s a difference between S/NC and this new policy.
* **Amy Clark:** Students can make the decisions, but there is a higher threshold for the expectation to pass the course. Obviously, we could make a different choice. One of the key functions is so that the student makes that choice, and the faculty assigns the grade and doesn’t know if student takes that option. Removes concern of assigning a grade based on mode choice.
* **Question**: So the basis for C- is based on other schools...do other schools use D- as a passing grade for A-F grading?
* **Amy Clark:** I’d have to look but I’m sure we aren’t the only ones.
* **Comment:** For chemistry, we have a lot of classes that require a C- passing grade as prerequisites; that threshold provides the option for students and otherwise we’d have to opt out.
* **Amy Clark:** We have focused a lot on that D-/D range, but also there are students with A or B range who choose the S/NC option due to extenuating circumstances to save their GPA.
* **Comment:** Humanities was concerned about C- cutoff. A small number of students seemingly would be impacted based on presentation, but looking at Gen Ed courses, there were a lot of students who earned Ds and D-s, and it just seems like many will be in a place where they can’t get credit. There may be impacts with ‘flip-flopping’ with optimistic students hoping for a C-. An amendment suggested was to have the grade threshold align with current passing grade (D-) but we see how that could cause difficulty. Would be amenable to a trial rollout. Seems like a lot of communication would be needed.
* **Amy Clark:** A lot of students do get below a C- and would be impacted. A lot of those who get a C- currently don’t have options. So there is value here for them (outside of dropping or withdrawing).
* **Erin Baumgartner**: To add a bit of nuance, proportionately, the Gen Ed with highest proportion of D- is Foundational Mathematics. Also want to let you know that HECC is looking into how to address students transferring with these grades. We also have a petition process that would continue to be available (in Gen Ed).
* **Mike Baltzley**: During the pandemic, something like 10% of students chose S/NC grading. It was not just students who get lower grades, it was across a variety of grades. A relatively small percentage of students would actually be impacted negatively.
* Motion to move forward with proposed change. Seconded.
* **Motion passes – 17 YES votes, 4 NO votes**
* 6.2. Contemporary Music, M.M. (Major) - Drop (Melanie Landon-Hays)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* Motion to table the vote. Seconded.
* **Motion Passes – 19 YES votes, 2 NO votes**

# 7. Consideration of New Business

* 7.1 Proposal for WOU to Require COVID Vaccines (Mark Perlman)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Mark Perlman**: I won’t belabor this because of yesterday’s announcement and would like to commend the administration for making this move. One thing is I want to caution us to not be too permissive about our position on this; it is a political hot potato, and people have strong views, but our university’s attorneys have looked into the legality of this and our administration should not be too accommodating despite people being unhappy about this [vaccine requirement]. We can’t just take people’s word when they said they have a compelling reason to not get a vaccine. People with genuine medical reasons for not getting vaccinated can have exceptions, but we need to protect people - it’s a matter of life and death.
* **Comment**: A few questions about the justification for bringing this proposal forward (e.g., with what expertise, on what basis?)
* **Mark Perlman**: I’m willing to withdraw the proposal.
* **Faculty Senate President**: Any objections to withdrawing proposal?
* **Lars Soderlund**: I was asked to read a statement by a faculty member who is not on the Senate, and they still want it read (it is available on FS website). Also, to clarify, this statement does not reflect my own opinion/position, I simply volunteered to read the statement. According to Roberts Rules, I am to ask the permission of the Senate to read it; does anyone object?
* Several objections.
* **Faculty Senate President**: In this case, a vote is needed; if a majority votes yes, the item/statement can be read.
* Motion to read documents related to rebuttal. Seconded.
* **Motion does not pass – 4 YES votes, 20 NO votes**
* **Faculty Senate President**: If there are objections to withdrawing the motion, then we need another vote. Are there objections to withdrawing the original motion?
* **No objections; proposal is withdrawn.**
* 7.2. Proposal for Handling Non-Disciplinary Student Complaints (Emily Plec)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Emily Plec:** There are two statements we can make with this proposal: one to students, one to administration. The resolutions are:

1) Communicate to students and HR that FS supports a process wherein a student filing a non-anonymous complaint would get some notification from administration about the composition of that complaint and what action was taken

2) For faculty, a notification process; faculty are given an opportunity to reflect on complaints, and there should be some coaching by an appropriately trained individual who could notify the faculty of the complaint and offer them an opportunity to engage in coaching/growth. This may also dovetail with the DEI initiative.

* **Comment:** I appreciate your ideas and positive objective; resolution as written seem related to HR complaints, but I also recently learned about a different [complaint](https://wou.edu/provost/student-grievances/academic-complaints/) form that goes to Provost office.
* **Emily Plec:** I do agree and if you have a way to incorporate that I would support it, but HR does say that all complaints land there.
* **Comment:** Thank you. Our campus desperately needs to move in the direction of addressing racism, sexism, and other bias/discrimination, and correct course we’ve taken over time to be more inclusive.
* **Provost Winningham**: HR is not made aware of academic complaints, which begin with the instructor or division chair, unless there is an alleged civil rights violation or harassment. This link shows all of the complaint types: <https://wou.edu/provost/student-grievances/>

The first complaint received from the student is usually not the complete story, so be careful with that since you probably don’t want the Provost office to have all of those complaints that are usually handled at the instructor or division chair level. Bias complaints go to the dean of students (it is a legal responsibility for civil rights violations and harassment to go to HR/Tina Fuchs). Suggestion to invite Carson Campbell, Judy Vanderburg, and/or Tina Fuchs to talk about this.

* **Emily Plec:** Thank you for clarifying and maybe we can hear from them before a vote takes place. Our concern is that Division Chairs are not adequately trained to respond to student complaints, so we may need an independent office/individual who can coach/work with faculty.
* **Provost Winningham**: For the past two summers we conducted Division Chair training on complaint processes and we have discussed their responsibilities with these complaints moving forward because we have tried to create/refine the process. We have really stressed to them that they MUST act on complaints, and sometimes it’s just talking to faculty, but they do have a legal responsibility to go to HR if it is a civil rights violation or harassment.

# 8. Discussion items

* None

# 9. Informational Presentations and Committee Reports

* 9.1. Revised Transfer Policy for Math and Writing (Kristin Mauro and Rob Findtner)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Kristin Mauro**: In sum, we no longer require math and writing for admission of transfer students.
* **Comments**: There have been concerns about transfer policies for the Early Childhood Ed major regarding math prerequisites, that transfer policy is flexible to allow them to take the classes they need.
* **Kristin Mauro**: What we are discussing is math and writing requirements for *admission* purposes (note that if student completes AAOT, they will have fulfilled math requirement).
* 9.2. UDIAC Diversity Plan (Gabbi Boyle)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* Highlight: May 20th 11:30-1pm UDIAC Townhall live Zoom session in addition to Google Form call for feedback.
* 9.3. Financial Aid and the Student Withdrawal Process (Kella Helyer and Leslie Lloyd)
* Report available on the Faculty Senate website
* **Question:** If possible, if you could flag those emails as urgent or important, that would be helpful given the volume of email received. Also, I have a student who keeps appearing on roles for classes I teach, but they never actually show up, and I wonder if Financial Aid has a process of helping students who may be living off student aid and are getting themselves into a debt cycle.
* **Faculty Senate President**: It is now 5pm, so I need a motion to extend the meeting if we want to do so.
* No motion.

# 10. Announcements

* None

## 5:00pm Meeting adjourned

# 5 – 5:15 p.m.

*Better Know a Colleague* (informal gathering continued, optional)