

1 William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – February 23, 2016
2 FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate> --
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4 **PRESENT:** Aktan, Andreopolous, Avdeev, Cano, Crick, Decker, Diamond, Duffy, Ellis, Falk-
5 Romaine, Fallace, Flint, Fondeur, Gazzillo-Diaz, Griswold, C Goldstein (for Uhlein), Harris,
6 Hong, Kaur, Kearney, Kim, Kothandaraman, Levitan, Maduro, Magaldi, Makarec, Martin,
7 Martus, Najarian, Natrajan, O'Donnell, Owusu, Potacco, Rosar, Sandmann, Scala, Simon,
8 Snyder, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Tesfaye, Verdicchio, Waldron, Wallace, Watad, Wicke
9

10 **ABSENT:** Helena
11

12 **GUESTS:** Brenenson, Chabayta, Charney, Chen, Corso, Cupo, Delasuaree, DiNoia, Godar,
13 Gordon, Gritsch, Hahn, Kollia, Kubeyinjo, Learmouth, Leckey, Lincoln, Loach, Louie,
14 Martinez, Mathew, McCoy, McLaughlin-Vignier, Miller, Moore, Nocella, Noonan, Nyamwange,
15 Obrecht, Owusu-Ansah, Oyola, Pakizegi, Pavese, Rabbitt, Richardson, Rim, Rosenberg, Ross,
16 Roux, Sabatino, Schneider, Seal, C. Sheffield, Sherman, Shojai, Tiernan, Trelisky, Victorino,
17 Vishio, Wagner, Weiner, C. Williams, M. Williams, Wolf, Zeff, Zeleke (It is likely that many
18 other guest attendees did not sign it.)
19

20 **PRELIMINARIES:** Chairperson Falk-Romaine called the Senate to order at 12:32pm. The
21 Agenda, moved by Martus and Najarian, was approved unanimously. The Minutes of the
22 1/26/2016 meeting, moved by Cano and Harris were also approved unanimously after several
23 typos were noted.
24

25 **CHAIR'S REPORT:** Zeff noted that NSSE is in progress and urged that freshmen and seniors
26 should be encouraged to respond.
27

28 Sandmann reported that the College of Business had been awarded full accreditation by AACSB
29 for the next five years.
30

31 **VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT:** Magaldi nominated (Duffy seconded) Arlene Scala to serve on
32 Danielle Wallace's Retention Committee. This was approved unanimously.

33 Due to problems constituting a Range Adjustment Committee for Martus, the Executive
34 Committee (in consultation with the Provost and the Union) approved three members from
35 outside his department: Ku, Rosar and Zeleke.

36 **GOVERNANCE COUNCIL: EMERITUS STATUS FOR STEPHEN BRYANT:** Dean and
37 Duffy moved approval of the Council's resolution. Falk-Romaine spoke in favor after which it
38 was approved unanimously.
39

40 **GOVERNANCE COUNCIL: EMERITUS STAUS FOR JAMES HAUSER:** Duffy moved
41 and Levitan seconded the Council's resolution. Snyder and Kaur spoke in favor, after which it
42 was approved unanimously.
43

44 **GOVERNANCE COUNCIL: EMERITUS STATUS FOR GURDIAL SHARMA:** Dean
45 moved and Duffy seconded the Council's resolution, which was approved with one abstention.
46

47 **DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY:** Falk-Romaine reported what the Executive Committee
48 had heard about the Geography Department being placed in a state of “dormancy.” She quoted
49 the Senate Constitution regarding the primacy of faculty in curricular matters and approving
50 programs (and, by extension, disapproving them). The AFT discussed the situation at its meeting
51 last week, and all seven former chairs of the Senate who are still active at WPU wrote a letter to
52 the Provost decrying the lack of clear communication and transparency in the entire process.

53
54 Owusu and Nyamwange presented the Geography Department’s understanding of the events,
55 some statistics about the number of majors (12, not 3, as erroneously reported), the importance of
56 the department’s offerings to many other programs on campus, and the questions to which it still
57 seeks answers: Why Geography? Why now? The department believes that it has responded to
58 recommendations made in the last program review. Many things were implemented over the past
59 year or two, but insufficient time has been allowed to reflect these changes and to see them to
60 fruition. The department has been told to come up with new ideas.

61
62 Sandmann reiterated that no final decisions have been made about the status of the Geography
63 Department, and acknowledged the many excellent and significant contributions that its faculty
64 noted a few minutes ago. He stated that discussions are going on about the department -- a
65 necessary and appropriate function for faculty and deans. It is something that is done all the time,
66 and both undergraduate and graduate programs undergo similar scrutiny. All aspects of the
67 academic offerings must be discussed in terms of the needs of the students and the demands of
68 the workplace, and thus the curriculum must change to keep up. He said that he would use the
69 term academic suspension rather than dormancy, but he repeated that no decisions have been
70 made yet.

71
72 Tardi deplored a situation where rumors abound, and where clear and honest communication
73 between parties doesn’t seem to exist. It is also intolerable that the faculty in the department
74 learn of things affecting them from third parties.

75
76 She presented her reconstruction of a conversation she had with the Provost regarding
77 Geography (and, incidentally, Secondary Education). Tardi reported that the Provost made three
78 major points: 1. The Geography Department is being eliminated. 2. Faculty would not lose their
79 jobs, but would be transferred to other departments. 3. Students who were already majors in the
80 Geography Department would be allowed to complete the program, but no new majors would be
81 admitted. [Tardi also noted that five days after the initial conversation with the Provost and
82 subsequent to the Senate meeting there was a second meeting with the Provost. She expressed
83 concern that the Geography Department had not been notified by the Dean. The Provost stated
84 that nothing was final and that it all depended on push back from the geographers.]

85
86 At the Senate the Provost reiterated that there are no written plans and that he wants to see how
87 the department pushes back. In his opinion this is not a Senate issue to which Tardi responded
88 that it most certainly is. Like the department, she asked if the problem is with money, with the
89 majors, etc., and if there are problems, let the senators help recommend solutions.

90
91 Scala noted that such actions and innuendos create fear and concern for small departments.
92 People need to know ahead of time what the rationale behind such actions is. A situation like this
93 must never happen again. We need a clear process.

94

95 Natrajan raised several broad philosophical issues. Who needs to legitimize themselves at a
96 university – and why. How is the integrity of core elements of the university (e.g., deans and the
97 Senate) compromised by such an intransparent process. If no decision has been made, why was
98 such a surreptitious plan sprung on the department? Surely some planning had, in fact, already
99 been done. If Geography is as important as the Provost says, what are the rubrics and the
100 numbers that are causing this situation?

101
102 Verdicchio reminded the body of the many times Geography was noted at the previous Senate
103 meeting, and he quoted from the letter signed by the former Senate chairs -- Bing, Duffy, Godar,
104 Levitan, Parras, Verdicchio and Wahrman -- asking for clarification of the process by which such
105 decisions are approached and made. (This letter is archived in the Packet for this Senate
106 meeting.)

107
108 Andreopoulos stated that the current situation and the lack of vision in regard to small
109 departments. Steinhart asked about the process, the place and use of numbers, the policies being
110 observed, and the uncertainty that has been engendered. We cannot deal with rumors and
111 innuendos. He called for a mutually-agreed-upon formal policy to be drafted by the Senate and
112 the administration to address these sort of situations.

113
114 Simon stated that “us vs. them” does not lead to good outcomes. She prefers that the relevant
115 groups work together to solve problems. There must be honesty and trust, however. Watad said
116 that the process must move faster and must not be allowed to kill us. There must be longer term
117 planning, flexibility, trust and transparency. Tesfaye called for collaborative leadership to solve
118 problems.

119
120 Falk-Romaine reminded the body of the Comprehensive Analysis that was conducted two
121 decades ago. It was a faculty-run process that gained immense buy-in from the campus and led to
122 probing self- analyses by departments and made recommendations that were widely accepted.

123
124 Diamond noted that all faculty and administrators seek truth and that if no final decisions have
125 yet been made, there are still opportunities for the parties to work together. We need a shared
126 vision and a fair and transparent process. Potacco also spoke of the vision, mission and strategic
127 plan of the University. Martus noted that some departments were slated for elimination due to the
128 Comprehensive Analysis, but that cooperative efforts led to positive changes. Griswold
129 reiterated the importance of geography in the global economy, but wondered where things were
130 going and what would happen next. Kim asked what are the options? Nyaboga questioned the
131 honesty of the current process.

132
133 Andreopoulos and Flint moved that the next Senate meeting (March 8th) be changed into a
134 Faculty and Professional Staff Committee Meeting (which only voting members are permitted to
135 attend). After brief discussion the motion passed by voice vote with 4 negative votes and 8
136 abstentions.

137
138 Rabbitt stressed that she and the department have engaged in the sort of on-going discussions in
139 which all departments must engage. Previously set goals and targets must be reevaluated and
140 appropriate change need to be made. No decisions have been made, but discussion must
141 continue. Steinhart reiterated points made by others: the need for transparency, shared
142 governance and clear criteria for any curricular restructuring.

143

144 **ADJOURNMENT:** The Senate adjourned at 1:47.

145

146 The next **regular** meeting of the Faculty Senate (all members in attendance) will be on Tuesday,
147 March 22, 2016 in Ballroom C.

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149 The Faculty and Professional Staff Committee Meeting (**voting members of the Senate only**)
150 will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 in Ballroom C.

151

152 Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

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154 THIS AND OTHER SENATE DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

155 www.wpunj.edu/senate