

1 William Paterson University – FACULTY SENATE MINUTES – September 24, 2019  
2 FACULTY SENATE WEB PAGE <http://www.wpunj.edu/senate>

3  
4 **PRESENT:** Aktan, Andreopoulos, Ashnai, Betts (for Griswold), Brillante, Crick, Diamond,  
5 Duffy, Ellis, Finn, Gazzillo Diaz, Helldobler, Hong (for Pozzi), Jurado, Kalaramadam, Kaur,  
6 Kearney, Kecojevic, Kollia, W. Liu (for Najarian), Marks, Natrajan, Northington-Purdie (for  
7 Hill), Nyaboga, M. O’Donnell, Orr, Owusu (for B. Liu), Potacco, Powers, Ramos, Ranjan, Rebe,  
8 Rosar, Shekari, Silva, Simon, Snyder, Spagna, Steinhart, Swanson, Tardi, Vega, Verdicchio,  
9 Vishio, Wallace, Watad, Weisberg

10  
11 **ABSENT:** Chung, Hack, Janos, B. Liu, Schwartz

12  
13 **GUESTS:** Andrew, Bannister, Bartle, Brown, Cammarata, Cannon, Decker, Diaz, Erdogan,  
14 Escobar, Ferguson, Galetz, Ginsberg, Goldstein, Gritsch, Hertzog, Hill, Jian, Kim, Kromidas,  
15 Liautaud, Lincoln, Malindretos, Mandik, Martus, McLaughlin-Vignier, Noonan, B. O’Donnell,  
16 Ortiz, Owusu-Ansah, Refsland, Richardson, Rosenberg, Ross, Sabogal, Sharma, Tajes, Vasquez,  
17 Maggie Williams, Martin Williams, and one unintelligible

18  
19 **PRELIMINARIES:** Chairperson Natrajan called the meeting to order at 12:30pm. Kecojevic  
20 and Aktan moved the Agenda, which was approved unanimously. The Draft Minutes of the  
21 September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, moved and seconded by Kearney and Jurado, were also approved  
22 unanimously. Duffy noted that we were going to try out a new way of keeping attendance: There  
23 will be one list circulating around the table for the senators and a separate one, on a clipboard, to  
24 circulate among the guests (who are reminded to print their names clearly).

25  
26 **CHAIR’S REPORT:**

27  
28 Since our last Senate meeting, the Senate Exec met with the President & Provost.

- 29 1. *Academic Partnerships:* The contract is signed. We discussed issues of control over  
30 curriculum, the role of FT & adjunct faculty to deliver the online programs.
- 31 2. *ART:* The Provost, in consultation with the AFT and SEC leadership sent out a note on  
32 priorities for ART awards – to be used – in case of fiscal issues.
- 33 3. *50K gift to the Senate by the President:* The SEC is preparing a RfP which will be circulated  
34 soon for faculty initiative grants focused on student success and diversity.
- 35 4. *University Budget:* The SEC stressed the need for strategies for revenue generation. There is  
36 going to be a Budget and Enrollment forum soon, and we have a discussion scheduled in the  
37 Senate.
- 38 5. *On Consolidation:* This is the most pressing issue at hand today for us:
  - 39 a. The President is firm in the timeline for consolidation, and spoke of pressures from  
40 the BOT & legislature for “cutting programs due to the budget deficit”. He also,  
41 however, reiterated that he did not want to retrench faculty as in the St. Cloud  
42 University faculty layoffs that happened recently, and that his goal was to balance the  
43 budget while “preserving everyone’s job”. However, the President also made it clear  
44 that reorganization would not stop until the “needle moved” on majors, and invoked  
45 the specter of year 2026 when much would be determined by way of student  
46 enrollment at the university.

- 47 b. It is clear to the SEC that we have a President who is concerned about preserving  
48 jobs. However, the SEC would be remiss if we did not express our concerns to the  
49 faculty. Without being alarmist, we want to make sure that faculty do not take  
50 consolidation lightly. For, if numbers go in the direction that they are going, then we  
51 face the prospect of closing departments, which means that faculty will likely lose our  
52 jobs.
- 53 c. The nature of topics discussed at our SEPP meetings brought up the question of trust  
54 between the faculty and the administration. It was a difficult dialogue at times grim,  
55 but nonetheless generating more light than heat.
- 56 d. I therefore offer the following thoughts to my fellow faculty. Last year, President  
57 Helldobler showed that he gets what our students need [SLIDE text: “Today’s college  
58 graduates may change their careers—not their jobs, their careers—seven times before  
59 they are 40...I often tell students that their major will help them get their first job, but  
60 it is the first two years of their degree—at William Paterson our core curriculum and  
61 its focus on writing and critical thinking—that will help them make the jump to their  
62 next career” (President Helldobler, WP Magazine Fall 2018)
- 63 e. Our university is part of a larger world shaped by political decisions. Politics is about  
64 establishing hegemony. Hegemony is about fixing meanings and framing parameters  
65 and rules of the game. Examples of hegemony are the tyranny of quantifying, scaling,  
66 and measuring value; of bottom-line logic in decision-making; and of producing  
67 ‘scarcity’ and ‘crisis’. Alas, our university is not immune to this. And we are all  
68 caught in its fever.
- 69 f. In such a context, extending Audre Lorde’s famous insight, how can faculty construct  
70 tools to expand the narrow parameters of evaluation, and change the framing of  
71 reimagination of this university so that we all can have a different sense of value and  
72 bottom-line? So that faculty may teach what we love, what we are good at, and what  
73 we know our students need—especially what they need in their darkest hours when  
74 no work seems satisfying, when they are wondering why the world is the way it is,  
75 and when they are told that the world is ‘naturally’ or ‘inevitably’ the way it is? To  
76 my mind, that is when our students most need the skills, knowledge and dispositions  
77 to see the difference between seeking jobs and crafting careers in an increasingly  
78 volatile world that is barely creating jobs, and restricting careers to the few.
- 79 g. If we appreciate this, then it is wrong to have criteria that place precisely those  
80 departments on the line who specialize in ‘denaturalizing’ received categories of  
81 thought and notions about the ‘fixed givenness’ of categories of thought, identities,  
82 interests, histories, and social relations – the core stuff of critical thinking. They are  
83 the ones built upon imagining a different world, and built upon a praxis that knows  
84 that we need to change the conditions of our lives even as we struggle to survive  
85 within its hegemonic parameters.
- 86 h. By Sept 26th, the Senate needs to provide recommendations. It is of course rushed  
87 and we have expressed the fact that huge anxieties are taking hold of faculty. Further,  
88 since Colleges have already begun their own discussions, the Senate needs to provide  
89 leadership that would be considered within the Colleges. It is in this spirit that the  
90 SEC urges faculty to think with the following priorities about the criteria and  
91 implementation models that we could recommend for consideration

- 92 i. [SLIDE text: *Senate Exec Rationale for Criteria & Models* – a) Innovation, b)  
93 Academic Integrity, and c) Preserving Jobs].  
94 j. Since the Senate was unfortunately not given a list of departments that are being  
95 considered by the administration, we have had to build some scenarios on our own  
96 k. [SLIDE text: *Possible Paths* – a) Preserve – stay as-is ~ Not recommended; b) Scatter  
97 – Individual faculty seek new department home ~ Not recommended; c) Add & Stir –  
98 ‘consolidation without merger’ ~ Low viability; d) Subsume -- department as unit  
99 joins larger dept. ~ Context dependent; and c) Create / Innovate – create new  
100 department, major, interdisciplinary spaces]. We think that there are departments in  
101 four Colleges that need to prepare for changes. The first thing to point out is that no  
102 one size fits all. While the Preserve or Add & Stir models appear tempting, both can  
103 quickly become daunting due to pressures to move the needle or demonstrate  
104 alternate ways to value. The Scatter and Subsume models may also be fraught with  
105 problems of taking into account that even larger departments maybe experiencing  
106 dips in enrolment. So, it is the considered opinion of the SEC that the Create /  
107 Innovate model would best combine intellectual synergies, quality of programs for  
108 students, with the protection of our jobs. We have already been informed about  
109 conversations happening between departments considering new programs, and at least  
110 one College has planned a retreat this week with some models at play. We would like  
111 the context provided by the SEC today to be informing faculty choices.

112

113 We will now open up for discussion on Consolidation beginning with criteria and move to  
114 implementation models.

115

116 **VICE-CHAIR’S REPORT:** Andreopoulos presented the 2019-2020 UUC Review Panel  
117 rosters, which were approved unanimously. Her motion (Natrajan seconding) to approve of  
118 Siomak Shojai to be the College of Business’s representative on the Academic Standards  
119 Council was also approved unanimously.

120

121 Professional Sales, a small department with only two full-time faculty, needs a third member for  
122 Saeed Shekari’s Retention Committee. Andreopoulos and Weisberg nominated Betts (Marketing  
123 and Management), who was approved unanimously.

124

125 **PROVOST POWERS:** Powers briefly discussed the ART proposal that he had sent to the  
126 faculty on 9/20/2019, emphasizing that support for pre-tenure faculty should be a top priority.  
127 Budgetary considerations must acknowledged. The annual Provost/AFT ART Workshop will be  
128 held on Thursday, October 3 in Raubinger 101.

129

130 **PRESIDENT HELLDOBLE:** Helldobler addressed Natrajan’s comments. He emphasized  
131 the need for sound academic stewardship, moving the needle, and building trust at all levels.

132

133 He noted that enrollment figures are mixed, and that the University faces a \$1.2M shortfall this  
134 Fall and \$1.0M in the Spring. The annual open Enrollment and Budget forum, hosted by Ross  
135 and Bolyai, will be held on Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 3-4:30 in the Library Auditorium.

136

137 **DISCUSSION ON DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION OR CONSOLIDATION:**

138 Discussion on this topic, which was suspended upon adjournment at the end of the September  
139 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, resumed with Natrajan and Steinhart moving acceptance of the Senate Executive  
140 Committee's three proposed Additional Criteria (to be added to President Helldobler's initial  
141 three). [Archived in Packet of this meeting.]  
142

143 Tardi noted that the Executive Committee tried to persuade the President to lower the numerical  
144 thresholds in his three criteria, but with no success.  
145

146 Vega stated that as the University moves toward more interdisciplinary programs, one  
147 department gets to count the students while another – one that may be teaching 2/3 of the courses  
148 – is not given credit for those students. Graduate and certificate students are also not credited to  
149 the department or program. Kalaramadam began by noting that her department Women's &  
150 Gender Studies was interdisciplinary and innovative, had managed to enrich the campus and  
151 student capabilities while producing between 25-40 majors over the last decade with only 3 FT  
152 faculty. She pointed the irony that the same bodies that are chosen to demonstrate diversity at  
153 Open Houses or the catalogue are the first to be sacrificed for a capitalist logic. Quoting Howard  
154 Zinn about not being able to be neutral on a moving train, she stressed that consolidation hurts  
155 some more than others, and that visibilities are possibilities for some departments. She ended by  
156 saying that if we do not approach the Consolidation process with a generosity of spirit, much  
157 interdisciplinary work and creative collaborations would be stalled.  
158

159 Owusu and Tardi added that such program bring significant amounts of extra revenue to the  
160 University. Helldobler replied that he was looking, originally, at the undergraduate level, but  
161 he's open to including graduate students and programs.  
162

163 Nyaboga questioned whether the amount of money being saved is worth destroying intangible  
164 benefits brought to the University by smaller departments. Helldobler reiterated that 80% of the  
165 University's budget is tied up in salaries and that he doesn't wish to cut jobs, so savings have to  
166 come elsewhere. Every position at \$35,000 or higher is being carefully scrutinized for cost  
167 savings.  
168

169 Shekari suggested developing a ratio of inputs and outputs (roughly corresponding to  
170 Helldobler's Criteria #1 and #2).  
171

172 Verdicchio returned to the \$150,000 savings and noted that is the salary of one retiring full  
173 professor. He called for looking at this entire situation with a larger vision. Are we just thinking  
174 about survival or are we going to make WPU one of the premiere institutions in the state – one  
175 that attracts more students?  
176

177 Steinhart and Vega moved that "Counting graduate students" be added as a seventh criterion. It  
178 was approved unanimously. Then the set of Additional Criteria #4 - #7 were approved  
179 unanimously.  
180

181 Natrajan wished to move to a discussion of possible models for Reorganization and displayed  
182 some possible 'models' to be considered by faculty within Colleges [archived in the Packet of  
183 this meeting].

184

185 Steinhart questioned whether the Senate had exceeded its charge and argued that the Senate  
186 could not dictate policy. Natrajan sought clarification whether the issue was the term ‘models’  
187 and agreed to change it to ‘ideas’, emphasizing that these were meant for consideration by the  
188 faculty within Colleges. He also stressed that the leadership of the Senate was needed on this  
189 since no model was presented by the administration. The matter was also considered by the  
190 parliamentary Marks who affirmed that the Senate was indeed a policy recommending body.

191

192 Discussion continued as senators advanced ideas for further discussion within their departments  
193 and colleges.

194

195 Potacco cautioned that when departments get too large they become unwieldy and inefficient.

196

197 Snyder stated that the historical development of departments should be considered.

198

199 Northington-Purdie noted that in the past larger departments split since specialization and  
200 expertise were supported better in smaller departments.

201

202 Owusu fears that some small programs and departments will disappear despite the efforts they  
203 have made over a very short timeline to update, modernize and make themselves more relevant  
204 of the next generation of students.

205

206 Verdicchio pointed out that our Strategic Plan is a decade old and perhaps we should be  
207 developing a new one. If we’re going to turn the University upside-down, it shouldn’t be over  
208 \$150,000. We need to see a larger picture and have a broader vision.

209

210 Tardi said the Executive Committee simply set forth some “food for thought” that departments  
211 and colleges could use to help frame their discussions. More alternatives have to come forth from  
212 within the colleges. Targeted departments can’t be told what to do; they must take the lead  
213 themselves.

214 Tardi also reminded the body that it took years to get the revised UCC approved, with turf as the  
215 main issue. One can’t let the process die over turf. Regarding this  
216 department/program reorganization, if you do not have a job, you have no turf. Natrajan added  
217 that if the UCC had not focused so much on turf, we probably could have developed a much  
218 better UCC program.

219 Helldobler said that new presidents often initiate a new strategic plan, but he has delayed since  
220 Middle States – which criticized us last time for not having one – wouldn’t look kindly upon us  
221 in a state of flux. He needs to move the needle first. \$150,000 doesn’t move the needle.

222

223 Powers sees himself as a program prioritizer who can help departments and colleges with the  
224 process.

225

226 Nyaboga said the Russ Berrie Institute is an example of innovative thinking and practice.

227

228 Andreopoulos urged departments to undertake these discussions with the utmost seriousness. In  
229 boom times one can add and divide departments, in time of crises we must reorganize and  
230 collaborate.

231 .

232

233 Ashnai urged that small, new programs that have done well – preparing students for jobs,  
234 winning national competitions, etc. – need to be fostered, not put within a different department.

235

236 Ranjan reiterated the demographic realities we face and said we must operate in a collaborative  
237 mode. The Senate should provide leadership, but things must be done in and with the  
238 departments.

239

240 **ADJOURNMENT:** Upon Tardi’s motion, the Senate adjourned at 1:46pm.

241

242 The next meeting of the Faculty Senate, will be held on Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:30PM in  
243 Ballroom C.

244

245 Respectfully Submitted: Bill Duffy, Secretary

246

247 THIS AND OTHER SENATE DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

248 [www.wpunj.edu/senate](http://www.wpunj.edu/senate)

249

250