

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE
July 2020, 2020 – VIRTUAL SENATE MEETING

4:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present: V. Alexander, A. Biddle, C. Boncelet, J. Bush, D. Buttrey, D. Cha, D.C. Moore, H. Doty, A. Fields, A. Fox, J. Fuhrmann, D. Galileo, F. Grubb, B. Hanson, A. Hestvik, F. Hofstetter, P. Huq, P. Inquito, J. Jebb, A. Hagstrom, T. Kaminski, A. Karpyn, M. Laberge, S. Lanteri, S. Lu, Jason Hill, T. Melvin, B. Morling, J. Morrison, S. Mortenson, E. Orsega-Smith, L. Overby, V. Perez, A. Poorani, S. Raible, R. Rakesh, J. Russ, H. Shenton, S. Sundaram, K. Takis-Haynes, J. Tannis, C. Williams, M. Carbone, G. Henry, R. Morgan, L. Thompson, C. Riordan, J. Riera, J. Pelesko, B. Weber,

Members Absent

Members Excused: B. Abraham, A. Bhat, D. Brinley, D. Burris, M. Busch, J. Cohill, J. Custer, J. Gizis, M. Khan, R. Lee, W. Lewis, L. Liao, I. Obrusinkov, S. Partridge, M. Robinson, K. Theopold, D. Assanis, E. Atekwana, D. Doren, K. Matt, M. Rieger.

Jamie Summerfield (Faculty Commons): Presentation of meeting logistics over zoom. Test poll to determine number of voting senators present -- 44 at beginning of meeting. 50 total.

I. Adoption of the Agenda

- Discussion: none
- Approved

II. Approval of the Minutes: [June 22, 2020](#)

- Discussion: none
- Approved

III. Remarks: Provost Robin Morgan

- Thank you all for doing this during the summer.

- Prasad Dhurjati passed away end of June. He was one of the first people who welcomed me to this university in 1985. Prasad's loss makes the university fundamentally different.
- Tom DiLorenzo passed away last Friday. Former Dean of A&S and then a long term as Chair of Psychology, he left UD in 2010. He always had a great big smile. He had married Suzanne Austin while here, whom many of you knew. They had just moved to Charleston, as Tom retired as Provost of University of North Dakota and Suzanne was taking up the position of Provost at College of Charleston. Tom was a victim of an armed robbery attempt.
- These losses are a reminder that we are not owed another day. We should enjoy being around a university with the smart creative people we get to deal with.

IV. Announcements: Senate President Charles Boncelet

- President Charles Boncelet: self introduction as new president, noting that this is his second run. Thanks to Matt Robinson for helping transition.
- A moment of silence for Prasad Dhurjati and Tom DiLorenzo

V. Regular Agenda:

A. Unfinished Business: None

B. New Business:

1. Recommendation from the Emergency Task Force (Matthew Robinson and Lynn Okagaki, Co-Chairs) with the concurrence of the Executive Committee (Charles Boncelet, Chair) for the **approval of a resolution to extend the modified pass/fail grading for Fall 2020 ([Attachment 1](#))**

WHEREAS, in the Spring 2020 academic term, the University of Delaware decided to move to a modified pass/fail system to accommodate students who might have been negatively impacted by the shift to online teaching (<https://www.udel.edu/home/coronavirus/academic-regulations/>), and

WHEREAS, the co-led Faculty Senate/Provosts Office Emergency Academic Task Force voted to recommend the modified pass/fail grading system be extended to Fall 2020 Semester to continue to accommodate undergraduate students who may be adversely affected by COVID19 modifications to the learning environment, be it therefore

RESOLVED, the University of Delaware temporarily modify Faculty Handbook 3.1.9 (per [Attachment 1](#)) allowing a modified pass/fail grading system for Fall 2020.

Discussion:

- William Rose (Chair, UGS, member of Fall Planning Committee): This was not unanimous, 14 of 21 in favor. I was not in favor. I think the costs outweigh the benefits. This sends a message that teaching and learning of Fall is not of usual quality and neither faculty nor students need to put forth their best effort. 13 of 14 institutions that someone on the committee checked on will use regular grading. This will just cause grade inflation and cast doubt on the value of a UD transcript.
- Levi Thompson (Dean, Engineering, member of Fall Planning Committee): I was in favor of this. Students offered many reasons and strong support. We find some institutions feel that their online is better than their in-person.
- Mia Carbone (SGA president). Around 6000 students took advantage of the modified P/F this semester. Ongoing flexibility is important, which is why we gathered so many comments. Most students who are going to try are going to try no matter what, if students are not going to try in person they are not going to try online either.[Document linked in chat contains student comment https://docs.google.com/document/d/1smB9yZ47rLZ_qdm18luhfeIaWsIJZvC6BdXRusMopIE/edit?usp=sharing]
- José Riera (VP Student Life): I honestly don't know the answer here and I'm sympathetic to Bill's points. If we were to approve this, I would not like to think it as admission of lower teaching quality, but an admission that we remain in crisis. People most disadvantaged will be our lowest income and less prepared students.
- Alan Fox (Philosophy): These are unprecedented circumstances. There is no normal. We have seen a plague of anxiety, and anything we can do to reduce the stress they are under will improve the learning environment. My goal is to create a safe space to learn.
- Rakesh (Mathematical Sciences): I would like to see why a student would choose this instead of a standard grade? I don't understand why a student would accept a high pass instead of a B– or B?
- Suresh Sundaram (Business Administration): To answer Rakesh. If a grade on a particular course negatively affects your GPA, you may opt to remove it from the GPA. This allows with high pass and mid pass to meet requirements of a particular limit, such as needing the C– limit. I am in favor of it because many of our students do not have good access from home. Students will typically use this so that difficult circumstances do not affect their GPA.

Approved 40 to 8

2. Recommendation from the Emergency Task Force (Matthew Robinson and Lynn Okagaki, Co-Chairs) with the concurrence of the Executive Committee (Charles Boncelet, Chair) for the **approval of a resolution to teach on Labor Day for Fall 2020 only**

WHEREAS, the University of Delaware regularly observes the Federal Holiday of Labor Day (this year September 7, 2020) to honor the social and economic achievements of American workers, however

WHEREAS, the co-led Faculty Senate/Provosts Office Emergency Academic Task Force voted to recommend teaching on Labor Day in Fall of 2020 to remove a three day weekend at the beginning of the semester to hopefully reduce COVID transmission, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the University of Delaware allow instruction on September 7, 2020

Discussion: none

Approved 39 to 8

3. Recommendation from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Charles Boncelet, Chair) with the concurrence of the Rules Committee (Brian Hanson, Chair) for the **approval of a revision to the Constitution of the Faculty of the University of Delaware and the Faculty Handbook 1.1 Section IV ([Attachment 1](#))**

WHEREAS, section 1.1.4. parts 1 and 2 of the Faculty Handbook regarding ex officio senators contains specifications that all Deans will be senators and that 12 is the maximum number of unelected senators, and

WHEREAS, the creation of two new Deans in Spring 2020 makes the existing language mathematically impossible, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that Faculty Handbook section 1.1.4. be modified as shown in [Attachment 1](#).

Discussion:

- Brian Hanson (Chair, Rules Committee): We were required to make some change in this section because the list of unelected senators was no longer compatible with the the limit of 12 unelected senators. The Rules Committee felt that the President, the Provost, the VP for Student Life, and all Deans who control faculty appointments should be in the senate. Rather than specify the additional unelected senator, we left that up to the President and Provost to decide, hoping that the additional flexibility would prevent having to revisit this every year.
- Rakesh (Mathematical Sciences) how many does this specify?
- Brian Hanson: this specifies 11 and gives the President and Provost one to pick, with the restriction that it has to be someone with faculty status.

Approved 45 to 3.

IX. **Introduction of New Business:**

Such items as may come before the Senate. (No motion introduced under new business, except a motion to refer to committee, shall be acted upon until the next meeting of the Senate.)

- No new business1
- Meeting adjourned 4:42.