

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Wednesday, February 24, 2021
1:30 pm via Zoom

Faculty Council Website: <http://behrend.psu.edu/for-faculty-staff/committees/faculty-senate-and-council>

- I. Call to Order – Emily Cassano, Faculty Senate Chair
- II. Approval of minutes from December Faculty Senate Meeting
 - a. Lisa Elliot and Luciana Aronne
- III. Ralph Ford, Chancellor
 - a. The campus is open again, welcome back. Good to see the campus coming back to life.
 - b. Covid testing (Ken Miller)
 - i. Multi-staged approach
 - ii. More than 2000 students underwent pre-arrival testing, 0.4% positivity
 - iii. Back to campus testing is underway. <1% positivity. Rapid test
 - iv. Surveillance testing starts next week. Increasing the amount of testing to 2%.
 - v. Athletes are being tested. The process varies by sport.
 - c. Vaccines are > 90% effective
 - i. Each state is handling it differently
 - ii. PA in in stage 1 of the distribution
 - d. We are resuming NCAA Division III athletic competitions with limitation
 - e. The Zoom event with the mother of Trevon Martin was Zoom-bombed. Security was increased for the event with Patrisse Cullors, the founder of BLM, and there were no Zoom issues.
 - f. There will be an announcement soon from the University concerning Summer and Fall courses. Summer is expected to be mixed mode, while fall is expected to be a regular schedule.
 - g. Mary Ellen Madigan will be retiring soon and will be missed. A search for her replacement will begin soon.
 - h. Concerning fixed term faculty contracts, the language that had been added is being dropped. This does not affect our campus.
 - i. A faculty member asked about raises this year. The Chancellor replied that had not heard that they are ruled out, but we do not know at this time.
- IV. Pam Silver, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
 - a. Alternative grades are approved for use in the spring semester. Please be sure to understand the effects of using alternative grades before advising students.
 - b. The final exam schedules are posted. Please check them for accuracy. Do not shorten the time for your final exams,
 - c. This summer we will be doing PASS again. It will be closer to regular English and Mathematics. We are determining how to place students.
 - d. We are resuming __ WISE but will be renaming it.
 - e. The first-year task force is to set up a common set of things that freshmen need to be exposed to during those courses.
 - f. A question was asked by a faculty member “Will SRTE’s count this semester?” Pam replied that that it is not definitive yet, but she expects that they will. The faculty member is concerned that students who chose alternative grading may negatively affect the SRTE’s. Faculty should be protected.
 - g. A faculty member brought up the fact that students are taking >18 credits in one

semester. This was discussed at a recent Faculty Senate Committee meeting. Ed Evans informed us that 24 credits is the new limit. Matthew Swinarski stated that data was analyzed to come up with that cap of 24 credits.

- V. Matthew Swinarski gave updates from the last Senate meeting
 - a. Provost Jones discussed budgets, capital investments
 - b. The graduate school shared enrollment numbers
 - c. The University Planning committee gave enrollment numbers
 - d. The Barnes and Noble First Day Complete is going to pilot a program to have students pay a flat rate for books. They shared a report that lists the cost comparisons.
 - e. The benefits committee reported on the topics of childcare and healthcare plan comparisons.
 - f. The faculty affairs committee reported that they are looking at all assessments, including SRTE's, and will issue a report

- VI. Various faculty members voiced the following questions and concerns.
 - a. Why are the annual reviews so arduous this year? MS – They are looking into it.
 - b. Faculty are encouraged to engage students online more, but the administration needs to recognize that this takes so much time.
 - c. Why is Behrend annual review due sooner than others? PS – Deadlines are coming up quickly for the response to the AFAR.

- VII. Dr. Silver presented the topic of Academic Freedom in detail. The slides are attached to these minutes.
 - a. A faculty member asked why this has arisen as an issue. PS – Because some faculty have crossed the line in the classroom. We need to be sensitive to disparate views within the classroom.

- VIII. Emily Cassano informed us that we will be holding a Town Hall meeting on Friday, March 12 at 11 am.

- IX. A faculty member announced that the first week of March is national foreign languages week. Please encourage the students to attend the events.

- X. The next meeting will be April 11, 2021

- XI. Motion to adjourn
 - a. Ed Evans and Lisa Elliot