

University of Wyoming at Laramie

FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES

December 11, 2023

A regular meeting of the University of Wyoming Faculty Senate (FS) was called to order by Chair Robert Sprague at 3:12 pm on December 11, 2023, in the Family Room, University of Wyoming Union. Additional Faculty Senate members and guests were able to join via Zoom.

The Secretary Treva Sprout-Ahrenholtz called the roll, and a quorum was met. The following Senators were not in attendance or represented by a proxy; Senators Alvarado (excused), Anderson, Bialostok, Caulton, Coupal, Grant, Hoberg, Lake, McCoy, Mocsary, Myers, Rettler, and Slater.

The Chair called for a motion to approve the agenda; made, seconded, and carried.

The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 27, 2023; made, seconded and carried.

The Chair Reported that the FDRP panel election poll had been distributed via an all-faculty email distribution list maintained by UW IT (because Faculty Senate does not have direct access to an all-faculty email distribution list) and encouraged the Senate to vote and encourage their constituents to vote as well. The Chair also reported that under the excused absences regulation, the observance of holy days and religious holidays are a valid exemption and allowed students to qualify for an excused absence. The Chair then noted he had provided the Senate information from Senator McElroy that the Ombudsperson had established an informal conflict resolution committee and was seeking members. The Senate discussed.

The Chair called for an ASUW report. No ASUW representatives were present.

The Chair called for a Staff Senate Report. Staff Senate Vice President Tori Henderson reported that Staff Senate had endorsed the Presidents Freedom of Expression principles.

The Chair called for General announcements. No General Announcements were made.

The Chair introduced Provost Kevin Carman to discuss faculty workloads. Provost Carman thanked the Chair and noted that the newest Faculty workload report made to the Board of Trustees had revealed that most other research universities allowed for a great deal of autonomy at the department level for course load. Provost Carman also noted that teaching a class in one department can differ greatly than teaching in another, and that the current standards do not necessarily reflect the work of many of those involved in more service-related fields. Provost Carman noted that changing this policy would also involve a review of Tenure and Promotion Policy. Provost Carman stated that he was hopeful that as an R1, research and teaching should be

valued equally but that the University had emphasized teaching over research. He emphasized that any change would not mean that every faculty member would have the same teaching load. Provost Carmen stated that a change to the policy would also allow for more accurate reporting of research expenditures. Provost Carmen then yielded the floor to questions and discussion.

The Senate asked the Provost if changing the course load percentage would also change the expectations for research going forward and what the standard course load would be going forward. Provost Carman responded that his view was that any change could and should not decrease the amount of resources going into teaching and that it was important that departments should have the authority to make decisions regarding workload in accordance with the needs of the department. The Senate asked the Provost where the staffing for teaching would come from if the percentage of required teaching was decreased. The Provost stressed that the teaching requirements would not change, but rather the metrics for faculty would be changed. The Chair noted that previous faculty workload policy, including as described in a Senate Bill passed in 1992, left decisions at a department level.

Provost Carman then discussed AI in higher education. The Provost noted that a committee had been formed to address the changes that came from the introduction of AI and how it would affect the University specifically and higher education in general. The Provost noted that the sentiments towards AI were currently more positive than they had been during the introduction of ChatGPT and was looking forward to updates from the Committee. Provost Carman stated that he was working on a parallel look at how AI would affect the recruitment of students and was optimistic from the resources that were emerging. The Senate discussed.

The Chair introduced Vice President Zebadiah Hall to discuss equity in faculty workloads. Vice President Hall first noted that he was centralizing the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's website to allow for religious exemptions and that he would send a message campus wide when that had been concluded. Vice President Hall then emphasized that he was not attempting to create policy with respect to workloads, but that his aim was to garner faculty feedback and opinion and then provide a report on this feedback to Academic Affairs after meeting with stakeholders both in and outside of the University Faculty. Vice President Hall noted that the information regarding workload was contradictory, with administrators taking the position that the current workload was manageable, but most faculty members felt that the current workload was not feasible. Vice President Hall stated that he would be holding regular sessions with faculty members to discuss faculty workloads. Vice President Hall yielded the floor for questions. The Senate asked how information would be distributed to Faculty. Vice President Hall responded that a list of times and dates would be sent to the Faculty through Kaylin Brooks, the Office Associate for Academic Affairs and that some of the meetings would also be held online.

The Chair introduced Vice President Bob Link to discuss the case for change made in the Deloitte study. Vice President Link thanked the Senate and stated that the goals were to align resources, improve the workplace, improve administration's support model, improve job hierarchy, and allow for continuous update of staff workplaces. Vice President Link stated that the study concluded that the current model was not sufficient to meet the University's needs and that the University had a great deal of inconsistent policies across several different departments

and that many University staff had to deal with issues outside of their job description and that this often hindered staff advancement. Vice President Link stated that the plan was to standardize and clarify University administrative positions. Vice President Link noted that all of the material pertaining to the change was available online. Vice President Link stated that the aim was to implement one of three models: shared services, community of practice, and distributed. Vice President Link then yielded the floor to questions. The Senate asked if Vice President Link had reviewed which model functioned best within individual departments and if individuals in a current department would remain within in their units. Vice President Link responded that they were exploring this decision and were undecided. The Senate asked who would make the final decision regarding this. Vice President Link responded that the decision would remain with the Deans. The Senate expressed that HR should hesitate when determining redundancies and that some duplication is necessary within the University, and that there was dire need for professional reward for personal advancement among staff and faculty. Vice President Link noted that the main aim of the change was to streamline and improve the Universities opportunities for advancement. The Senate discussed.

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 PM; made, seconded, and carried.