

Minutes of the CAS Faculty Senate Meeting of May 15, 2023

May 15, 2023, 4:01 PM ET - 5:34 PM ET

Attending: Olivia Amzallag, James Angelini, Jennifer Barker, Nonie Bell, Suzanne Burton, William Chain, Kenneth Cohen, Jon Cox, Alan Fox, Deni Galileo, John Gizis, Mark Greene, Christine Grogan, Katie Gwaltney, Alenka Hlousek-Radojcic, John Jungck, Jenny Lobasz, Dilia López-Gydosh, Edward Lyman, Bernard McKenna, John Morgan, Nina Owczarek, John Pelesko, Rakesh, Tom Rocek, Louis Rossi, Jonathan Russ, Kimberly Schroeder, David Suisman, Jenn Trivedi, Shawna Vican, Robert West, Neal Zondlo

The meeting began at 4:01 PM ET with the poll of present senators. The meeting had 24 senators and 2 other people attending at the start of the meeting.

The agenda was then adopted with no discussion by a vote of 22 yeses and 1 no.

There were no comments, amendments, or corrections to either the [April 17, 2023](#) minutes or the [April 24, 2023](#) minutes. Both were approved together by a vote of 24 yeses and 0 noes.

President John Gizis then gave his remarks. He thanked everyone for allowing him to hold this important position. He added that he hopes that future years will allow for even more changes and stronger feedback to the administration. Several people thanked President Gizis in the chat.

Dean John Pelesko then gave his remarks. He added his thanks to others for his services as president and for keeping things running smoothly.

He then wanted to share a few updates from the chairs meeting last week, an extended meeting of 2.5 hours. The extra hour allowed him to spend some time in his last chairs meeting sharing information with chairs about things like best advice in general, how to handle the dean transition, etc.

Dean Pelesko reminded everyone that convocation is next week. He shared the dates and times and invited people to attend and help celebrate.

He also reminded everyone about the Student Success Center and Internship Coordinators. He noted there is a great team involved and during the fall they had really been doing good work. Since September 2022 they have had 287 one-on-one appointments. Their work has also included launching internship programs and workshops on interviewing skills and internships. They have met with at least one person from each academic unit. Since there has been a lot of confusion around rules around internships like pay and enrollment, they are working with the registrar's office to put together a manual so that every department has a manual to refer to. Dean Pelesko encourages everyone to keep their eyes open for that, which should be available early in the fall.

Dean Pelesko reminded everyone to get their final grades in on time for graduation.

He also thanked everyone involved in giving out faculty awards and congratulated the winners. He added that there will be an event in the fall to celebrate everyone.

Dean Pelesko then shared the agenda of topics he discussed with the chairs at his 37th and final chairs meeting. He added that he will give additional information and updates on a few. His topics related to transition planning and general guidance included: retention; hiring plan; post-APR action plans; special salary adjustment; website; ECC; undergraduate recruitment and enrollment; space; budget. He noted that if anyone was interested in learning more they could also talk to their department chair. He will also share this information with the Interim Dean once they are named.

Regarding retention, he noted that things were heating up again and there had been a lot of turnover and many people were getting offers from other places.

There was an input session regarding graduate education which discussed issues such as stipends and Master's students.

There was a hiring plan presented to the Provost on March 31, some of which Dean Pelesko shared with the CAS Faculty Senate at the previous meeting. There is a hold on approving more searches until there is more clarity with the plan. 35 offers for the fall have been accepted, while 18 searches remain ongoing, although more and more are expected to wrap up quickly, likely within the next week or so.

In the cases where searches have failed, most have already received the Provost's approval to restart searches, defaulting to the decision to relaunch unless there are pressing circumstances. In those cases a decision will be made on what to do before the end of July.

New undergraduate recruiting events and changes to existing events have helped recruiting efforts. In 2020, 29.4% of potential students who attended Blue and Golden Saturdays deposited. In 2021, 21.6% did. By 2022, that percentage was up to 36.6%. In terms of students who applied to CAS specifically, in 2019, that percentage was 38.83%, but in 2022 that was 65.88%.

In order to control the size of the next incoming class, UD admitted 767 fewer students to CAS compared to last year, stopping admittance in February. Dorm space is an issue. CAS's final deposits are at 1,294, lower than last year but still ahead of the previous few years and in a good place. The yield is similar at 16.91%, also ahead of past years and in a good place for the year. Now attention turns to summer melt, as well as the future issue of a demographic cliff set to begin in 2024.

Dean Pelesko said he has asked the departmental chairs to keep the Associate Deans informed about capacity issues in classes, as well as student support issues. There are concerns about learning loss related to COVID-19. Early data from the math placement tests show a significant downward shift which indicates students will need more support and perhaps new forms of support.

In terms of upcoming events, May will bring Convocation.

Dean Pelesko said thank you to everyone. He added that he has had a lot of weird final moments of late, but it has been “an absolute pleasure working with this group.”

In Q&A, CAS Senate President John Gizis asked where the strategic hiring plan for the upcoming three years goes and if it is available to the Senate, faculty members, chairs, administrators, etc.

Dean Pelesko noted that the strategic hiring plan is a book they prepare for the Provost each year. It has two parts. One part you should be seeing from department chairs and includes information about chairs, context, and information about departments, including the department plan, as well as larger college-level information including metric goals, strategies, hiring, and a 3-year plan. Every chair has a copy.

CAS Senate President Gizis then asked if Dean Pelesko has a time frame for when the Interim Dean will be known, but Dean Pelesko said he knows nothing.

Senator John Morgan said that the worst kind of failed search is the kind when someone he hires does not turn out, especially if there is a lot of start-up funding involved. He noted that there should be a different nomenclature for if a department has a search and no one is hired. We should not call that a failed search. Dean Pelesko admitted he does not like calling such searches a failed search either. Senator Morgan suggested we call them “incomplete” and Dean Pelesko suggested “unfinished.” Senator Morgan then clarified that the most appropriate thing is to ensure such searches are carried over.

Senator Morgan said he has concerns over the years of the level of mathematical preparation for many incoming UD students from both in state and out of state. He asked what the issue of concern with the placement test is specifically.

Dean Pelesko noted that it is very early on and only a small fraction of incoming students have taken it, around 10%. But there are a combination of factors, including COVID-19 learning loss and the fact that it is now proctored whereas it was not before. He said that Senator Rakesh can speak more on the issue.

Senator Rakesh described anecdotally hearing of students having someone else take the math placement test for them before it was proctored. He described how the real issue now is that the department is not yet sure how many resources to allocate to which courses, especially courses like Math 010. The courses offered and how resources need to be allocated may have an impact on most majors given required math courses. The department’s Associate Chair is in touch with other departments. He added that the score drop is “dramatic.”

Senator Morgan added that this was very consistent with what he observed in Fall 2019. He gives his own math review test in Physics 202. In some cases clear evidence that students were getting higher scores on placement tests compared to his test.

Senator Rakesh notes that all incoming students have to take the test by June 15 and then will get a second chance. They can use the ALEX program to practice their standard skills before

that second chance in August. Due to all of this there could be changes in the overall score distribution that affect which students qualify for which classes. All exams will be proctored.

CAS Senate President Gizis said that in a colleague's online course the vast majority of responses are from ChatGPT, adding that this is a problem now. He asked what the college's plans for this are. Dean Pelesko said that the University's response to Chat GPT is being led by the Provost's office, with Matt Kinservik specifically leading the effort.

Senator Mark Green added a note of caution, saying that they almost sent a note accusing a student of using ChatGPT, but in testing it, the system he was using claimed it wrote his own work too. Senator Jenn Trivedi added in the chat that the detection software is not great overall. Senator Rakesh said that it does not do well at generating good answers. Senator Gizis says he assigns it as a usable tool in class, but added that advanced and introductory classes are different. Alan Fox said that the use of ChatGPT varies based on what subject is being taught. He has a statement about how using it is plagiarism because it is not what a student is thinking, but rather what another entity is thinking and letting machines think for us is dangerous. He also clarified that his questions in class ask what *students* think. Senator Green then said that UD's policies define plagiarism as use of another "person's" work which might need to be revisited.

CAS Senate President then introduced Graduate College Dean Lou Rossi.

Dean Rossi said that he appreciated being allowed to come and talk to the CAS Faculty Senate about national trends, graduate student stipends, and how the national trends interact with how we support graduate students. He noted that job actions and unionizations for graduate students are happening nationally and other universities are changing funding packages for graduate students in response to inflation and other drivers. UD is not immune from these. UD has enjoyed some advantages with its location in Newark, historically an affordable place to live, but this is changing, especially with the housing market changing and a high rate of local inflation.

In tracking peer institutions and "decliners" (what other schools graduate students decline to attend when they choose UD instead) the Graduate College and UD have learned a few things. Some of these peer/decliner institutions are pricier than UD now, but local inflation is changing that. More than half of our graduate students receive the minimum amount of funding or within \$1,000.00 of it. It takes time to make changes to this, but UD needs to move the minimum stipend up to \$27,000.00 within the next 3 years. This will put UD close to parity with Temple, who it used to compare favorably with and very close to most of its peer/decliner institutions.

Many peer institutions do summer funding, but we do not.

Within 4 years, internal funding of Master's students will effectively end. This will put us on an equal footing with other institutions.

In the Q&A, Senator Jennifer Barker asked what the current minimum stipend is. Dean Rossi clarified it is \$22,000.00. Senator Barker then asked why her department has students on \$10,000.00 or \$5,000.00. Dean Rossi clarified that they may have students who do not have a

full award. Senator Barker asked for some additional clarification and Dean Rossi noted that \$22,000.00 is the full award, but partial awards and pro-rating are possible.

Senator Barker then asked if the Graduate College had thought about a special extra stipend for international students. Her program has a lot and she feeds a lot of them on her own on a regular basis because they cannot work off campus, especially in the summer. Dean Rossi was sorry to hear about this, but noted that they do not have excess funds to augment international students. They are working on piloting an internship program for UD students only which would allow them to work over the summer. Senator Barker then urged Dean Rossi to think about international students moving forward, as they need extra help. Dean Rossi added that they are thin on support for graduate students, but are working on getting students' needs better met.

In the chat, senators seconded Senator Barker's comments and questioned university priorities.

Kenneth Cohen asked who did the research on these issues, as other universities still offer Master's level funding. Dean Rossi said that the number of internally funded Master's degrees is small here. His research was completed by talking to other graduate college deans who said that they do not support Master's level students. The stipend is not the problem with this, but the tuition is. He believes students should have Master's level funding from sources like industry partnerships, but the concern emerges when we treat Master's degree students like Ph.D. students.

Senator Zondlo asked about the fees involved for students. If UD's fees are higher than other institutions we may be worse off. If other institutions are increasing stipends, but also increasing fees, we may be better off. Dean Rossi said there was a time we were ahead of other institutions, but other institutions are now doing better. UD still does well, for example, in subsidizing health care. The fees at UD have remained flat for the past 3 years, but students complain about it, especially international fees, but benchmarked against other institutions they are about the same. Senator Zondlo encouraged an approach that was quantitative about it in the presentation.

Senator Green asked if the decliners numbers were gross or net, clarifying that he wanted to know if the numbers were only representative of students who declined, for example, Temple to come to UD, or if they also factored in students who declined UD to go to Temple. Per Dean Rossi "the net transfer rate [...] the metric is just... the top decliner is the institution that has the most applicants to UD that went to the other place, that went to that other place." Senator Green clarified that this is a gross number, which does not seem like a relevant statistic on its own. He added that if they were gross numbers, they were not relevant on their own because if twice as many declined Temple to come to UD than declined UD to go to Temple, it was not concerning. Dean Rossi is unsure if he can get that data, but notes that it would be interesting.

Senator Rakesh asks how departments who do not support a non-terminal Master's degree would be affected and what fraction of the budget goes to this, especially since he interprets what Dean Rossi is saying as the tuition is the biggest part of the budget. Dean Rossi said graduate tuition is about \$18,000.00, which is our own cost. Dean Rossi noted that there are two things that could happen if we take a binary approach to this. (1) You could tell a student we are not going to cover their tuition and they could choose not to come, even with the stipend.

We do not have the student. We do not have to educate them, but do not have the tuition either. We have fewer students. (2) The student says it is a good program and they're willing to pay something for it. We end up with a gain in revenue. In CAS revenue to fully subsidize Master's students, he believes it is something just shy of a half a million dollars a year. Senator Rakesh asks what that is percentage wise of total graduate student support. Dean Pelsko clarifies that CAS supports about 420 teaching assistants each year. The stipend support for that alone is about \$9.5 million. Dean Rossi clarifies that if everyone paid tuition instead of getting it from the university, they could give each of those TAs a \$500 - \$1,000 raise.

Senator Deni Galileo said that Dean Rossi made it sound like graduate students select a school based on stipend size. He asked what evidence he had that this is even a major factor in a student's selection of their graduate school. Dean Rossi apologized for that impression, but when "you are making a decision to live at close to subsistence wages, a couple thousand dollars means something, it means something to these students, it's hard to ignore." Being within a close range on the stipend amount will make us competitive. Senator Galileo says he chose it based on where he wanted to go and used loans, although Dean Rossi says times have definitely changed.

Senator Jenny Lobasz seconded Senator Barker's comments about international graduate students, saying that many faculty members have had the experience of frantically searching in April or May for funds for international graduate students who are desperate. She says that it is both a human rights and equity issue for such students who may have no other option. This also is extra labor for faculty members, even in departments like hers who do not have graduate programs.

Senator Morgan adds his comment that he also made at the general faculty meeting: that it is not subsidizing graduate students if these students are doing essential work for the university at very low wages, such as graduate students who teach sections of ENGL 110 or who TA large science classes with discussion sections or lab sections. The tuition revenue that those students are generating is "something on the order of \$200,000 a year, maybe a little less, but not a lot less" and so saying we are "subsidizing" them is incorrect. We need to look at the total operating budget of the university and a higher level look at what we are doing. We do not need to put money into new buildings if we do not have graduate students to put them in. We also should not bring in Ph.D. students who do not do well in English language exams who have to be supported as graders. We need to look at what has actually happened on campus versus the perspective of consultants who "just visited UD for a day or two."

During this, there were also conversations ongoing in the chat. Senator and Educational Affairs Committee Chair James Angelini said that "coming from a field where there is a nearly universal expectation that a student has earned a Master's degree to get into a Ph.D. program, and where MA students are advised not to attend a school where they are not fully funded, this could hurt." Dr. Cohen then added that "the fact that the MA is often the entry path for international students and those from under-represented communities [...] this is a danger to University-wide diversity efforts," as well as how "the PhD students who finish an MA or leave, which happens in several departments across campus every year."

Dean Rossi said that they are not saying a MA student should not be paid for work they do, but rather the term “subsidy” refers to a “free education.”

In the chat, Jonathan Russ says that Senator Morgan makes an excellent point.

Senator Amzallag said that just talking to deans about what they are doing is one way to get more perspectives and data, but behaviouralism or incentive research is another. She added that our psychology is wired in a different way and suggested we could look more innovatively. If it is a changing world, how is it changing?

Dean Rossi said that we poll students during the application funnel pre-decision and that says our yield is going down.

CAS Senate President Gizis said that per Dr. Cohen’s observation in the chat, we still need 420 teaching assistants to complete the work. And per Senator Angelini’s comment, students need a MA and cannot go anywhere without full funding.

In the chat, Senator Trivedi asked “are we polling students after? Once they’re here and decided or after they leave - especially if they leave early?” Alan Fox say “IMHO [in my humble opinion], what should attract students is great teachers, so we should be hiring and promoting more excellent teachers. My two cents.” CAS Senate President Gizis suggested Dean Rossi read the chat comments as well.

Dean Rossi said that they complete a comprehensive survey of all graduate students every two years and get a great response rate on that, but the data will not be ready for a few more months. The poll he referred to earlier was Decision IQ. Different colleges do surveys as well and they try not to over survey. Diversity is on their radar and they have found that underrepresented groups generally went through a high quality MA degree program first.

In the chat, Senator Angelini added that he “forgot to say, it makes me uncomfortable that I heard that doctoral students contribute to the university’s research goals but the implication is that masters students do not.”

We then moved into COCAN business. Senator and Chair of COCAN, John Morgan, said there was a combination of good and not so great news.

The CAS P&T committee is nearly fully set up. However, we need to elect a replacement for Arild Hestvik who cannot be a member of the committee next week. Anna Klintsova was a third candidate for the election in February and is willing to step into the vacancy.

Thanks to some efforts by James Angelini, there are two new members on the CAS Educational Affairs Committee, but there is still 1 vacancy. In the chat, committee chair Angelini clarified that this will need to be filled, he believes, by someone from the Social Science portfolio.

The Advisement & Retention and Grade Grievance Committees are fully staffed.

There are still some moving parts on the Awards Committee. Someone was not able to join due to some workload issues, but there are other volunteers.

There are an excess of volunteers for the Diversity Committee, which will probably need to be formed into a pair of subcommittees.

COCAN Chair Morgan then asked for a confirmation vote to place Anna Klintsova on the CAS P&T Committee. The vote was 23 yeses and 0 noes.

COCAN Chair Morgan then said that he has sent repeated emails soliciting people to be officers for the CAS Faculty Senate. Jenn Trivedi has agreed to continue in the role of Secretary if elected and Bernard McKenna is the only volunteer for CAS President Elect. Senator McKenna clarified in the chat that he thinks "there should be new blood, but I offered to serve if no one else stepped forward." John Morgan himself noted that he will continue as COCAN Chair for a few months, but "we need someone else to step in soon." There was no discussion and we proceeded to the votes. Senator McKenna was elected President Elect by a vote of 21 yeses and 0 noes. Senator Morgan was re-elected COCAN Chair by a vote of 20 yeses and 1 no. Senator Trivedi was re-elected Secretary by a vote of 21 yeses and 0 noes.

We then moved into the regular agenda.

We began with a discussion of the meeting dates for 2023-2024: September 18, 2023; October 16, 2023; November 13, 2023; December 11, 2023; February 19, 2024; March 18, 2024; April 15, 2024; May 20, 2024.

CAS Senate President Gizis said that these are mostly on the third Monday of every month, but since that does not always work, these are the proposed dates. Senator Morgan added that the exceptions to this are specifically November and December where they have been moved to the second Monday of the month to avoid Thanksgiving break and finals.

There was no discussion and the dates were approved by a vote of 21 yeses and 0 noes.

There was then a motion to hold the 2023-2024 meetings online.

CAS Senate President Gizis said that in May 2022 there were strong feelings about preferring online meetings in 2022-2023 due to COVID-19 and convenience. He proposed we continue this for the next year. Pre-COVID, he clarified, meetings had been in Gore Hall. He also asked if there were any comments.

Senator Morgan said that as Parliamentarian he wanted to clarify that the decision about the format of the meetings could be revisited by the senate next year when there are new members. He also added that Nancy Getchell is looking into the feasibility of hybrid meetings for the University Faculty Senate, information which could be shared with the CAS Faculty Senate if there is an overwhelming desire to return to in person meetings. Senator Green added in the chat that "for accessibility and compatibility with family obligations, I strongly support committing to online or [an] online option."

The vote to hold the 2023-2024 meetings online passed with 22 yeses and 1 no.

We then moved into new business.

CAS Senate President Gizis clarified that here Senators are invited to present new motions. All motions presented under New Business, except for a motion to refer to committee, shall be acted upon at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting in September 2023. He added that nothing should be debated here, but it would be considered in fall.

Senator Morgan said that it should be obvious from what took place in the past hour that there are a number of senators from a number of departments who are concerned about the de-emphasis of Master's programs and he thinks it is important to get organized as a college. One single department cannot affect things at the highest levels of the university, but if the college organizes there may be a chance of preventing what may seem like a good idea from the outside but is actually a bad idea from getting further along. He clarified that while a half a million dollars is in some way a lot of money, it is actually less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the university's operating budget that the Provost controls.

President Gizis suggested that this is a topic the Senate should consider next year. Senator Morgan said that he thought we should get to work on it this summer and that we may even want to have a special session in June. If we do not "kick up a fuss," these things will be done already by the fall. President Gizis asked if it should be this senate rather than the graduate student representatives or if it should be a joint meeting. Senator Morgan said he does not know about the dynamics of the grad college except that CAS has barely a third of the members and its advisory and that some of these plans were discussed with them without a lot of opposition. President Gizis said that the Executive Committee will discuss the issue and poll senators.

Senator Zondlo said that the Senate should be organized for this fall. He added that there are several items we have talked about this year, including convocation, shared services, etc. that we need to move towards actions or statements on. For example, he raised the idea of a statement from the college that convocation should be moved back to the departments.

President Gizis wished Dean Pelesko the best of luck moving forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 PM ET.