

Minutes of the CAS Faculty Senate Meeting of September 18, 2023

September 18, 2023, 4:00 PM ET - 5:30 PM ET

Attending: Olivia Amzallag, James Angelini, Eve Buckley, Suzanne Burton, William Chain, Kelly Cobb, Meghan Dabkowski, Scott Duarte, Deni Galileo, John Gizis, Daniel Green, Mark Greene, Christine Grogran, Katie Gwaltney, Debbie Hess Norris, Alenka Hlousek-Radjovic, Jenny Lobasz, Ed Lyman, Bernard McKenna, Peter Mende-Siedlecki, John Morgan, Nina Owczarek, Nadya Pincus, Rakesh, Thomas Rocek, Tania Roth, Kimberly Schroeder, Dan Smith, Brandon Stanford, Lydia Timmins, Jenn Trivedi, Ivett Tweedy, Alison Yerger, Neal Zondlo

The meeting began at 4:00 PM ET with the poll of present senators. At the time there were 24 senators present and 3 others, along with CAS Faculty Senate President Neal Zondlo who welcomed everyone.

The agenda was then adopted by a vote of 22 yeases and 0 noes.

The minutes from the May 2023 meeting were then approved by a vote of 24 yeases and 0 noes.

President Zondlo then welcomed Interim CAS Dean Debra (Debbie) Hess Norris and thanked her for her service in the role of Interim Dean.

Dean Norris then gave her remarks. She thanked everyone in the CAS Faculty Senate for their service.

She said that Dean Pelesko and the team in the Dean's office had been great in the transition period and she had officially started in the role of Interim Dean on August 1. She is following Dean Pelesko's example using slides from the chairs meeting as the basis for her slides for the CAS Faculty Senate meeting, which are [available here](#).

Dean Norris said she had a lot of highlights to share, including the opening of a new interdisciplinary Humanities Hub, the continued growth and fundraising for Building X, the integration of Dance into the Department of Theater and Dance, and the relocation of Africana Studies to Memorial Hall.

She herself has moved into an office at 4 Kent Way and invites everyone to come meet her there. She has added art from faculty members, former faculty members, students, etc. to the space and says she looks forward to the opportunity to serve this year while the search for a new permanent Dean is ongoing, especially as so many people are working hard on that effort and she is also still the acting chair of Art Conservation.

Dean Norris emphasized that she has already been working closely with members of the Senate, listening to people, and working to understand challenges and identify opportunities. She looks forward to strengthening the collaboration of CAS with other colleges and UD as a whole, centering a people first approach and working with people.

She feels there is no need for her to read the slides verbatim and encourages everyone to read over them during her presentation as she moves through them or afterwards when she [shares them](#).

Most importantly, she believes in being an advocate for everyone on the screen in the CAS Faculty Senate and everyone in CAS. Some of her biggest goals are fundraising. She wants CAS to have many opportunities to do work successfully moving forward and sees fundraising as a way to help that. We can help promote those efforts by sharing our stories, accomplishments, and what we need with her.

Dean Norris then shared numbers related to CAS undergraduates. For the AY23-24 there were 1,198 deposits to CAS, resulting in a yield of around 15.74% for CAS, a bit lower than the University yield of 17.85%. She wants to do better for next year in a way that reflects the hard work departments are doing, so she wants to think of some different strategies to increase enrollment yield. Summer melt was about 7.42% which is not unusual and actually better than last year. She is working with Alison Gondos and CAS units to target admitted students.

Dean Norris then discussed the math placement test data for entering students. For FY19, 8.64% of entering students placed in FY010/113. For FY23, it was 44.96% of students. There were a lot of factors involved in this, including the shift to proctored exams and COVID-19 learning loss. MSLL is key to working on this and has a positive impact on the teaching and learning of our students in math, so she is committed to better supporting MSLL and is working with the Provost and Facilities to find them a bigger space.

She then reminded everyone about upcoming Blue and Golden Saturdays this fall on September 30, October 21, and November 11. She added that she has been associated with UD for a long time and has seen the evolution of these events from lectures to this more engaging format.

Dean Norris then moved into discussion of budget issues and related strategies. CAS has a deficit for the first time in a long time, as she understands it, a bit less than 1% of the budget. This is the result of a range of issues. In part it is from a significant increase in sponsored program cost recoveries (CAS had budgeted \$7.7 million, but generated \$10.4 million). She tries to read every proposal that comes into her office in order to be a better advocate and understand the impact the work is having.

CAS hired 70 new faculty members in the last year, 50 permanent and 20 temporary. She is excited about this and thinks the hires will reduce s-contract expenses.

There have been increased travel expenses with relaxing COVID-19 restrictions. She sees this as a positive, as it reflects our faculty sharing knowledge, but it is an increased expense. She hopes to do fundraising specifically for this cost.

Another key element is unfunded tuition discounting has grown by 96% since 2017, while net tuition growth is only up by 2.1%. The discounted tuition rate for FY24 is 37.5%. CAS undergraduate student tuition variations are down 3.6 million compared to FY22. Next year should be better.

Graduate stipends for nine month contracts increased from \$22,600.00 to \$23,500.00 for around 455 students. The goal is to increase this stipend amount to \$27,000.00 in FY25. In total this adds an additional \$1.5 million to the CAS budget. Dean Norris also added that “ideally [we would be] supporting them for twelve months as well.”

In addition, there are \$5.73 million in new faculty start up costs. The impact of the CBA is currently unknown, but in general each 1% increase equates to around \$825,000 in faculty salaries and fringe benefits. There is also a 7.3% increase in exempt fringe rate over the last two years.

This year, CAS was able to pay off the deficit with reserves, but the goal is always a balanced budget so that reserves can be used in other ways.

She is urging people to look at their own funds, restricted and unrestricted, to see if they have funds available now or can figure out matching funds to leverage for gifts, rather than spending it directly.

Regarding faculty hiring, they are considering how to prioritize the 3 year hiring plan, with the goal to leave the college in an excellent financial position for the incoming permanent dean when they are hired. They have not approved hirings for this year yet, looking at what are the most urgent priorities for hiring.

Dean Norris is also looking at strategies to increase revenue, working closely with the Deans Council. She is about to leave on a trip to Maine, meeting with alumni and others with great capacity to secure support, working with the Deans Council and their networks, etc. to strengthen partnerships, including internal-external partnerships and local-global partnerships and opportunities for funding, as well as to create new partnerships.

She has spent some time thinking about Winter Session opportunities to increase revenue and is working with chairs on the issue. In some departments it may be helpful to get graduate students to teach in Winter Session, which would help offer classes and help them build their resume and get more money.

They are evaluating all unrestricted accounts and will share action plans, although this is still very much a draft. She believes in sharing drafts to get input. In sharing this draft, she thinks she will be able to get more input and make for a better Winter Session this year and beyond. The CAS Winter Sessions Strategies Draft that she has shared is available [here](#).

She wants departments and faculty to look into their accounts and see if they have any money available that they can leverage. She wants to connect work to funders, telling stories about the work that is occurring already at UD every single day.

\$10 million is her stretch goal for fundraising. She wants to see what needs resonate, how to connect those to support, and what people share as their passions. In this, Dean Norris is working closely with development, since they lead this work, but she needs faculty help to share the stories about what happens in our departments and thinking about who to share it with.

Dean Norris then shared stories about what is happening on campus, including the Ann Lowe exhibit at the Winterthur. There has never been an exhibit of her work until now, which includes a nearly identical replica of Jacqueline Kennedy's wedding gown made by faculty and students at UD which will be donated afterwards to the Kennedy Museum in Boston.

Heidi I. Sarver, who has been the director of the UD marching band for 29 years will be retiring this year.

The James R. Soles Lecture is always held on Constitution Day and is a great lecture and tribute to a former faculty member.

October is Arts and Humanities month.

Indigenous Enterprise is coming to campus and performing at UD, a wonderful opportunity for the campus.

Dean Norris noted that together we need to ensure that our work is communicated and celebrated. She shared the artwork "Kaleidoscope Eyes" by Abby Donovan where many separate pieces come together to connect in a powerful way, as representative of spaces like CAS.

She will do the best she can in this role and work as many hours as she can to advocate for us, this college, and the university. However, to do this she says she needs our help and is grateful to have a Senate who will help and work with her in the year ahead.

At this point in the meeting, Katie Gwaltney clarified that due to some Zoom settings, the chat box is disabled and so we will need to use the hand raise function for questions. We then began Q&A for Dean Norris.

Senator John Morgan said he is grateful to all of the faculty members in CAS who have responded to his solicitations trying to fill committees and without their cooperation he would be ineffective. He also thanked Dean Norris for her presentation.

Senator Morgan then noted that students taking classes during Winter Session are often students who fell behind in the fall or who are getting ahead on their degree, asking how students taking classes then helps the CAS budget in the long term if the students are taking the same overall

number of credits. He pointed to the example of what has been happening at West Virginia University (WVU) where, per their Provost, so many students were graduating early that it affected their revenue. So, he asks, how does teaching more in the Winter Session generate revenue for CAS in the long-term versus just up front?

Dean Norris said that in the short term, CAS receives more funding with 50% of the students' tuition going to the college alongside other incentives. She does not have an answer yet to the question of how this translates long-term, particularly in terms of students who might graduate earlier. She will look into this. In her own experience in Art Conservation, a small group of students, the students who take classes in Winter Sessions do not graduate early, but some in CAS overall probably do. She will investigate further.

Senator Morgan said that later in the agenda for this meeting there is a motion for the formation of an Ad Hoc Budget Committee which may get set up in the next 2-3 weeks. Once he has that information and makes sure it is reliable, he will share it with the Executive Committee and they can decide how to best share that information in a condensed form that is easier to process.

Dean Norris said that her personal goal was to raise money for experiential learning, including opportunities for students to work outside of the classroom.

Senator Jenny Lobasz thanked Dean Norris for her presentation and said she had a question regarding the budget shortfall. She said that related to the history of the university's lack of transparency and uncertainty about what sort of budget we will have, she is curious about the unfunded tuition discounts, asking if this impacts our college more than other units on campus and do these discounts reflect a higher percentage of instate students in our majors? She also asks how are we thinking about that, how are we celebrating that for providing an important service to the state and our students, and are there any advantages in serving more underrepresented groups in the state if that is even what is happening?

Dean Norris clarified that CAS is not the only college affected. as she understands it. Many colleges awarded more scholarship funding that they had because need is so great. Because the need is great, more funding was awarded than the colleges - not just CAS, all colleges. They are looking at these issues more carefully this year to sort out what to do, while also campaigning for more scholarship funding. She does not know whether this was tied to more in or out of state students, but she does know it was not just CAS.

Senator Lobasz said that she acknowledges that it may not be politic for the Dean to answer this statement, but that this may be a university problem they are trying to make a college problem.

Dean Norris said that the challenge is that once students are admitted we cannot then charge them more tuition later, in part because we want them to graduate. In other words, this problem cannot be solved immediately, but she is working towards addressing it and decreasing the percentage of unfunded tuition discounts, which in her mind requires more fundraising to have more external funds to support students, not just for CAS but across all colleges.

Senator William Chain then said that trying to increase enrollment is wonderful, but with that are we surprised that math scores are dropping and we need to expand seats in remedial math classes? Is that combination part of the college's thinking?

Dean Norris said she is working closely with the Math Department, including the chair specifically, and other STEM disciplines, as everyone is affected by this. The changes in scores are tied to issues around COVID-19 and related learning loss, but the Math Department chair was surprised when he arrived on campus and learned that UD's math placement test was not proctored and that math courses had such high DFW rates. His conclusion was that students were not being placed accurately. Combining the effects of COVID-19, high school math education, and new math placement exam proctoring, all of these issues are combining to have clear effects.

Senator Rakesh added that the math placement exams used to be given in person, but when that was a problem for some students, they were then able to take them at home on their word that they were taking them alone. The exam must now be taken either in person or proctored online, which has made a big difference in the score. He wonders if many students starting in Math 010 will be capable of finishing their degree and how many of them are getting tuition discounts. He thinks this needs to be looked into.

Dean Norris said that we have MSLL and an opportunity to ensure these students are successful with a proven model. She hopes we can invest in this. She is working with the department chair in Math and investing in permanent faculty.

Next, CAS Faculty Senate President Neal Zondlo gave the President's Remarks. He thanked everyone for serving in various capacities. He also added a note, telling Senators to let us know who your substitute is if they cannot attend.

He added that it is part of our jobs to make recommendations to the Dean from a variety of perspectives. He has been at UD for 22 years. He is in Chemistry-Biochemistry, but has a BA in Russian/Eastern European Studies. In 1992 he went into the sciences thinking maybe we did not need Russian/Eastern European Studies as much.

President Zondlo wants to do work in the Senate to assure that students succeed. How can we make our jobs easier so that we can serve students better? He believes we need to generate data whenever possible before making decisions. He shared his email and encouraged Senators to email him with any questions or comments. He also encouraged Senators to reach out to the rest of the Executive Committee, including Past President John Gizis, COCAN Chair John Morgan, Educational Affairs Chair James Angelini, and Secretary Jenn Trivedi.

Then we had a report from the Educational Affairs Committee from their Chair, James Angelini. He reminded Senators that the deadline for program revisions was November 3 and the deadline for course revisions was November 10. He acknowledged that this was earlier than elsewhere in

the university because all of these petitions have to go through the CAS Educational Affairs Committee and the CAS Faculty Senate where other colleges do not have to do this.

Next, we had a report from the COCAN Committee from their Chair, John Morgan. All but one of the CAS committees are fully staffed. The Promotion and Tenure Committee (P&T) is fully staffed. There is a gap in the Educational Affairs Committee. They are currently lacking someone from the social sciences and will soon be lacking two people in the social sciences as James Angelini cannot continue as chair in the spring, so it would be really great if someone with experience from a department in the social science portfolio could help. The committee evaluates proposals in the fall, but there is less work in the spring. The other committees are fully staffed. There are actually 10 people on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, leading Senator Morgan to recommend it be subdivided into 2-4 subcommittees. He reminded the CAS Faculty Senate that every department in CAS is now allowed to send a senator to the UD Faculty Senate, along with 2 at-large senators.

President Zondlo then introduced a brief discussion and resolution for a potential vote in October about the reestablishment of departmental convocations. He described how there has been a lot of discussion in recent Senate meetings about convocations being moved to the college or sub-college level because many people from many departments see convocations as critical in building alumni relationships, which support departments. People have seen less graduate and family attendance at and connections to the college and sub-college level convocations.

He asks that senators go back to their departments and see if there is support for returning to department level convocations to see how widely distributed those feelings are in the department. President Zondlo himself has been in conversation with Beth Brand. If there are strong sentiments from departments we can make a statement as a Senate.

President Zondlo added that there is nothing to do right now - the motion will be voted on in October, but asked if there was any conversation.

Senator Ed Lyman asked if senators needed to circulate this resolution in their departments or do a poll. President Zondlo said that was each senators' choice, whatever they think would provide the most meaningful feedback for us as a Senate.

Senator Rakesh asked for some clarification. He said it was the Math Department's understanding that department convocations were disbanded for financial or scheduling reasons. If it is the first, given the deficit, he would like to hear what the Dean has to say.

Dean Norris said that she does not know about the financial piece of convocation. She knows some of the funding comes from the university and some of the college, but acknowledges that this is some of the data gathering she needs to do. She also acknowledges that we have not released the same process for convocation since the pandemic began. She has heard that individual department convocations were more expensive than what is being done now.

Senator Daniel Green said that the Political Science Department was really sad that departmental convocations were eliminated and that he was unaware they cost the college money.

President Zondlo said that these issues would be part of the information gathering the Senators should do, because it was important for us to know.

Past President John Gizis said that the shift to college and sub-college convocations seemed to be a decision that came from Beth Brand's office, the Vice President and University Secretary. She met with a number of department chairs and himself last year due to feedback and complaints about having one CAS convocation, leading to three sub-college convocations. From this it is clear that the decisions are being made elsewhere, not by the CAS Dean's office. He also noted that there were not just budgetary concerns involved, but also support for having multiple events.

Senator Deni Galileo said that the Biology Department convocations were really nice events that everyone looked forward to. They invited distinguished alumni to give addresses each year, relationship building that generated money back to the department, while also allowing them to meet parents. Each year they filled the gym in Little Bob. With the current set up only about two faculty members go, which is not the same feeling. It is no longer personal.

President Zondlo noted that this was an important point alluded to in the resolution, that these events, when departmental level, raised money for departments. He encouraged senators to get information about this from their departments as well.

Meghan Dabkowski stated that a lot of faculty and students are increasingly involved in interdisciplinary programs, making it harder to attend every related event. For example, last year there were students who were in health care, but minoring in Spanish, making it difficult for faculty members who wanted to see all of their students graduate and make it to all of their commencements. Department events were the preference of the Department of Language, Literatures, and Cultures as well, and their entire faculty was behind it.

President Zondlo reiterated the importance of getting data from everyone's departments. He then segued into a discussion of a survey on changes in services at the departmental, college, and university levels. He noted that this relates to pandemic-related and other changes over time, as well as emphasizing that services provided by departments, colleges, and the university are all related to one another.

President Zondlo said that the Executive Committee is going to put out a survey to the faculty to specifically ask for information on where department, college, and university services are most effective, what is and is not working. He does not want to discuss service-related issues until there is more information available.

Senator Morgan asked if scheduling classes in appropriate classrooms, something he has had issues with, will be a part of the survey.

President Zondlo said that it would be and reiterated the importance of gathering data.

President Zondlo then moved into the discussion and resolution of the establishment of an Ad Hoc Budget Committee. He noted that the lack of clarity regarding many budgetary items was already discussed in Dean Norris's remarks and the related Q&A. He added that the goal of forming an Ad Hoc Budget Committee was to identify areas we can provide input on, collect facts from UD, collect information about peer and aspirational institutions, and help the interim and permanent Deans of CAS. He clarified that we need to have a vote to establish the committee.

Senator Rakesh asked if we had a resolution about this and President Zondlo clarified that it was on the third page of the Agenda. Senator Morgan suggested giving everyone a moment to read it, to which Educational Affairs Committee chair James Angelini suggested sharing the screen with it, which Senator Morgan did.

President Zondlo then invited Senators to share anyone they wanted to serve on the committee with the Executive Committee and/or COCAN, as we want interested parties to be involved. Senator Morgan asked that people CC him on suggestions as he is the chair of COCAN. There were no further questions or comments.

We voted on the resolution and it passed with a vote of 26 yeases and 0 nos.

There was then a discussion about a survey of departments related to the Graduate College and funding for Master's level students. President Zondlo clarified that this was related to a topic that was discussed last year.

Senator Rakesh then said that he believed the last vote on the Ad Hoc Budget Committee went too fast and he wanted to hear the Dean's opinion.

Dean Norris said that she welcomes the support of the committee, as well as the good thinking of the members and the opportunity to work with them. She thinks any report generated from their work, as well as creative thinking about these challenges will be helpful.

President Zondlo apologized for going so fast and then returned to the Graduate College discussion. He clarified that we would like to know more about the breadth of the issue and which departments will be affected in different ways. The Executive Committee will write a survey and send it out to gather information so we can have a more informed discussion.

Senator Morgan said that 90-95% of Master's students in Physics want to get a Ph.D. so restrictions on those who only want to get a Master's will not have a large effect on the faculty in his department, but he is very concerned from a procedural standpoint for decisions being made from central administration for which there are no plans distributed. He feels like this is the Dean of the Graduate College micromanaging graduate students, and that the Graduate College should not be so intrusive, even if their by-laws are not perfect.

Senator Morgan added that there is nothing in the Graduate College by-laws about this issue. He emphasizes that the survey needs to address this issue at both the department level and beyond. He said that if there are departments with no graduate programs “it will have no effect at all.”

President Zondlo said we should not have this discussion now, but should get the data first. President Elect Bernard McKenna clarified that this would happen in the next week or so.

Senator Kelly Cobb added that there should be some question or discussion about what the terminal degree in the field is, given that in her area it is a M.F.A., not a Ph.D.

Senator Deni Galileo added that there should be an open ended committee section.

Dean Norris noted that terminal Master’s degrees will not be affected by this and ultimately it is up to the colleges, like CAS, how they implement the changes in the rules.

Senator Rakesh noted that how we prioritize the funding is the issue.

President Zondlo then said the goal is to understand impact at every level. He wants the CAS Faculty Senate to be able to respond with data.

Educational Affairs Chair James Angelini notes that this is not about what we would do with unlimited funding but rather to better understand what all our departments are doing.

In New Business, Senator Morgan said that he is happy UD is returning to a proctored math placement exam because he has a lot of evidence that people were getting help from parents, boyfriends or girlfriends, etc. and all they were learning was that they could cheat on online tests and get away with it.

We then adjourned at 5:30 PM ET.