

Drake University Faculty Senate Minutes

April 7, 2021

President Shelley Fairbairn called the regular meeting of the Faculty Senate to order at 3:30 pm, Wednesday, April 7, 2021. The following senators were present for all or part of the meeting: Natalie Banta Lynner, Klaus Bartschat, Michelle Bottenberg, Megan Brown, Dan Chibnall, Debra DeLaet, Matt Dore, Catherine Gillespie, Matthew Hayden, Sandy Henry, Paul Judd, Kevin Lam, Peter Levi, Yasmina Madden, Joan McAlister, Lynn McCool, Denise Hill, Jimmy Senteza, Priya Shenoy, Ashely Sidon, Ron Torry, Jill VanWyke, Matt Zwier, Shelley Fairbairn, and Carrie Dunham-LaGree.

The March 17, 2021, minutes were approved on a voice vote, motion by Matt Zwier, seconded by Catherine Gillespie.

Contents

College/School Announcements.....	1
President Martin’s Report.....	1
Provost Mattison’s report.....	2
Report from President Fairbairn.....	2
Unfinished Business.....	2
New Business.....	2

College/School Announcements

- AS: Two A&S students received Goldwater Scholarships: Taylor Vroman, a junior Environmental Science major, and Olivia Kannas, a junior Biochemistry and Chemistry double major.
- SJMC: Carson Reichardt placed in the Hearst Journalism Awards Program in the category of Personality Profile.
- SOE: Counseling Program Alumnae Dallas Vander Pol received Excellence in Education Award from Newton Community Education Foundation. She works as a school counselor at Wilson Elementary school in Newton.

President Martin’s Report

Admission Update

- There are 508 tuition deposits, up from 484 last year and 464 the previous year.
- There are 26 transfer deposits, up from 13 last year. Of those, 40% are students with AA or AS degrees from the blanket articulation agreements.
- Friday is a virtual Admitted Student Day, and there are 203 registered.
- Small cohorts of 14 families have been able to sign up for Saturday visits, and slots are almost 100% full.
- Continue to dig in with recruiting, as the yield will turn on continued efforts.

Discussion

- How are admissions for the John D Bright College? There are 20 students currently working through the application process, and another 10 in the pre-application phase. This is behind projections, based on Drake's model, Arupe (who is low this year, as well). DMPS counselors are working through the challenges of this school year, but will turn towards working with graduating seniors and their school choice decisions soon. Admission for Bright College will run through the summer. Additional recruitment materials have been made available to school counselors and local recruitment advocates are reaching out to communities.
- Question regarding the cost of adding a leadership position: Chief of Student Affairs. Position has been added because it is imperative that a stronger student culture is created here at Drake. There are increasing challenges with mental and emotional health. There have been increasing student conduct issues. The Student Life staff has been overwhelmed by the volume. The new Chief of Student Affairs, Jerry Parker, will be conducting research on what is working at other higher education institutions and research-based best practices, and he will be providing leadership to implement change initiatives. There has been criticism about the cost of this new position. President Martin detailed elimination of positions and restructuring in leadership over recent years that has resulted in \$540,000 in savings annually. The new position does add to the budget, but less than 30% of those dollars previously saved.

Provost Mattison's report

- Students requesting a virtual-learning accommodation this fall apply through Access and Success services. Providing such an accommodation is akin to teaching an independent study, and the student will be much more self-directed. They will have to provide a documented medical excuse.
- FY International students may need to begin the year virtually, as some countries have not opened up their visa services. We are expecting about 10 total International students who will start out on an independent study, but the expectation is that sometime early in the semester they will be able to be on campus.

Report from President Fairbairn

Volunteers are needed for the vaccination clinic on Friday.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4fafab2ba3fbc07-covid19>

Student Senate Report: Kody Craddick, Academic Affairs Senator

- The community tutoring program was approved, and will be implement later in April.
- The Academic Affairs committee reviewed the Advising Proposal and is in favor of the suggested changes. Senators from those units who already using such an approach provided some explanation about how it works. Recommendations from the committee:
 - Make sure the titles and responsibilities of positions are clear for students
 - Be clear about the transition timeline

Unfinished Business

None known

New Business

21-12: Motion to create an Ad Hoc Committee to resolve ambiguities related to the procedural standards and processes of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee. Approved on a voice vote, motion by Deb DeLaet and seconded by Megan Brown.

Motion to consider the following item informally. Approved on a voice vote, motion by Shelley Fairbairn, and seconded by Kevin Lam.

Discussion of the advising proposal developed by the Admissions, Retention, and Financial Aid Committee

- Against a campus-wide proposal as the units are so different. This should be a unit-level decision. At most Faculty Senate can encourage units to take a look at this proposal.
 - The proposal was vetted with key groups across campus. The committee ended up at Faculty Senate because the committee is concerned about inconsistency for students across campus.
- How will this be paid for?
- Can we work within the systems that we already have? Could we improve within our unit, and still meet the same goals via professional development of our current advisors?
- Faculty Senate is being asked for an endorsement of something that is not in our purview. I would not endorse this without a clear budget. I would want more detail about how it will be operationalized.
- One recommendation is to have professional staff advisors advise for coursework, while faculty is doing more mentoring. I value doing their academic advising. Part of my advising is getting to know my students and advising them on their academic plans, which are closely aligned with their professional plans.
- I would think that students expect personalized attention from faculty on a small campus. But Kody just said Student Senate is overwhelmingly supportive.
- How will they get to visit with two advisors? Some struggle to meet with one.
- In the past we have discussed incentivizing better faculty advising. I want to bring this up again. We lose something if we don't retain a strong faculty advising.
 - There was some discussion of the idea for incentivizing advising and picking out a group of faculty to focus on advising within our committee. There was some pushback from some areas on campus if this would require a release time, how to ensure overall equal workloads, and how to ensure some faculty didn't get overwhelmed.
- Concerned about a disconnect between faculty and students. It's good to hear that Student Senate supports this proposal, but we need to consider other students who are shy, introverted, or not engaged with Student Senate.
- Some department programs are more predictable, and course pathways are clear. Other large units are less predictable, so there are a lot of options and decisions.
- This model empowers faculty. They can certainly continue to help with AOI and career pathways.
- We don't need to implement this all at once. It can be phased in. Through our HLC accreditation, we can propose a quality initiative. We will start Summer 2022, with a focus on student retention. That includes advising and will provide some funding as we are phasing it in.
- The Proactive Advising Project was very helpful a few years ago. I think faculty were offered a small stipend for participating in training, data collection, and evaluation.
- In 2018, 1/3 of our first-year students reported that they had not met with their advisor since coming to campus.
 - Is there a standard for advisors (faculty or staff) to report contact with their list of advisees, possibly at the end of fall semester?
 - I thought there was a standard we had to meet with them the first week.
- Whatever model we take up, it should retain a strong faculty advising position. The proposal calls for hiring or training administrative staff to help handle the load. Those doing this work now in AS are faculty.
- Great concern that this might nominally reduce the load for faculty, but as high cost/low benefit

effort.

- The path through different majors can vary greatly. A large part of advising is helping students to select major courses that will get them where they want to go. The amount of training that a staff member would need is enormous – they don't have the field expertise. The number of variables here is huge. The questions would end up back on faculty anyway to answer the questions. Who is going to train them? We are. Who is going to answer the questions? We are. Who is going to approve alternatives? We are. This will increase costs without reducing the faculty workload. Maybe there is a blended model that is a magic bullet, but I don't see it in this proposal.
 - Cost for professional advisors is lower than for faculty. We will still have faculty advising students on the issues you raise. If the major is so complex that it cannot be explained that is an issue. People are responding here to worst possible outcomes without evidence.
- Is this a response to some faculty being poor advisors and this is a way to deal with?
- There is no magic bullet. This work is ongoing and unfinished.
- What are the needs of the colleges? In SOE we have a lot of off-campus and graduate students we're working with, and this speaks only speaks to undergrads.
- Concerned around the experiences of students of color on campus. We are focused on academic and professional advising, but there are other questions/issues we need to contend with. It's easier to focus on these questions that are more tangible. This place can be alienating/isolating for students of color. That is the piece I focus on.
 - This speaks to more than retention—it's also about fulfilling Drake's mission and ethical commitments through every aspect of student experience.
- This is not just about AOI. It's major academic advising as students discover their interests. I don't want to move to something disconnected from the field. It's not that they are so complex, but there are different pathways. I can help them map out an academic program that suits them over the course of their four years. I don't want a template for every student who comes in. I'm not sure how we balance all of these things.
- I've been in both advising models, and I wouldn't want to go back. The staff advisors make my life better because I can have more in depth conversations with students.
- Could availability of faculty advisor time be improved with more professional staff advisors?
- Key data points: availability and approachability. Over the past seven years, we have done significant work to improve this. We are now up to 85% who had met with their advisor by the end of October. We would be sure to keep that if we have professional advisors. We continue to support that good, 7 years of work. Part of the job of advising specialists is to reach out to students. These two can work together. Students feel someone cares about their success and are connected to campus.
- Last year it became a new expectation that all advisors meet or greet new advisees in the first week. That is new. Some colleges have been working on this for a while, but it was not across the institution.
- I have been in blended model, it has helped. Those academic and professional plans are still conversations I have with my advisees. But, as we get closer to graduation, they can look at their programs and there are no surprises for students. It has been an advantage to both undergrad and grad students. It's not replacing faculty. It will allow us to concentrate on those conversations we enjoy. We don't need to retain a huge number of students to make this cost effective.
- Ensure pathways are developed in deep consultation with faculty and department chairs so it's not flowing towards a one-size-fits-all.
- I worry that we're not going to improve much on 84%. I reach out, and still some don't make an appointment. I don't think they'll reach out to professional advisor any better. The assumption is that it will improve retention because it will improve contact, but I'm not sure of that.
- Would like data from other schools that are using this model.
- If the committee would like us to endorse something, we would need specific language.
- Sounds like the Faculty Senate would like more information about how it will work and how it

will be financed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm on a motion by Deb DeLaet, seconded by Catherine Gillespie.

CHAT

From Megan Brown to Everyone: 03:35 PM

Loved seeing Jill's excitement!

Congratulations to these students and alums!

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 03:35 PM

Hooray for Carson, my former TA and Speaking Center tutor!!

From Neil Ward to Everyone: 03:47 PM

Its hailing in Windsor heights

From Shelley Fairbairn to Everyone: 04:04 PM

Here's the full link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4fafab2ba3fbc07-covid19>

From Megan Brown to Everyone: 04:11 PM

good point, Peter

From Nate Newman to Everyone: 04:11 PM

There was some discussion of the idea for incentivizing advising and picking out a group of faculty to focus on advising within our committee. There was some pushback from some areas on campus if this would require a release time, how to ensure overall equal workloads, and how to ensure some faculty didn't get to overwhelmed.

From Megan Brown to Everyone: 04:12 PM

Thanks, Nate. I remember those issues came up in A&S discussions as well. Thanks, too, for your work on this issue.

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:14 PM

The Proactive Advising Project was very helpful a few years ago. I think faculty were offered a small stipend for participating in training, data collection, and evaluation.

From Nate Newman to Everyone: 04:16 PM

I don't have the specific stat that Provost Mattison is asking for. I know Melissa Strum-Smith has that and will be joining us shortly. The stat that I do have from Melissa is that in 2018, 1/3 of our first-year students reported that had not met with their advisor since coming to campus.

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:18 PM

An initiative focused on retention seems a good idea.

From Matthew Hayden to Everyone: 04:21 PM

This is all fine, but again, the push for standardizing unit processes is problematic. The desire for efficiency for sake of efficiency is a value worth pursuing for its own sake. There are perfectly fine recommendations in the work of the committee, but each unit should be allowed to decide which will work best for them and how. I can't understand why that is not the starting point.

Is NOT a value worth pursuing for its own sake (goops)

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:22 PM

On faculty Advising in A&S: Mary Beth Holtey does a stunning amount of advising for A&S, including fielding calls and emails on evenings and weekends.

From Neil Ward to Everyone: 04:22 PM

^ very much so.

From Sue Mattison to Everyone: 04:23 PM

May I respond to Matt's specific issues.?

From Megan Brown to Everyone: 04:23 PM

Joan is absolutely right. I would love for Mary Beth to have more support. Alina too.

From Robert Olinger to Everyone: 04:25 PM

Regarding the 1/3 of first-year students not meeting with their advisor, is there a standard for advisors (faculty or staff) to report contact with their list of advisees, possibly at the end of fall semester?

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:28 PM

Kevin is right about inclusion and equity. This is an urgent concern for retention.

From Yasmina Madden to Everyone: 04:29 PM

Thanks for bringing that up, Kevin

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:30 PM

And Kevin's concerns speak to more than retention—it's also about fulfilling Drake's mission and ethical commitments through every aspect of student experience.

From Sue Mattison to Everyone: 04:34 PM

Excellent point, Joan.

From Robert Olinger to Everyone: 04:35 PM

The proposal stated "advisor availability and approachability were reported as key variables in relation to reported satisfaction (Elliot & Shin, 2002)." Are these two issues the same as the issues raised by Drake students? Would staff advisors resolve or improve one or both of these issues?

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:37 PM

Thanks for that good news, Melissa.

From Denise Hill to Everyone: 04:40 PM

Great discussion everyone. I need to get off to do a media interview on vaccine passports so signing off.

From David Courard-Hauri to Everyone: 04:43 PM

I think one of the reasons why advisor meetings are way up is that it's now an assignment in Bulldog Foundations. It feels like we're on the right track there, but I'm not certain that professional advisors will increase that ratio beyond where it is now. I have a percentage of students who don't respond to my e-mails requesting a meeting—I'm not sure they'll be *more* likely to respond to such a request from a professional advisor. I just don't see where we keep assuming this will improve retention over and above what we're doing now.

From Matthew Hayden to Everyone: 04:44 PM

Good point DCH. I agree. I contact my advisees all the time, and there is a certain percentage who don't respond no matter what.

From Kevin Lam to Everyone: 04:45 PM

Thank you for the proposal. It's a lot of work done.

From Debra DeLaet to Everyone: 04:45 PM

Yes, thanks to the committee for all of the work.

From Joan McAlister to Everyone: 04:47 PM

Thanks to the committee for the work and to attendees for careful conversation.