

September 2, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

We write to welcome you to a new school year and to update you about the extensive work done by your elected Faculty Council this past summer. Click on these links for the [Council's membership](#), [minutes](#) of past meetings, a description of [standing committees and their charges](#), and to [send the council an anonymous message](#).

The Faculty Council and its committees met throughout the summer to continue to revitalize shared governance, work with our new Provost, and makes sure that faculty insights and concerns were incorporated into the university's planning for the COVID pandemic. Since we waited until the start of the new school year to update you, this message is quite long; future updates will be more frequent and terse.

Specific Resolutions and Interventions

- Early this summer we conveyed our concern about the lack of faculty representation on the new committees created to respond to the COVID crisis to the Provost and President. Shortly thereafter, they created a Faculty Advisory Committee as a part of this structure. This committee has conveyed numerous concerns about office and laboratory access, planning for face to face and hybrid teaching, and other issues to university leaders since its inception.
- In early August, we relayed concerns about academic freedom and shared governance to the Provost that had been conveyed by faculty in the School of Social Work, the Quinlan School of Business, and the School of Communication. These concerns centered on mandating specific online course design architecture without faculty consultation and the granting of access to course Sakai sites to deans in these schools. These conversations are ongoing.
- In April and March we were joined by Provost Grzywacz, who engaged in a substantive and detailed discussion about a number of issues (e.g., the possibility that those up for tenure and promotion could choose to extend their clocks given

the working conditions created by the ongoing pandemic). The Provost subsequently announced such a policy – a successful example of practicing shared governance.

- Other discussions late last spring include the mold that has destroyed much of the collection in the Library Storage Facility (LSF), a problem that does not seem to have been conveyed to the Presidential or Provost level months after the LSF's collections was rendered unsafe and could no longer be accessed.
- We have appointed to Faculty Council representatives to sit on Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC), which is being reconstituted after a combined call with the University Senate, stemming from the January 1st transition to Aetna as the university's health insurer. Our hope is that the BAC will perform the due diligence required ahead of such changes, including conducting a comprehensive assessment of access to current physicians and mental health services.
- We passed resolutions [congratulating the *Phoenix*](#) on its award from the Illinois College Press Association, and [urging the transfer of the Loyola University Museum of Art](#) from management by Administrative Services into the of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences. This basis for this resolution was that LUMA has scholarly curation of its collection(s) and CAS is an academic unit and Administrative Services is not.
- We have strengthened faculty governance by assigning all Faculty Council members to standing committees, including newly constituted committees on communications and the faculty handbook, to assure sustained work across the years.
- In June, we approved revisions to the Council's bylaws and constitution. These include changing our name to "Faculty Senate," to reflect better our commitment to not only communicate with the administration but to represent and actively communicate with the entire Faculty. As you are aware by virtue of reading this message, we have, for the first time, a list-serve of all Faculty to expedite timely communication. The name Faculty Senate is more in line with the name given to such representative bodies within peer and aspirational institutions. We regret that President Rooney declined to consider these changes for the time being,

pending the report of a Task Force on Shared Governance that was constituted last academic year. (A discussion of this can be found in the [minutes](#) of her visit to Faculty Council). We have no measure of when the Task Force's report will be completed.

Discussions with University Administrators

- The Council hosted Interim Provost Margaret Callahan in her last month in office to discuss the consequences of the retirement incentive program and the efforts to recruit and retain a diverse faculty as well as Faculty's role in the new strategic plan.
- In June we hosted new Vice Provost for Research Minervan "Sonny" Singh to discuss ways in which the university's research profile can be enhanced. Details of that discussion can be found in the [minutes](#).
- In early August, President Rooney visited the council for the first time since April of 2019. She addressed a number of our questions, including the current status of fundraising and university finances, the administration's response to police violence and the Black Lives Matter movement, and the shared governance system. A description of this conversation can be found in the [minutes](#).
- Concerns about the current Faculty Activity System were also conveyed to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and a survey about the FAS is currently being undertaken; we ask that you fill in this survey.
- In late August, new Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Badia Ahad joined us to discuss her extensive efforts to revitalize Faculty Affairs, including faculty development, the retention and recruitment of faculty of color, and the updating of faculty grievance and hearing policies.
- Also in late August, the new Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education Emily Barman joined us to discuss the place of graduate education at Loyola, how it might attain greater importance in university decision-making, and how the university might diversify its graduate student body.

Longer-Term Project: A Revised Faculty Handbook

- The Faculty Council has sought to be responsive to matters of importance to the University and bring our decision and communication process to align with the rate at which decisions are made in the Provost and President's office. Our meetings have also defined a number of long-term objectives that we are attempting to meet.
- The most important of these is the [Faculty Handbook](#). The Handbook is described as “a contract between the University and its various faculty” (page 12). Ours was most recently revised in 2015 and describes a very different university than the one that exists today. For example, it provides for two provosts rather than the one provost model for the medical and academic schools under which we now operate. In addition, new academic units, such as the Parkinson School of Public Health, have come into being since its ratification and numerous internal links to critical policies, such as grievance procedures and tenure and promotion guidelines, are no longer functional. Numerous practices and policies across the university have deviated from the stipulations of the handbook.
- Thus, as is provided for in the current handbook, we constituted a Faculty Council committee to propose revisions to the handbook to the administration. This committee regularly and at considerable length throughout the 2019-2020 academic year to draft an extensive set of revisions for wider faculty discussion and consideration by the administration
- Proposed revisions include more gender-inclusive language, reforms of the grievance and dismissal procedures to bring them in line with peer institutions, and making our commitment to diversity and inclusion integral to the document.
- President Rooney has put discussions of these proposals on hold pending the report of the Shared Governance Task Force. We do not know when this report will be forthcoming.

REQUEST FOR HELP

•We recognize that shared governance is continuously evolving and that the Task Force on Shared Governance has yet to submit its report. We also acknowledge that the administration is trying to lead us during a difficult time under its emergency response strategy that frequently requires decisive action. While none of us know what the fall semester holds, we are asking that faculty members call upon the administration and ask that they continue to involve their elected Faculty Council and other shared governance bodies in all decisions going forward. Please take a stance for shared governance by letting the administration hear your voice.

Yours truly,

Dr. Tavis D. Jules (School of Education, Chair)

Dr. Michael P. Dentato (School of Social Work, Vice-Chair)

Dr. Benjamin Johnson (CAS and IES, Secretary)

(writing on behalf of the entire Council, whose membership can be found [here](#))