

Agenda of the Faculty Senate Meeting
March 24, 2020
WebEx, 11:30 AM–1:30 PM

- I. Convening of the Meeting – Ellen Thomas, President
- II. Approval of Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting on March 10th
- III. Report of the Faculty Senate President (10 Minutes)
 - a. Faculty Profile Pages
 - b. Elections
 - c. Update on Covid-19 Advisory Committee
- IV. Covid-19 Response Update (Fadi Deek)
- V. Preview of the Program Announcement for the undergraduate Materials Engineering program
Moshe Kam (5 minutes)
- VI. Data Science (Usman Roshan)
- VII. Open Discussion: what should our priorities be going forward?
- VIII. New business

Minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting
March 24, 2020
WebEx, 11:30 AM–1:30 PM

- I. Convening of the Meeting – Ellen Thomas, President
The meeting started at 11:32AM
- II. Roll Call-The following voting members were present: A. Zhou, M. Bandelt, L. Rodriguez-Freire, D. Blackmore, D. Bunker, E. Farinas, I. Gatley, H. Grebel, R. Goodman, Q. Jones, B. Khusid, P. Armenante, N. Steffen-Fluhr, E. Michalopoulou, R. Dent, A. Borgaonkar, R. Rojas-Cessa, A. Rosato, U. Roshan, A. Anandarajan, M. Schwartz, R. Sodhi, D. Sollohub, G. Thomas, E. Thomas, Y. Perl, A. Gerbessiotis, A. Lee
- III. The following non-voting members were present: J. Shafik, R. Lazer, F. Deek, A. Dhawan, L. Hamilton, A. Hoang, M. Kam, M. Stanko, K. Riismandel, S. Mongelli, B. Kolarevic, B. Baltzis, J. Yuan
- IV. The following guests were present: Laurent Simon (Undergraduate Studies), David Horntrop (CUE/Mathematical Sciences), Sotirios Ziavras (Graduate Studies)
- V. Approval of Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting on March 10th
Minutes were approved with no negative votes and one abstention.
- VI. Report of the Faculty Senate President (10 Minutes)
 - a. Faculty Profile Pages
E. Thomas: Faculty profile pages were due to go live, but will be postponed until the end of April, so that Faculty will have a chance to manage their online courses.

Bob Lazer would like to remind faculty to take the Great Colleges to Work For survey.
 - b. Elections
E. Thomas: elections are coming up, those completing their three-year term will be contacted. They can be re-elected (no term limit) or another member of their department can be elected. Also need to vote on new FS Vice President and Executive Committee (EC) members. Nominations should be sent to E. Michalopoulou.
 - c. Update on Covid-19 Advisory Committee
E. Thomas: D. Blackmore and I have joined the COVID-19 Advisory Committee, which meets weekly to advise the University and discuss issues such as: Should we adopt a pass/fail option? Should we set aside course evaluations for this semester on a voluntary basis? Should we extend the tenure clock?
- VII. Covid-19 Response Update (Fadi Deek)
Presentation and Discussion followed by Q&A. F. Deek: Some colleagues remain on campus. For example, the office of digital learning, technology support, mailroom, and the police force. Many changes are still coming. Already planning and will adjust as needed for a summer session to mimic the spring semester. Asking for endorsement of new changes to relevant academic issues of concerns.

B. Baltzis: Happy to see entire university has responded and cooperated with the changes. There has been a concern for students and the impact these changes will have on them. We propose a very lenient and student friendly approach to grading and academic standing. Regarding grading: enter the grades temporarily in the system, then at a certain point all F's to be converted to "Not for Credit". Undergraduate D's will be converted to "Pass Credit", implying that they will count towards degree completion if the students do not need a higher grade. Students will have the option that to get a D instead of Pass credit. For grades C or higher, students can opt for a Pass or the letter grade. Students will only have one opportunity to request this change. The difference between the pass credit and the pass is that it allows for an easier check of prerequisites for courses that require a C or higher. At the graduate level, C is the passing grade, so anything below a C will automatically be converted to Not for Credit, and any grades of C or higher will be given the option to either keep the actual grade or the pass. This way students will have the flexibility to choose if some of the courses will be Pass/Fail or actual grades. Would like FS endorsement of this new grading policy.

Regarding academic standing, students who were not in good academic standing at the end of the previous semester, and through the actual grades they earn at the end of this semester improve their academic standing, then the new improved academic standing is going to be recorded on the transcript. If a student was not in good academic standing and did not achieve good academic standing, they will not be penalized for this semester; they will keep the same academic standing as in the prior semester. No student will see their academic standing be negatively impacted.

There have also been complaints about online proctored exams, specifically ProctorU. Students have raised issues of privacy. Under emergency circumstances, instructors have the right to choose the type of proctoring for their classes. If a student objects to ProctorU, then they will have the opportunity to withdraw from the course and will not count this attempt of the course as being one of those that the policy allows for course repetition.

E. Thomas: When do students need to decide to take the grade or the pass? B. Baltzis: They will be given up till May 31st to tell us which grades they want to go into the new system. No one after May 31st will see an F on their transcript.

Q. Jones: can we get more information about the objections students have with ProctorU. B. Baltzis: Objections fall into two categories: Typically online classes indicate from the beginning what type of proctoring is to be used and students have not agreed to this type of proctoring; the use of cameras is viewed as an intrusion of privacy.

E. Michalopoulou: We should make sure the prerequisite grade of C will be upheld for subsequent courses. How do we ensure that D's will not be allowed in subsequent courses? B. Baltzis: D's will indicate pass for credit, and there will be different codes for these distinctions. A. Borgaonkar: Will we have to decide now or later? B. Baltzis: I'll defer to Fadi to address this issue, but we are asking for endorsement and cooperation of the fact that we are going to be changing, relaxing, and adapting some of the academic policies in place. We are not now asking for approval of the specific plan because there is not enough time. The announcement needs to go out to the students as soon as possible.

N. Steffen-Fluhr: Students who take online course will already know they need a webcam, but how about other students?? B. Baltzis: All of these issues should be handled by the Dean of Students with the help of Blake Haggerty's office. A. Rosato: Clarification on policy for graduate students, the grade of C can convert to Pass? B. Baltzis: If there is an issue with C's we might have to do the same thing with undergraduate D's. This way if we only designate A and B's we will have a clear picture of who is meeting the minimum B requirement for core courses. A. Rosato: if students choose a P, will it affect the GPA or will it just show up on the transcript? B. Baltzis: the GPA will not be affected. E. Thomas: Is there text available for this policy yet or are you working on it? B. Baltzis: Yes, there is text, and you will get a copy very soon. J. Shafik:

Regarding the option for students to withdraw from a course who are uncomfortable with proctoring software, will this affect their full time/part time status? B. Baltzis: If they withdraw now, it should not affect their financial aid, but I will look into it. J. Shafik: if students do change grades to P/F will it affect awards and distinctions? B. Baltzis: Yes, if they have any non-letter grade it will automatically disqualify them, because these awards and distinctions require letter grades -they will not be able to opt for a P/F option. P. Armenante: Do we have the option for the students who object to ProctorU to come to campus under social distancing? B. Baltzis: No, right now every member of NJIT needs special permission to get onto campus and all the cards that allow access into buildings have been deactivated. P. Armenante: One of the objections to the ProctorU software is that students in class do not have the option to communicate with instructors. Do you know anything about this? B. Baltzis: this was not brought up. B. Khusid: How will this new grading policy affect graduate courses? B. Baltzis: Will consult with Sotiri for clarification. G. Thomas: What's the new policy about absences of freshmen from class? B. Baltzis: we have not addressed this issue, but there should be no change from the original policy regarding absences. There are students who ended the fall semester 2019 and winter session with incompletes. The original policy would give to the end of the following semester spring 2020 to remove the incomplete or automatically receive an F. With these new circumstances the deadline will be extended to August 2020.

I. Gatley: I move that the FS applauds administration efforts to serve the students' needs online and supports making of appropriate changes to expedite that process. A. Borgaonkar seconded the motion. 21 voted yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. E. Thomas: You have the Senate's endorsement.

VIII. Preview of the Program Announcement for the undergraduate Materials Engineering program Moshe Kam (5 minutes)

M. Kam: This is a new program that will be presented in two weeks. Program announcement to get endorsement. Please read about this new program, so that any comments and questions will be handled before the next FS meeting. E. Thomas: We'll vote on this in the next meeting.

IX. Data Science (Usman Roshan)
Discussion postponed

X. Open Discussion: what should our priorities be going forward?

E. Thomas: what should our priorities be going forward? Denis and I were working on pushing for upper administration evaluations this spring, but with the new VP of HR starting and dealing with the virus, we suggest delaying this to the fall. What should we be working on, in the remaining months of the semester? Things that were important before, have changed. Now we should prioritize anything that impacts our students and keep shared governance running.

G. Thomas: I think one of the important things in our plans for the future is to reduce the rate of students who drop out or fail or both. I would like to have us look into things that we can do to help students. E. Thomas: Laurent, maybe you have some insight? L. Simon: It can be addressed through tutoring; I have tutors working to cover the junior and senior courses, and we could also do it through the the instruction itself. Other faculty might be using other tools, but my office is looking at from an advising and tutoring standpoint.

D. Sollohub: This is an unprecedented yield in online learning. Issues of the digital divide that could be used as a way to address these problems in the future. Perhaps have an ad hoc committee address these problems. M. Stanko: Some of the junior faculty in my department have questions about the tenure clock, especially when labs have to be shut down, and the time needed to resume their research might be longer than expected. On their behalf, what is considered in terms of tenure clock? E. Thomas: this can be taken up with the Senate, maybe even add something to the handbook about these kinds of extraordinary circumstances. K.

Riismandel: How are course evaluations will be used? In particular for Lecturers. What kind of feedback we are going to get and how is it to be used? B. Baltzis: We will get back to you on this particular issue. R. Sodhi: Have there been any reported cases on campus? B. Baltzis: Only the one. R. Sodhi: Are face to face classes being planned for the fall? How about sabbaticals? E. Thomas: I can speak for the management school that sabbaticals have been voluntarily postponed. P. Armenante: I would like to go back to the tenure clock, which may be premature to discuss now since the administration needs more time to consider the issue. L. Simon: For online course assessment, we need to be careful because this is not the usual delivery and type of preparation that people receive. A plan should be developed to analyze the result of a survey for this delivery of online courses taking care as to how the data is used. D. Blackmore: What about the procedures for presidential elections? Do we continue our discussions with the Board of Trustees? E. Thomas: We should continue. D. Sollohub: To follow up on Laurent's remarks on assessments, we could recommend that we do pre and post break assessment to evaluate the online teaching. B. Baltzis: We are in a mode of distance education where everybody tries different things, not like the usual online course, so we cannot be sure of the usefulness of such an assessment. B. Khusid: Do we keep the same policy for final exams? B. Baltzis: You can give a typical final exam or decide to use different modes such as final project or a lengthy problem differing from student to student. E. Thomas: for the next meetings we have a number of things to vote on and are working to form an ad hoc committee to study the results of the current distance learning experience, and discuss cutting the tenure clock. Also, the EC shall continue to work with the board of trustees on the presidential search procedure. A. Rosato: What about students who need extended time and the issue of cheating? L. Simon: Email OARS and myself for answers.

XI. Meeting ended at 1:03PM