

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES OF THE 799th REGULAR MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Presiding Officer Steven D. Brewer called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm

A. UNDERGRADUATES AS COURSE ASSISTANTS

Chair: Elizabeth A. Connor, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, College of Natural Sciences

Participants:

**Holly Lawrence, Assistant Dean, Career Services, Isenberg School of Management
Shannon Mooney, Assistant Director of the Writing Center**

Assistant Dean Lawrence:

Within business communications two large classes we rely very heavily on undergraduate course assistants. One of them is the first-year seminar; we call it Transitions and it has a cap of 19 in each section. Isenberg does it a little differently than some of the other schools on campus.

We have 49 undergraduate assistants and each of them is responsible for teaching one of the sections of transitions. To help them be prepared for that, a colleague and I meet with them once a week to go over the content that they will be delivering the following week. Advanced undergraduates go through an application process to become course assistants by submitting a short video in which they demonstrate how they might teach. We spend a lot of time on the course content and on giving teaching tips to them.

They are responsible for delivering content, and it is content that they are familiar with because they have taken the course earlier. They are responsible for grading assignments and tracking attendance. They also serve as peer mentors and leaders for the students in their sections. The assistantship is for credit; students receive 3 credits by enrolling in School of Management 397M.

Associate Dean Connor:

In CMS, we became aware that we have a great diversity in how departments have been using undergraduate assistants in their instruction. It varied not only by department but by faculty member within departments. We looked to provide uniformity in the experiences for undergraduate course assistants.

We began by asking every department three questions. Do you use undergraduate course assistants? If you do are they paid or receive academic credit? If they receive academic credit is it a letter grade or a pass/fail grade?

All 13 departments with undergraduate programs use undergraduate assistants in one form or another and they perform various tasks related to class and grading. The mix of paid and or academic credit compensation for their efforts varies. Among departments using academic credit, most used letter grading and only 2 used pass/fail.

With Dean Tricia Serio's guidance, we started a process to develop college-level guidelines for the use of undergraduate course assistants; a set of recommendation that we could make to the departments. I'll describe briefly the process that we've gone through. Amazingly this has been a multi-month, even multi-year process from when this idea was first raised.

Today, the home of the process is in the CNS curriculum committee, in which all 13 of those departments are represented. The committee drafted a document and members of the committee took it home to their departments, where the instructors who use undergraduate teaching assistants gave their feedback. Those suggestions were debated and the curriculum committee revised the document. We then sent it to Dean Tricia Serio, and she gave us her comments. We now have the document in final form and are ready to disseminate to departments for implementation.

We are well aware that there such variety in CNS that we need to focus people on how they do it. Part of our document asks that every instructor provide clear written expectations for what the responsibilities are, so there's no vagueness. It also asks that they be trained before assuming their duties. Since undergraduate course assistants are supervised by a graduate student TA, instructors are asked to clearly identify the supervisor is and then empower that supervisor to provide leadership, oversight, and support. We also ask instructors to give feedback to the undergraduate student assistants during the semester. This is important no matter whether they are paid or whether they earn academic credit.

In addition, our document addresses two situations in greater detail. When a student is receiving credit, particularly letter grades, we ask our instructors to provide student learning objectives for their assistantship. After all, being an undergraduate course assistant is a learning experience for those undergraduate. So, we want to make sure that learning outcomes and objectives we're trying to meet are met.

Then that the evaluator, whether the graduate student supervisor or an instructor, develops a rubric for assessing performance and giving grades that they share with the undergraduate course assistants at the beginning of the semester and use at the end to assess their performance and give a grade.

Having course assistants grading the undergraduates raises a whole set of issues and questions. To address them, we really stress in our document that there have to be very clear guidelines for the conditions under which an undergraduate may grade peers. We also stress that there should be student learning outcomes relating to their grading effort. This experience needs to be aimed at developing skills, especially if the student is earning academic credit, meeting those

expectations, and going forward for that student

Finally, I want to share this part of our document. This is dear to my heart and I think it's dear to all of us as we strive for inclusion and excellence at UMass and to increase our capacity for that.

We want every instructor who uses undergraduate course assistants to recognize the opportunity this position gives to an undergraduate. Right now, it has a huge impact on them; they can grow intellectually by meeting certain student learning outcomes. Then there are personal benefits: Course assistants have a better sense of connection and belonging and they gain stature in the eyes of their peers. It becomes a position that is valued, and as Holly mentioned, one that students who work with them will then aspire to.

As CNS instructors develop their mechanism for choosing undergraduate course assistants we also want to encourage all of them to recognize that diversity is important in these positions. The document specifically reminds them to recognize that talent may be found in unexpected places among our student population. So that it's not just the student who sits in the front and get As, and that they might actually cast the net a little more widely and make it clear that this opportunity is available. The goal is to have an undergraduate course assistant population that also serves as a mechanism and a model for our inclusion.

Assistant Director Mooney:

The Writing Center supports undergraduate and graduate writers any stage of the writing process through 45-minute tutorials. These sessions are collaborative – we are not an editing service and we don't assess writing or ever assign a grade. If a student comes to us with feedback from a professor we're happy to look at it and work with the student in light of that feedback. But our tutors aren't ever in communication with professor. We just work with undergraduate and graduate students on their writing.

New tutors, which we call interns, participate in a comprehensive year-long training process, which consists two 3-credit courses, while they also tutor at the Writing Center for a few hours each week.

Then after that year of training they become paid tutors. We typically conduct over 3,000 tutorials each year and for this academic year we're fully online and conducting sessions via Zoom. We serve undergrad and grad students from any discipline or major. We don't just work with essays, but also resumes, personal statements, scholarships, lab reports, and more. On average, roughly 75% of our sessions are with undergraduates.

This slide shows our list of the top 10 majors that we typically serve. The writing that students come to the center with may not be from their major, but we support students at all stages of their writing and offer strategies for how to approach writing across all disciplines.

We see a lot of assignments from General Education courses, particularly college writing courses. Around this time of year especially we see a lot of students who are working on

applications for graduate school, scholarships, jobs etc.

Questions for the Panel:

Senator Berlin:

We have been thinking about this in my department and our bookkeeper is interested in the issue of undergraduates being paid. If we have ideas for using undergraduate course assistants or were thinking about doing that, is there somewhere we should talk to you about exploring all the details around it?

Associate Dean Connor:

So, I think it's a pretty standard process at least in CNS departments sign them up in some sort of mechanism and pay them. I could look into it I don't know if there are any more people more knowledgeable than me and how that's handled.

Secretary Peterson:

Elizabeth, you mentioned at the beginning of your presentation that in CNS the undergraduate course assistants are sometimes used for discussion sections, sometimes used for labs, and sometimes used for field labs.

To what extent then is their experience going to vary depending on what they're doing and do you define learning objectives that are shared across these things or are the learning objectives unique to each different type of activity?

Associate Dean Connor:

We find that they are working in many settings that the student learning objectives will vary. We are going to provide a link to resources of possible student learning objectives both for helping in the lab, grading in their courses; we have developed these already and will make them available to our instructors with the hope that they will fine-tune them for what they have in mind regarding how they're using their undergraduates.

I also should mention those undergraduates are not solo; there's usually a graduate student in charge of the lab experience or in the discussion sections as well, so they are supervised in that way.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Principal Administrative Officers

Chancellor Subbaswamy:

According to section 3.1.1 of the bylaws of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Faculty Senate, the Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall be elected from among the members of the tenure system faculty to serve a term of three years.

Secretary Peterson's term ends in 2021 and the Faculty Senate bylaws stipulate that prior to the 1st of January of the year in which the secretary's term expires or whenever for reasons the office

falls vacant the Chancellor shall appoint a special nominating committee of three members of the Senate.

I am here to announce that I have appointed the following senators to serve as the special nominating committee for the Faculty Senate. Senator Lisa Green, Professor of Linguistics, Senator Sarah Hutton, Head of the Undergraduate Teaching and -Learning Services of the Libraries, Senator Wilmore Webley, Associate Professor of Microbiology.

Senator Green has agreed to chair this committee. The committee is responsible for nominating candidates to fill the position of Secretary and will report to the Senate no later than March 11th of 2021. I would like to thank these senators for working on this and to thank Secretary Peterson for her outstanding works as Secretary for the past several years.

Provost McCarthy:

As we near the end of our first full semester of mostly remote instruction, I recall our last in person Faculty Senate meeting, which occurred on March 12th, exactly eight months ago today. I took a moment earlier today to review the minutes of that meeting. They reminded me of the opening scene of Orson Welles's radio play "War of the Worlds", in which the broadcast of the live orchestra on the radio is repeatedly interrupted by news updates that foreshadow the invasion of Martians. A juxtaposition of the routine and the looming catastrophe.

My own comments at that meeting exposed me as a bad prognosticator. I predicted that we would move ahead briskly with the SPS Dean search which had just launched. Well, we did but it took us until October to close it.

I also predicted that we might have to grant a few pandemic-related TDY delays for example because the President had then banned travel. A week later, as the extent of the pandemic became clear, I was granting a campus-wide opt-out TDY delay.

I also said something like this: I want to express my gratitude for the collaboration that has been demonstrated by the faculty, especially for the statement that came out yesterday from the Massachusetts Society Professors. I really appreciate that spirit of collaboration; it will help us work through this time and will help us to provide an excellent education for our students despite the circumstances in which we now find ourselves.

I am happy to acknowledge that once again today we reach a similar collaboration with MSP and it was as always, to provide an excellent education for our students. I'd also like to report on a few highlights of our students' academic accomplishments.

Our 6-year graduation rate is once again reached a new high. 84% of students who entered in Fall 2014, have graduated; this 6-year graduation rate is probably the most closely watched metric of success at any University. Our 5-year graduation rate for the next cohort, students who entered in Fall 2015 is already 83%. So, it's highly likely we will best our current record of 84%.

Another thing that I'm really proud of is that the 6-year graduation gap between first-generation

and non-first-generation students is down to just 4 points, 81% vs 85% respectively. We're doing a great job and I thank you all for what you contributed to this.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life La Banc

The COVID-19 pandemic had presented all of us with major challenges. First of all, those of us in Student Affairs and Campus Life want to thank all of you for the work that you have put in these past several months to ensure their students continue to receive a meaningful UMass experience. Your job has been much harder and you and your faculty colleagues have done this, all the while managing what I'm sure has been a major disruption to your own lives and the lives of your family and community members.

This is a stressful point in the semester. Pre-COVID-19 we knew that, and in COVID we're even more aware of this. In a recent well-being survey of UMass undergraduate students, 23% stated that they felt "down", "depressed", or "hopeless" nearly every day in the prior 2 weeks. Again, this survey conducted a few weeks ago.

Another 21% stated they felt similarly on more than half the days. The most recent data from a CDC survey taken during Covid indicate the 25.5% of respondents during COVID, between the ages of 18-24 indicated seriously considering suicide within the past 30 days. This is more than double the average rate for suicidal ideation among the population as a whole and double the rate for this age group in previous years. Due to the fact that faculty interact with students often, you are very pivotal to help those who may be struggling emotionally or academically by directing them to the appropriate resources.

Under the leadership of Assistant Vice Chancellor of Campus Life and Wellbeing, Elizabeth Cracco we have curated a collection of faculty and staff resources to help identify signs of distress in students and to quickly connect them with Crisis Support Services available from UMass and nationally. So, I'm just hoping that via the minutes of this meeting we can share some links to those slides and graphics that can be highlighted in virtual classes.

https://umass.account.box.com/login?redirect_url=https%3A%2F%2Fumass.app.box.com%2Fs%2Freyjte45hbm1te8kogvz1gdgy83c7

Lastly, I want to highlight the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health has developed a new faculty and staff well-being service this semester. You're invited to call CCPH to receive recommendations and support from a licensed clinician regarding student mental health concerns.

Please consult early and often, that is exactly why we set this up to be an extra support to all of you and your colleagues. So, thank you again for allowing me to give voice to the experiences of many of our students and thank you again for always being there for them.

Vice Chancellor Malone

Good afternoon everyone. I think you all know we've been reopened in the research laboratories for some months now. We have had very good outcomes of health and safety measures thanks to a lot of hard work and attention by faculty, by staff, and by students. We've had no spread of Covid-19 in the research labs. All of the small number of cases that have been encountered have

been cases from the community.

We're currently at about 70% reopen in labs and hoping to grow further. Some activities are still remote and probably will remain so for a bit until we can normalize.

On Centers and Institutes, thanks to the Research Council for their recommendation this year of a very short, one-page, annual report for the centers and institutes that will simply answer the questions: "Is everything okay? What are your principal activities? Do you need any help with anything?"

The Five-Year review schedule for Centers and Institutes, which is a Board of Trustees requirement, was also discussed. We reached out and discuss this with the President's Office and have gotten some forbearance, so that the five-year review self-studies are now due in March rather than January. That will give an extra two and a half months for folks to put together a relatively straightforward self-study report. So, we hope that will give folks some relief but let us keep track of the important work, much of it interdisciplinary, that the centers and institutes are doing.

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Mangels:

I just received news today with the Senate Ways and Means Committee has forwarded the State budget with the state of appropriation being level-funded. So, it's now past the House Ways and Means and Senate Ways and Means Committee which is welcome news for the University continue to receive level funding on the state appropriation for FY21 level.

We're continuing to monitor the budgets as we get ready for the spring opening plan. We're still managing to about a \$5 million-dollar deficit that we hope to close over the remaining eight months of the fiscal year. We'll continue to monitor enrollment and on-campus occupancy levels into the Spring and refine that budget as necessary.

I also participated on Monday with a celebration at the new Worcester Dining Commons to celebrate our #1-ranking for dining once again – five years in a row. For anybody who has the opportunity to get to the Worcester Dining Commons, I recommend a visit. It is a beautiful facility and it's a great design to handle safely the number of students at will have on campus in the spring.

Lastly, I want to give thanks to all involved in the hard work that's gone into our Covid-19 testing. There has been a great collaboration between individuals and environmental health and safety. Our EMTs, student EMTs, public health, the school of nursing. It's just been a tremendous collaboration. It's incredible work that is involved in doing contact-tracing. This work sometimes goes late into the hours of the evening as well as on weekends when test results come back on Friday.

The successful contact-tracing and work that has occurred in the center testing has been absolutely critical in our quarantining and isolating students and containing the spread of the virus. So, I just want to thank you once again for the tremendous help that has gone into making that successful venture. As we budget for the spring, we're going to be increasing the resources

to the level that we're going to need for the 6,000-8,000 students on campus in the spring.

Vice Chancellor for Information Services and Chief Information Officer Misra:

All of our focus has clearly been on all things IT. I don't have the usage statistics, I'll have them for the next Senate meeting, but the rate of using Zoom, has been extraordinary. Our primary focus remains on Moodle, Blackboard, Zoom, and Echo360 which are the core tools for teaching in our remote environment.

Our team is also doing exceptional work with Andy's team on contact tracing and some of the IP back-end supporting some of the work. Once again, we appreciate your patience and we will keep focusing on availability and as always feel free to me or to the help desk.

2. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Secretary Peterson:

I suspect everybody understood what the Chancellor was saying just now. Last year even before COVID-19, I had decided that having any individual serve two terms as Faculty Senate Secretary were optimum for the Senate. With one term, a good chunk of the time is spent learning the job. With two terms, there is a lot of time when the Secretary knows the job and can do it well.

Beyond two terms, I have a feeling that maybe things get too comfortable with having the same person. Since anybody in this job has areas where they do a better job and a weaker job, the weaknesses would start becoming noticeable at six years. So, I had decided even before the COVID-19 emergency that 2021 would be the right time for the Faculty Senate to transition to a new Secretary.

I want to be clear that I am not a candidate for reelection. I also want to make clear to the special nominating committee and to anyone who's considering the position, that I'm happy to talk to those considering the position about what it involves. I will not be like the Trump Administration; I will fully cooperate in making the transition to the next Secretary and providing a platform for that person to succeed.

3. The Faculty Delegates to the Board of Trustees

Senator Hutton:

The only thing I have to report is that the Intercampus Faculty Council (IFC) is in discussion regarding the System Office's plan for UMass Global, and is gathering additional information particularly in regard to academic oversight and the role of faculty and academic governance.

4. The Representative of the Massachusetts Society of Professors

Senator Weinbaum:

We were relieved about the state budget. The House budget has level funding for UMass and we expect the same in the Senate budget that will come out next week and still a healthy reserve for the coming year. So that it's better news than we expected certainly six months ago. MSP continues to hear a lot of concerns from faculty and librarians about the impact of staff furloughs and the impact on our work. We've gotten stories about problems with grant management, IT support, registration, scheduling as well as building services including maintenance and cleaning that is more important than ever for people who are on campus.

We are hoping to get some reassurances that some staff are brought back and we're working with the staff unions on that. So as part of that effort we're collecting information from faculty and librarians about the impact of staff furloughs on your work, on your research, your students, your teaching, your time. So, send stories to MSP@umass.edu with or without your name attached. It will be really helpful for us to make sure that we know what's going on when we are arguing for reversing the indefinite furloughs and avoiding staff cuts through layoffs in the future. So, we know that many of you have been very concerned about your staff, about existing furloughs, and hours cuts and this is one concrete thing that you can do: send your story to MSP@umass.edu

We're working on mutual aid projects, and the Solidarity Fund has raised more than \$30,000 to support staff. A big thank you to everyone who made generous contributions to that fund. We have given out our first round of support and will be doing another appeal after Thanksgiving to support furloughed staff over the holidays.

Finally, we have heard a lot of concerns in the past week about face-to-face teaching and how that's happening, how assignments are going to be made, and the process. We did have a good meeting with the Provost's Office today and will be sending out a message jointly with the Provost's Office with some clarification, so we appreciate their willingness to collaborate with us. We all want what's best for our students and our colleagues and for the campus to bring people back safely and make sure that the academic program is as strong as it can be.

C. QUESTION PERIOD

Senator Dori-Hacohen:

I sent an email yesterday to IT and an automatic reply said they were not working yesterday on Veteran's Day, and I am wondering why some staff and faculty were not working?

My second question is about an email I received today that the football team will go away from November 19th - November 21st which is the last day of classes. I am wondering if it is a good idea for the football players to not attend the last day of classes?

Chancellor Subbaswamy:

In our impact bargaining with the staff unions we agreed that the usual holidays would be available for those who are not involved in teaching. Just as because of the teaching schedules we did not ask the faculty to have to participate in the furlough, there are certain things that would pertain to the staff. So that's really the reason why those holidays are being observed.

With regard to the football team, there were a lot of complications associated with the scheduling when we decided to allow the team to be on campus. Back then in July and August when they came to begin practice, there were a lot of questions about the schedule. We decide they would have reduced schedule of only four games. As games were scheduled, we had to make quick decisions, trying to strike a balance between academics and having opportunities for the football players to have games in a shortened season.

D. ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Report of the Student Affairs and University Life Council, as presented in

Sen. Doc. No. 21-006

Council Chair Vadnais:

I want to briefly speak about the Student Affairs and the University Life Council report for last year. It is a brief report so I assume you will have a chance to look at it. We did develop and propose an update our charge: we found some old titles, we added a graduate student representative to the council, and we updated some of the language. I believe I will be speaking next Faculty Senate meeting and then a couple after that to put that through the Faculty Senate process.

Last Fall, we spoke a lot about the graduate housing closure as the campus made plans to renovate Lincoln Apartments and North Village Apartments so the council did have many concerns and a lot of conversation about this in the fall. But in the end, I think we're satisfied with the measures that UMass Administration was doing and taking into consideration of graduate students moving forward and including them in the process.

We also had some students from SGA come and speak about their plans to promote the participation in the 2020 US Census. Then, as we all know, COVID hit, so much of a council kind of shifted to discussing how students were dealing with the crisis as everyone shifted to remote and how they were being affected being at home while trying to maybe work with other difficulties in their remote worlds technologically-wise, family-wise, etc.

2. Annual Report of the Undergraduate Education Council, as presented in

Sen. Doc. No. 21-007

Secretary Peterson:

Last year's Council Chair, Maeve Howett, left UMass for a position at another university in February, and I agreed to serve as interim chair while some members' situations settled down. The Undergraduate -Education Council's is charged to "advise generally on the academic aspects of the undergraduate experience on campus." This gives it a fairly wide-ranging mandate to look at a variety of things that the Academic Matters Council doesn't have time to look at because its agenda is so dominated by examining and recommending courses, examining and recommending programs, examining and recommending academic rules and regulations that will apply to undergraduates.

In the Undergraduate Education Council we get to talk about broader concerns. There were three that got most of our attention last year. First, and perhaps this one has been forgotten because it is hard for us to go back and remember the challenge the campus faced because we had an incoming class in Fall 2019 that was several hundred students larger than anticipated. But that was the case, and much of the preceding summer was spent by staff, not only in Residential Life, but also in Academic Affairs getting ready for their arrival by increasing sessions of New

Student Orientation, by preparing extra advising, by adding seats to a number of classes so that students would have courses to take, and adding first year seminars so that they were enough First Year -Seminars for all of these students.

It was a challenge that the campus met very well. In retrospect, we could look at it as a rehearsal for COVID-19. It didn't force anybody to pivot their method of teaching, but it did mean having to be flexible, having to add on certain features, having to do certain things. So, in 2019 the academic advisors got very little break between the end of summer advising in the beginning of the fall term.

They went into '19-'20 fairly tired and I suspect that a number of them are likely to get that sweatshirt that says, "First Rule of 2021 – We Don't Talk About 2020".

The second issue we talked about a lot, and I think we were able to help the College of Natural Sciences in their process of developing it, is good practices for using undergraduate course assistants. We also thought that the more knowledge there was around campus about undergraduate course assistants they can be employed would be a useful thing for other parts of campus to know because some parts of campus do sometimes use undergraduates as course assistants in some way.

The CNS report did carefully emphasize the training. Associate Dean Connor forget to mention earlier one thing that we in the Undergraduate Education Council think is important – that any student who is going to be able to see attendance records or grade records of another student has to be FERPA trained. They have to go through the same FERPA training the faculty member would go through so that they are fully informed, and don't make the kinds of mistakes that will get the university in trouble for violating someone's privacy.

The last part of the year you won't be surprised to know was dominated by discussing how the academic side was coping with a pivot to remote instruction and all of the joys that went along with that. I remember Vice-Chancellor Misra telling us at the time that the campus had gone from about 2,000 Zoom meetings a month in February to 4,000 meetings a day when we started remote teaching. So, there was a lot of heavy lifting and the council is very grateful to everyone involved in it.

E. NEW BUSINESS: AMENDMENT OF THE FACULTY SENATE CONSTITUTION

Proposals for changes in the Faculty Senate Constitution, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-008

[Paragraph 9 of the Constitution specifies that amendments to the Constitution may be voted on at a regular or special meeting of the Faculty Senate after an initial presentation at an earlier regular or special meeting. This begins the required sequence.]

Secretary Peterson:

Today begins what, as you all can see from the amendment provisions of the Constitution, is a really long process. We have to present the amendments at one meeting. The voting can be at a later meeting; it doesn't have to be the very next meeting; it's not quite as rigid as the rules for

amending the bylaws. But after the Senate votes, that's not the adoption of the amendments; the Senate vote is a recommendation of the amendment for ratification in a referendum by the whole Faculty.

Luckily these days we have ways we can do voting electronically and it will take much less time that would have back in the days when we would have to distribute paper ballots and wait for them to get out to the departments by University mail and wait for them to come back. But we will still obey the voting interval that is specified in the Constitution nonetheless.

What I want to do now is briefly explain what is behind the proposals. The one that I think is most noticeable to people is changing the number of elected senators. It is a reduction. What it does is it brings the number of elected senators in line with the districting and the districting is in line with what we are able to recruit.

The smaller number is 5% of the total faculty who are eligible to vote in faculty senate elections. I think 5% does give us the basis for a representation of voices from all parts of campus, from different stages of careers, from different socioeconomic positions, from different disciplines etc.

The districting scheme itself, which asks us to divide the districts by academic area does give us that portion of diversity and then we have to be mindful of the other sorts of diversity as candidates come forward.

When I read the Constitution carefully I was a bit stunned by the provision on "Senators on Leave" which basically says that if a senator goes on a leave they are automatically resigning and being replaced. I can see where that might be reasonable for a full year leave, but most people take a one semester leave.

So, I thought that not forcing somebody out, but providing a way that they can take an interval away and then come back would be better. But I will leave it to the collective wisdom of the Senate. Certainly, if somebody taking a full year sabbatical did decide to resign, they could do that and then we would simply have a special election to fill the vacancy.

The third part of the amendment in paragraph four, reflects the fact that the Constitution was developed in 1957. The administrative titles in the Constitution reflect the organization of the university in 1957, which means a long time ago. The difficulty of having those titles so specific is that the Constitution easily gets away from reality. What I'm proposing to do is make the titles in the Constitution less specific and then put the specifics in the bylaws because it is easier to revise the bylaws.

In paragraph five, the big change is again one that matches the Constitution with reality. It is addition of the word "Lecturer" to the ranks of faculty eligible to vote.

Lecturers are now a distinct career path in the faculty. The full-time lecturers and many of the part time lecturers are members of Massachusetts Society of Professors. De-facto, we have been treating them as eligible voters for many years and I don't see why they should be left out.

Then in paragraph five, we have another part that says that “faculty on leave are not eligible to vote while they're on leave”. That also struck me as odd because these days everybody can keep up with what is going on campus and can get their votes in electronically. Unlike the election authorities in certain parts of the United States looking for ways to restrict the voting population, I would like to lift a restriction.

The proposed amendment to Paragraph seven is also to conform to what was written in 1957 to now. For many years we have been operating with a faculty delegate to the board and one associate delegate to the board.

Again, that's something that we can think about. I think the de-facto has been working very well and I'm grateful to successive delegates and associate delegates for their active service in that role.

Paragraph eight is a technical amendment, allowing us to use current technology. You notice that there was a telephone chain as to how faculty would be notified about a referendum. We can now do that directly through the email voting lists.

Paragraph nine is grammatical recasting. It was all done as one big sentence with semicolons. It was kind of a clumsy way to write it, and other parts of the Constitution are not like that. So, I thought let's just make it better grammatically.

Finally, paragraph ten; the bylaws amendments. Somehow when this was written either the Faculty Senate did not have standing committees or somebody forgot to put them in. I realized that the language should be “and standing committees” not “committees”, and again this is mostly grammatical.

F. NEW BUSINESS: COURSES

Secretary Peterson: I move that Faculty Senate approve the courses ANTHRO 210, ASIAN-ST312, BMED-ENG 414, COMM-DIS 110, POLISCI 228, SPHHS 150, WGSS 286, MUSIC 597I, AND SOCIOLOGICAL 201, as recommended by the Academic Matters, General Education, and Graduate Councils.

Secretary Peterson:

I would like to amend the motion to include Sociology (SOCIOLOGICAL) 201 “Women and Work” CCMS Number 6345, 4 credits.

Presiding Officer Brewer: This is a friendly amendment. Unless I hear objection, I will take it as accepted. Hearing none, the amendment is adopted.

MOTION 08-21 as amended was Approved

G. NEW BUSINESS: PROGRAMS

1. Special Report of the Academic Matters and Graduate Councils concerning the Creation of an Accelerated Master of Science in Data Analytics and Computational Social Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-009
2. Special Report of the Academic Matters Council concerning the revision of a degree Program in Communication Disorders (BS), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-010
3. Special Report of the Academic Matters Council concerning a revision to the Certificate In Professional Translation and Interpreting, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-011
4. Special Report of the Academic Matters Council concerning a revision to the degree Program in Nutrition (BS), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-012
5. Special Report of the Academic Matters Council concerning a revision to the degree Program in Economics (BA), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-013
6. Special Report of the Graduate Council concerning creation of a Political Science and Research Methods concentration in the Ph.D. Program in Political Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. 21-014

Secretary Peterson:

The proposers have requested that consideration of Item (6) “Special Report of the Graduate Council concerning creation of a Political Science and Research Methods concentration in the Ph.D. Program in Political Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. 21-014” be postponed until the December meeting.

Consistent with Faculty Senate rules regarding consent agendas, the request was accepted.

Secretary Peterson read the revised motion: That the Faculty Senate approve (1) Creation of an Accelerated Master of Science in Data Analytics and Computational Social Science, as presented in Sen. Doc. No.21-009; (2) Revision of a Degree Program in Communication Disorders (BS), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-010; (3) Revision to the Certificate in Professional Translation and Interpreting, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-011; (4) Revision to the Degree Program In Nutrition (BS), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-012; (5) Revision to the Degree Program in Economics (BA), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-013.

H. NEW BUSINESS: POLICIES

Policy on Satisfactory/Fail Grading of Graduate Courses for the Fall 2020 term, as presented in Sen. oc. No. 21-005A

Secretary Peterson moved that the Faculty Senate approve the Policy on Satisfactory/Fail Grading of Graduate Courses for the Fall 2020 term, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 21-005A.

Motion seconded by Senator Calas

Secretary Peterson:

This is a much-revised version of what had been up on the Faculty Senate website last week. It reflects the complexity of academic regulations at the graduate level. The power to determine program rules for graduate degrees is very much at the program level. Each doctoral program, each master's program; if one department has more than one graduate program its separate programs can have different rules.

The only common rule about grading that exists in the entire graduate school, is that for a master's degree, at least 50% of the courses must be taken for a letter grade. So, the venture in trying to provide graduate students with some COVID-19 relief, much as we have provided undergraduate students with COVID-19 relief, turned out to be extremely complex.

I felt like that character in the ancient sculpture Laocoön and His Sons who has snakes all around him that he is trying to shake off. Now I think in the sculpture there are only two or three; by the time I got through some of this discussion I felt like I had 6 or 7 of them.

We had a very good discussion of all of this in the Graduate Council yesterday. This draft came out of some discussions before that as well as the discussion at the Graduate Council. I'm particularly grateful to members of the Graduate Council because that discussion ended up taking their meeting an extra half an hour.

Senator Olsen:

I just want to confirm to what extent may a department determine what that means by "passing". For instance, in our department, if anything below a B- does not count towards the degree, but if you put a C or D into SPIRE or will that actually PASS them and give them credit when they normally wouldn't?

In this document, I only see that it only says if you have an outside credentialing and I'm wondering about just the general reputation of our graduate program if suddenly you can get graduate credit for a D.

Secretary Peterson:

My sense of this is, and there are members of the Graduate Council here who can speak to it as well, is that if normally you do not allow a grade below a B- to count as credit toward the degree, then that lower grade is effectively a FAIL. The graduate grading scheme is different from the undergraduate one. If someone is performing at that level, wouldn't that actually be a fail?

Senator Olsen:

I agree. I just wanted clarity in this. Just so we don't have a graduate student say, "well wait a minute I got a D and that is passing according to SPIRE".

Secretary Peterson:

Not at the graduate level.

Senator Baird:

Maybe I don't know what's past policy but how would this change from what we normally do?

Secretary Peterson:

How much would change what you normally do depends on what the program decides to do. Basically, it is an appeal for programs to be flexible. It's an understanding that some programs cannot be very flexible because of requirements of professional accreditation. Some programs may want to still focus on having letter grades in core courses that they regard as predictors for success in the rest of the program.

Each part of the campus, once you get into graduate programs, is just a very different world and so it proved almost impossible to write anything covering all programs.

So, the only thing we could write that would fit all the different "worlds" was extending the period in which the student could communicate the desire for satisfactory/fail to the faculty member. For the rest, the policy is an appeal for understanding by faculty members and by GPDs.

If the department wants to reserve all certain courses because they've always treated them as key courses, they could communicate that.

MOTION 10-22 was Approved.

Presiding Officer Brewer: Seeing that we have completed consideration of all items on the agenda, I declare the meeting adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

MJ Peterson Secretary