



CALL TO ORDER

Senate Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 3:18 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 4, 2019 SENATE MINUTES (ACTION)

Chair Walsh asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the April 4, 2019, meeting; hearing none, he declared the minutes approved as distributed.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Committee Volunteer Period

Chair Walsh noted that there is still time to sign up to serve on one of the ten Senate standing committees this coming year. He added that volunteers do not need to be a Senator to be a member of one of these committees. Senate committees address topics related to students, faculty, and staff affairs, as well as educational and campus affairs. Walsh also noted that the deadline to volunteer is April 30th and that those interested could go to the Senate website to submit a volunteer statement and pick their top three committee choices. Walsh stated that the Senate's Committee on Committees will be selecting volunteers to serve on each committee and will notify selected volunteers over the summer.

Remaining Senate Meetings

Chair Walsh reminded Senators that this is the last meeting for all outgoing Senators and asked outgoing Senators to stand and be recognized. Chair Walsh explained that the May 7th Transition Senate Meeting will be for all continuing and incoming senators and would be his last meeting as Chair. On May 7th, the Senate will elect the next Chair-Elect, Pamela Lanford will take over as Chair, and the Senate will vote for the elected committees of the Senate. The names of candidates running for the various committees and their candidacy statements were distributed on April 23rd. The agenda and any additional materials for that meeting will be sent out on April 30th.

Presidential Search Update

Chair Walsh reported that Chancellor Caret has announced the membership of the presidential search committee. He noted that Regent Gary Attman will chair the search committee, and Dean Ball of the College of Behavioral & Social Sciences was appointed Vice Chair of the search committee. Former University President and University System of Maryland (USM) Chancellor, Brit Kirwan, has also agreed to serve on the committee. Walsh stated that the membership of the committee includes faculty, staff, and students suggested by the Senate. He noted that the search committee will be holding a campus-wide open forum on Wednesday, May 8, 2019.

ENHANCING SENATE INPUT ON UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND RESOURCES (SENATE DOCUMENT #17-18-20) (ACTION)

Andrew Horbal, Chair of the Elections, Representation, & Governance (ERG) Committee, presented Enhancing Senate Input on University Planning and Resources (Senate Document #17-18-20) and provided background information on the proposal.

Chair Walsh opened the floor to discussion of the proposal.

Senator Reichard, undergraduate student, College of Behavioral & Social Sciences and member of the ERG Committee, expressed his frustration over the level of undergraduate student representation on the proposed special committee. He noted that none of his recommendations were incorporated in the final plans for the committee. He commented that he believes his experience is representative of shared governance at the university. He stated that the special committee will be ineffective and will not provide accurate or useful information to the campus community. He urged the Senate to reject the ERG committee's recommendations.

Jordan Goodman, past Senate Chair, responded that he disagreed with Senator Reichard's statements. He noted that the purpose of the committee is not to develop policy, but to help the Senate understand the budget so that it can better advise the administration. He urged the Senate to support the proposal.

Horbal noted that the special committee was intentionally designed with a three-year term so that membership could be reconsidered, as appropriate.

Senator T. Cohen, faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences, urged the Senate to support the proposal. He noted that policy is linked to the budget, and noted that if the Senate does not understand the budget, it cannot produce good policy. He asked how the committee is intended to operate and how it would help people outside the Senate to understand the budget.

Horbal responded that the committee was designed in a way to allow it to evolve over time. He stated that the ERG Committee envisioned the special committee would educate the campus through the Senate, noting that Senators should advise their constituents based on information from the special committee.

Chair-Elect Lanford, stated that the establishment of the special committee before the presidential transition is an important opportunity for the Senate. She encouraged the Senate to support the proposal. She commented on the membership breakdown of the committee, noting that it is intended to be consistent with the membership of other Senate committees. She stated that the approach would provide a baseline of comparison so that membership can be adjusted in the future, as necessary.

Senator E. Lathrop, faculty, A. James Clark School of Engineering and member of the ERG Committee noted that the committee had lengthy discussions about the special committee's membership composition. She emphasized the importance of maintaining tradition of current Senate committee structure, noting that it is traditional to include members from the campus community at large rather than seeking representation from specific organizations. She stated that she believes it is reasonable at this juncture to maintain the proposed composition for a small and reasonable committee so that it can work effectively.

Senator Unal, faculty, Robert H. Smith School of Business, asked about the objective of the committee if the University budget is public and can be analyzed at any time. He asked if the special committee would be involved in the development of the budget, or if it would share opinions after the budget had been approved.

Horbale stated that the budget process is year-round and begins in the summer. He stated that the special committee would be directly engaged in helping to formulate the budget. He noted that the committee would interact with University's administration and the Senate throughout the entire process and would provide analysis and feedback after the budget is made public.

Senator Unal asked if the committee would have power to demand or reject particular items in the budget.

Horbale responded that as it was described to the ERG Committee, the budget process is not as simple as being able to say "yes" or "no" to individual items.

Seeing no further discussion, Walsh called for a vote on the proposal. The result was 86 in favor, 10 opposed, and 2 abstentions. **The motion to approve the proposal passed.**

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A UNIVERSITY POLICY ON REPEATING UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (SENATE DOCUMENT #18-19-09) (ACTION)

Thomas Cohen, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee, presented the Proposal to Establish a University Policy on Repeating Undergraduate Courses (Senate Document #18-19-09) and provided background information on the proposal.

Chair Walsh opened the floor to discussion of the proposal.

Senator Rozenblit, faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, asked how the policy would affect students who fail courses.

T. Cohen responded that the policy is intended to codify current practice. He stated that students who wish to repeat a course in which they received a failing grade would have the opportunity to do so. He noted that the policy would prohibit them from registering for the same course for a third time without being granted an exception from the dean of their college.

Senator Abana, graduate student, A. James Clark School of Engineering commented that Cohen had mentioned that previous grades would remain on student transcripts even if a course is repeated course. He noted that the University should remove old grades to encourage students to retake courses for better results and asked if the policy would do so.

T. Cohen responded that the policy is largely codifying current practice. He expressed concern that encouraging students to retake courses more than necessary would waste University resources. He noted that the policy largely has to do with GPA calculations, and that the committee did not consider replacing grades on student transcripts because grade replacement was not included in the original policy proposal.

Senator Abana expressed his opinion that if a student goes to the effort of retaking a course, they deserve to have the old grade stricken from their record.

T. Cohen responded that his principal concern is that if students are overly encouraged to retake courses, resources will not be used effectively. He stated that students would be more inclined to optimize their GPAs than to graduate in a reasonable amount of time.

Senator Jennings, staff, Division of Research, introduced Suzanne Ashour-Bailey, A. James Clark School of Engineering. Ashour-Bailey asked T. Cohen to clarify the definition of “Attempt” and how it applied to auditing courses.

T. Cohen responded that the committee discussed the inclusion of “audit” as an “Attempt”. He suggested that if a student audited a course before registering to take it for a grade, they would have an advantage over other students in the course. He acknowledged that students may audit courses without registering to do so and that this policy could penalize students who officially audit courses.

Ashour-Bailey noted that students do not earn credit for auditing courses and asked why they should be penalized when they do not receive credit. She noted that it would not be in a student’s best interest for an audited course to count towards the 18-credit repeat limit.

T. Cohen responded that the committee attempted to strike a balance between helping students and using resources effectively. He noted that the committee did not discuss audits at length.

Ashour-Bailey noted that the recommendations include that the policy be implemented in Fall 2020. She asked if the policy would apply to all students at that time.

T. Cohen responded that the policy would apply to all students because it is simpler for the Office of the Registrar to manage one consistent set of criteria for repeating courses.

Senator Huntley, undergraduate student, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, made a motion to amend the policy by removing references to audits from the definition of “Attempt” as noted in pink below:

An “**Attempt**” of a course refers to a course taken at the University for which a student received a grading symbol or marking (A+ through F, XF, P, S, W, I, **or NG, or AU**) identified in the University of Maryland Grading Symbols and Notations Used on Academic Transcripts (III-6.20[A]). An “Attempt” also refers to a course taken at another institution subsequent to an Attempt taken at the University of Maryland. An “Attempt” does not refer to a course taken during a semester in which a complete withdrawal (designated with a WW) was processed.

Chair Walsh asked for a second. The motion was seconded. He opened the floor to discussion of the amendment.

Senator Huntley expressed his concern that inclusion of “audit” as an “Attempt” would result in students inundating professors with requests to unofficially audit courses. He stated that students should not be disincentivized from following the rules.

T. Cohen responded that in his opinion, that would be a minor side effect of including “audit”. He stated that students who audit courses typically plan to do so for well-thought-out reasons, not

because they believe they will fail the course. He noted that allowing students to audit courses without counting it as an "Attempt" results in inequity between auditing students and students who take a course with no prior experience.

Senator Brown, undergraduate student, A. James Clark School of Engineering, stated that some students audit courses for fun when their personal interests lie outside their chosen field of study. She noted that students who audit courses for fun may not attend every class, and therefore would not have an advantage over other students at a later date.

Senator Scarcelli, faculty, A. James Clark School of Engineering, suggested that if University tuition were to go down in the future, students would be better able to retake courses to raise their GPA. He noted that many students in Europe retake courses for this reason, and advised the Senate to keep this in mind.

Senator J. Kahn, faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences, stated that as an instructor of a difficult course, he is in favor of allowing students to audit so that they can do well when taking courses for a grade.

Senator Abana proposed an amendment but Parliamentarian Novara stated that the proposed amendment should be considered separately once the current amendment had been completed.

Dean Cohen, Office of Undergraduate Studies, reinforced the concept that students should be required to register to audit a course in order to more efficiently use University resources and that an audit should be considered to be an "Attempt". He expressed concern that students who audit courses have complete access to course materials but do not receive a grade, and that this could invalidate grades for students who take the class for a grade.

Senator Callaghan, faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, stated that the amount of work that a student would undertake to first audit a course and then take it for a grade should not be considered cheating. She stated that she supports the amendment to remove "audit" because students should not be penalized for applying themselves to learning.

Senator Evers, faculty, Robert H. Smith School of Business, introduced Alice Donlan, Teaching and Learning Transformation Center. Donlan urged the Senate to reject the amendment. She stated that allowing students to audit courses without limit could result in an environment in which students with the resources to pay for more semesters at the University would have an opportunity to preview courses and then take them for credit without repercussion. She expressed concern that this would be unfair to students who do not have the resources to extend their time at the University.

T. Cohen agreed that this would produce serious inequity issues among students. He noted that the amendment is regarding whether an audit should be counted as an "Attempt", not whether students should be allowed to audit courses.

Senator Koppel, faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences, expressed her support for the amendment. She noted that many students do not complete audited courses, and that they would not receive an advantage over other students unless the professor repeated their course verbatim from semester to semester. She stated that students could get the same advantage by reading a course's required texts ahead of time. She argued that auditing allows students to perform better in their courses.

Dean Cohen introduced Adrian Cornelius, University Registrar. Cornelius stated that an “AU” mark denotes that a student audited a course for the entire semester. He expressed concern for removing “audit” from the definition of “Attempt”, students would be free to audit the same course several times before attempting it for a grade.

Senator Koppel noted that she has never experienced a student willing to audit the same class more than once and asked if Cornelius had data to support that concern.

Cornelius responded that though instances of repeated audits are likely minimal, he was concerned about the general concept.

Senator Lau, faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, expressed her support for the amendment and stated that she feels strongly that classes are a competition and that grades show that students have won that competition. She stated that she does not believe students are cheating by auditing to master course material, and expressed her disappointment that the University does not share that opinion.

T. Cohen stated that there is too much emphasis in academia for students to optimize their grades, and restated his concern about the use of University resources. He stated that students should not take unnecessary attempts at courses, even in an ideal world in which academia is motivated by thoughts of intellectual growth.

Senator Lau stated that there should be a way to restrict course registrations to prioritize students who are registering for a course for the first time.

Seeing no further discussion, Chair Walsh called for a vote on the amendment. The result was 43 in favor, 43 opposed, and 4 abstentions. In the event of a tie, the Senate Chair casts the deciding vote. Walsh opposed the amendment. **The motion to amend the policy failed.**

Walsh opened the floor to discussion of the policy.

Senator Klose, faculty, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, introduced Katherine Russell, Associate Dean, College of Behavioral & Social Sciences. Russell stated that there are other resource issues at stake beyond students auditing courses to get better grades. She gave the example of a student passing MATH120 at a community college and then having to take MATH140 at the University of Maryland. She asked if taking the course at this university would count as a repeat. She also asked if the credit for MATH120 would be removed if the student then failed MATH140. She stated that it would be a waste of resources to require the student to repeat MATH120 in that situation.

T. Cohen explained that the credit for MATH120 would not be included in the student’s University GPA, and that MATH140 would not be considered a repeat because the original class was not taken at this university. He noted that the failing grade for MATH140 would remain on the transcript, but that the student would have multiple options for repeating the course depending on their status at the University.

Russell asked if the student would lose the earned credit for MATH120 if their initial attempt of it were taken at the University, followed by the receipt of a failing grade in MATH140.

T. Cohen noted that much of the policy refers to GPA calculations rather than earned credits.

Dean Cohen introduced Doug Roberts, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies. Roberts stated that the policy is about counting how many credits can be applied to a student's degree and what is included in GPA calculations. He said that if a student has fulfilled a requirement for their major, it should still apply even if the student receives a failing grade when repeating that course. He stated that making sure that the requirement still applies is complicated, but agreed that requiring a student to repeat the required class would be a waste of resources.

Seeing no further discussion, Chair Walsh called for a vote on the proposal. The result was 72 in favor, 16 opposed, and 4 abstentions. **The motion to approve the policy passed.**

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SENATE DOCUMENT #16-17-24) (ACTION)

Thomas Cohen, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards Committee, presented the Student Course Evaluation Improvement Project (Senate Document #16-17-24) and provided background information on the proposal.

Chair Walsh opened the floor to discussion of the proposal.

Senator Bravo, faculty, College of Arts & Humanities thanked the APAS Committee for its work on the proposal. He expressed his belief that grade distributions should not be made available to students, because students will only register for seemingly easy courses. He stated that faculty who teach difficult courses could be adversely affected. He noted that most of the committee's recommendations were shared with clear justifications, but that the only rationale for sharing grade distributions is that students regularly ask for them and that the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA) has to provide them to third party websites under the Freedom of Information Act. He stated that though sharing grade distributions was the University's practice before 2014, this is not a justified reason to share them now if there is no demonstrable benefit to doing so. He noted that he received emails from other departments who share his concerns. He shared a statement from another ARHU faculty member who stated that sharing grade distributions could have a deleterious effect on professional track (PTK) faculty and the University.

Senator Rozenblit made a motion to amend the proposal by striking the recommendation about sharing grade distributions as follows in pink:

~~The University should again make course grade distributions available to students.~~

Chair Walsh asked for a second. The motion was seconded. Walsh opened the floor to discussion of the amendment.

T. Cohen stated that the committee discussed arguments in favor of sharing grade distributions, including that they are already available, though not uniformly. He noted that aside from access to grade distributions, students already communicate about what courses or instructors are easy. He stated that students making less-than-noble assessments based on their own information is not a better situation than the University providing accurate data.

Mike Passarella-George, subcommittee member, referred to the history of providing grade distributions to students. He noted that responses to the question "how do you think you did in this course" were also previously available to students and were used when registering for courses. He

stated that throughout the subcommittee's experience interviewing constituent groups, every conversation with students reflected their desire for access to grade distributions. He stated that the proposed system does attempt to balance competing interests between assessing teaching effectiveness and helping students with course selection.

Senator Levermore, faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences, stated that he teaches a large sophomore-level math course, and that he publicly shares his grade distributions. He stated that grade distributions do not provide as much information as students think they do. He observed that performance in his course typically depends on how much students help each other, and that comments from students that the class is "easy" rarely reflect the actual rigor of the course. He stated that grade distributions are an unstable feedback mechanism and that students who request them are misguided.

Senator Huntley stated that though he was originally concerned that access to grade distributions would result in grade inflation, he believes that they should be made available to students. He observed that students already discuss amongst themselves which courses are easier and that they can all access the data on third party websites. He stated that it is unfair that some students have better social networks to utilize when choosing courses during registration.

Senator Reichard emphasized Senator Huntley's statement. He stated that students already utilize independent resources to seek out grade distributions, and that the University should provide them so that students have accurate data with which to make informed decisions.

Senator Brown noted that many difficult courses are major requirements that students will register for regardless of the grade distribution. She suggested that publicizing grade distributions could result in professors improving their teaching practices.

Chair-Elect Lanford agreed that access to grade distributions could allow instructors to inform their own teaching. She suggested that it could be useful for instructors to see if they are on par with their peers.

T. Cohen stated that departments can already facilitate such comparisons.

Chair-Elect Lanford stated that she has never experienced such discussion in her own department.

Doug Roberts, subcommittee member, stated that it was very clear from students that having this information is important to them, regardless of the ability to find it from third parties. He stated that he was hopeful that the publication of grade distributions would inspire conversations about the importance of grades. He noted that there is no clear correlation between grading and rigor of a course. He stated that access to grade distributions across departments could facilitate these discussions.

Senator Huntley noted that students already tell each other which courses they think are easy.

Senator Evers noted that by providing grade distribution information, the University could put the data into better context for student use. He stated that the more the University can control the data, the less students will have to rely on inaccurate sources.

Senator Bianchini, faculty, College of Arts & Humanities, expressed her support for the amendment. She noted the effect of grade distributions on enrollment in courses taught by PTK faculty. She

stated that if the data is provided by the University, students may feel that it is an official tool to be used when registering for courses. She observed that grade distributions are not a good measure of teaching effectiveness, rigor, or information about a course, and that the data can vary wildly.

Senator Koppel stated that she is unsure how the data would be useful in terms of feedback. She noted that several PTK faculty in her department already consult each other when teaching the same course, and that their grade distributions are typically similar. She stated that there is other information available to students that they should use when choosing courses.

Senator Lau stated that the University is not responsible for providing all of the information that students want. She expressed concern that by providing grade distributions, the University would be endorsing the data as a tool that students should use.

Senator Bhargava, faculty, School of Public Policy, raised concerns about the specific comments made by the students and the repetitiveness of their comments. He was ruled out of order by Parliamentarian Novara.

Senator Huntley stated that students should be allowed to express their perspectives on an issue that affects them so significantly. He noted that students can already access grade distributions, and asked if the University really wants them to receive the data from third parties rather than providing it with context.

Senator Evers made a motion to call the question and end discussion on the amendment to the proposal.

Chair Walsh asked for a second. The motion was seconded. Walsh called for a vote on the motion to call the question and noted that it required a 2/3 vote in favor to pass. The result was 74 in favor, 4 opposed. **The motion to call the question passed.**

Chair Walsh called for a vote on the amendment to the proposal. The result was 30 in favor, 45 opposed, and 6 abstentions. **The motion to amend the proposal failed.**

Senator Napp-Avelli, faculty, College of Education, introduced Imani Goffney, College of Education. Goffney noted that it seems as though the committee was concerned about how the survey addresses bias. She noted that student bias could be expressed in responses to questions about climate and instructor satisfaction. She suggested that the questions be revisited, or that clear guidance be provided to the advisory group about the wording of those questions. She thanked the committee for its work on the proposal.

Chair-Elect Lanford made a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes.

Chair Walsh asked for a second. The motion was seconded. Walsh called for a vote on the motion to extend and noted that it required a 2/3 vote in favor to pass. The result was 57 in favor, 20 opposed. **The motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes passed.**

T. Cohen responded to Goffney and stated that the committee was extremely sensitive to the issue of bias and would attempt to make sure that opportunities for bias be eliminated as much as possible. He noted that the trade-off to keeping responses open enough to get information is that doing so invites bias. He stated that it is a complicated issue, but that the committee will try to

formulate and test questions to gauge whether students are responding to the questions the survey is intending to ask.

Goffney observed that instructors benefit from getting information from students, and that positive questions that ask for evidence could be beneficial.

T. Cohen responded that that is the intention of several questions.

Alice Donlan, subcommittee member, stated that part of the reason that the recommendations include changing the title of the survey is to recognize that student assessments of teaching are based on their perceptions. She noted that students have a valuable viewpoint but that they cannot speak to every aspect of teaching assessment. She stated that it is dangerous when the student evaluation survey is the only measure of effective teaching. She noted that there is a vast amount of documentation of bias, so the proposal includes constructs that are designed to reduce the amount of error due to student bias. She stated that as concrete benchmarks for effective teaching are created, it is less likely that students will include bias in their responses.

Senator Dorland, faculty, College of Computer, Mathematical, & Natural Sciences, stated that he has been teaching at the University for 20 years and that he has a lot of experience with student course evaluations. He noted that students are adults and that he values their opinions, and that asking for value judgments is very important. He expressed that it is important to ask students if an instructor was an effective teacher or if the student learned a lot in the class. He asked if the recommendations were that all of the current questions be removed, and if it is possible to retain some of the current questions.

Donlan responded that there are problems with those particular questions. She stated that students are typically not pedagogy experts and do not have a strong definition of effective teaching, so students are not the correct audience to answer those questions. She noted that students do not have the experience or knowledge to know what an effective instructor is. She noted that a low score on a question like "I learned a lot in this class" could have many interpretations to the point that an instructor may not be able to correctly interpret the response. She stated that the committee desired to develop questions about things that instructors can use to improve their teaching.

Chair Walsh noted that the Senate would have to postpone discussion on this proposal due to time constraints.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.