



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY CONGRESS

Academic Year 2024-2025

October 22, 2024

10:00 to 11:30 am

via Zoom: <https://villanova.zoom.us/j/3688604725?omn=95666560633>

AGENDA

Present: Jennifer Altamuro, Farshid Baghai, Rishtee Batra, Paul Bernhardt, Lucy Chen, Allison Covey, Raul Diego Rivera Hernandez, Joseph Drury (vice-chair), Jason Grant, Amber Haley, Stephanie Katz Linkmeyer, Michelle M. Kelly, Christopher Kilby, Amanda Knecht, Brittany Koons, Rory Kramer, Bo Li, Michelle McKay, Gwendolyn Morris, Max Osborn, Jared Paul (chair), Alan Pichanick, Megan Povelones, Jacob Rozran, Andrew Scott, John Sedunov, Rachel Skrlac Lo, Raisa Velthuis, Ryan Weldzius

Housekeeping

- Welcome!

Tej Patel, Villanova's new Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, will be our guest speaker at the next meeting.

- Approval of minutes from September 23, 2024 meeting

Minutes approved.

Standing Committee Reports (*reports submitted in advance; please see Appendix A; this time set aside for elevated issues and/or questions*)

1. Awards Committee
2. Adjunct Faculty Representatives (Tina Agustiady)
3. CNT/FTNTT Faculty Representatives (Rishtee Batra)
4. Election and Credentials Committee (Bob Styer)
5. Research Policy Committee (RPC; Megan Povelones, chair)

RPC met on Monday, October 21, 2024 to review HRPP plan; plan was subsequently submitted to Amanda Grannas.

6. Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee (FRRC; Michelle Kelly, chair)
7. Retired faculty members

Committees with Faculty Representation (*reports submitted in advance; please see Appendix A; this time set aside for elevated issues and/or questions*)

1. Academic Policy Committee (Greg Hoskins)

APC report:

1. *The Provost and Dean's rejected the petition from Faculty Congress back in the spring to make Election Day an "asynchronous" instruction day. The petition was designed to remove barriers to students and faculty participating in the election, say by voting or by working at a polls. They offered three reasons for rejecting the proposal: first, students now will be able to vote on campus (thus eliminating for many the time it took in the past to get to the polls to vote in person on election day); second, people concerned about the time it might take to vote in person on election day have readily-available mail-in ballot options; and, third, students could take a Personal Day if they needed one on that day.*
2. *If members of Faculty Congress have questions about the work of APC this year or proposals for what we should take up in APC, please do not hesitate to contact Greg Hoskins directly.*

Discussion:

In the spring, students on APC said they saw personal days more for personal health, not for election day. Faculty always have right to temporarily change modality of class for any reason. Policy can be found here:

<https://villanova.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?app=pt&source=unspecified&docid=1587&public=true>

2. Athletic Advisory Committee (Daniel Mark)
3. Budget Committee (Raisa Velthuis)

Budget Committee report:

While the University experienced a positive budget variance from recurring operations in FY2024, after taking into account a loss on decommissioned facilities (to allow for construction of the new library), the overall operating margin came in at 3.3% compared to the budgeted amount of 3.5%. Favorable contributing factors to the operating budget variance included an unbudgeted estate gift, federal reimbursement for Covid-19 pandemic related expenses, lower utility expenses, and lower salary expenses due to vacant staff positions. Unfavorable factors included lower than budgeted revenues from graduate programs and non-credit certificate programs and higher than anticipated employee benefit costs (due to increased utilization of healthcare and tuition remission benefits).

The FY2025 budget continues to rely predominantly on Undergraduate student charges. However, support from Endowment spending has increased significantly over the years as the endowment has grown in size. Graduate programs have recently been brought in-house and may offer enhanced revenue opportunities going forward. The largest budget expense category is Personnel, where salaries, wages, and benefits together make up the majority of operating expenses.

Stephen Strader, PhD, College of Arts & Sciences, was voted to serve as Chair of the Budget Committee.

4. Mission and Social Justice Committee (Gwendolyn Morris)
5. Student Life Committee (Rishtee Batra)

Committees Not Under the Auspices of Faculty Congress (*reports submitted in advance; please see Appendix B; this time set aside for elevated issues and/or questions*)

1. Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees

New Business

- By-laws revisions (please see Appendix C)

Bob Styer and Christopher Kilby led FC through the proposed by-laws revisions. Several changes to the revisions were suggested. Changes will be made in advance of the November 2024 FC meeting, at which there will be further discussion and vote on the revisions.

- Textbook program feedback (Jared, Joe)

Joe Drury reviewed with FC the responses from [a recent FC survey](#) on the textbook adoption program. The following represents an overview of the responses:

Benefits:

- *Many faculty reported having no problems with the program*
- *Many faculty appreciated the savings to their students*
- *Many faculty noted that their students were more likely to have the textbooks for their courses at the beginning of the semester*

Key Problems:

- *Bookstore disorganization – QR access codes not working, staff not providing reliable, timely information, conflicting information about availability of course packs*
- *Inadequate support for faculty – not copied on messages sent to students or provided with list of students who had opted in to the program, making it hard for them to help students, only one email address to deal with all problems, no clearly identified contact person, response to queries took several days, some struggled to link e-books to Blackboard*
- *Follett failures – sent messages to students from unfamiliar email which meant students ignored them, clunky platform, doesn't have all books faculty want to order, no way to*

indicate request for hard copies other than via email, slow to deal with problems with orders

- *Problems for students – students who opted out of program sometimes started semester without books, hard for students to compare cost of program with the cost of books they actually need, students who opted in forced to pay extra for books assigned late and “optional” books, course books not listed anywhere outside Follett, graduate students unaware of requirement to opt out, some charged late fees*

Broader Issues

- *Program places constraints on faculty who wish to make last-minute changes to syllabi*
- *Default e-book selection might be harmful to students’ education*
- *Program essentially subsidizes some majors at the expense of others – burdens some students with need to opt out every semester*
- *Program leaves Villanova student learning and faculty at the mercy of an unreliable outside vendor*

It was determined that more feedback would be collected. A concern was raised about the possibility of switching from Follett to a different vendor and the effect that might have on the program.

- Academic Freedom event (Joe)
 - “Academic Freedom at Villanova: A Conversation,” Tuesday, October 22, 4-5.30pm, Zoom. This event is co-sponsored by Faculty Congress and the Office of the Provost. Join a discussion with Kathy Byrnes, Rick Eckstein, Massimo Faggioli, Billie Murray, and Craig Wheeland, with Joe Drury moderating. All Villanova faculty are welcome: <https://villanova.zoom.us/j/93824789890>. Please submit questions for the panel to joseph.drury@villanova.edu.
- Amber Stuver memorial (Jared)
 - Physics Department, Thursday, October 24
- Cabrini (Jared, Joe)

Jared Paul and Michelle Kelly will tour the Cabrini campus on October 23, 2024. FC is looking for ways to contribute productively to the Cabrini decisions and to provide support for the possible transition of some University departments and activities to the Cabrini campus. Thoughts or concerns can be sent to Jared Paul (jared.paul@villanova.edu).

Reminders

Upcoming Congress events:

FC leadership meetings with Provost & Vice Provost

(Jared, Joe, Michelle, Greg)

~~October 24, 9:00 am (rescheduled)~~

December 3, 9.00 am

FCEC dinner with President

October 23, 6.30pm

Fall 2024 Faculty Congress general meetings

~~September 23, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm~~

~~October 22, 10:00 am to 11:30 am~~

November 25, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

2024-25 Faculty Fridays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm (*The Refectory*)

~~August 30, 2024~~

~~September 27, 2024~~

~~October 25, 2024~~

February 28, 2025

March 21, 2025

April 25, 2025

Appendix A: Standing Committee Reports

1. Research Policy Committee

RPC is reviewing the updates made last year to the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). The committee will meet on October 21 to finalize any suggested modifications and will discuss priorities for the rest of the semester.

2. Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee

FRRC welcomes referrals related to issues that concern faculty and the faculty handbook. Faculty members are encouraged to reach out to FRRC directly. On October 10, 2024, FRRC met for the 2nd time this semester. The Classroom Lecture Capture (section 25 of the handbook) has been finalized. Faculty should refer to FERPA restrictions related to sharing classroom recordings. Several issues were discussed and are pending before the committee which include: 1) Technical revisions to the student grad appeals and complaints language in the faculty handbook, 2) Clarification of the language regarding term limits and eligibility to serve on the University Committee for CNT promotion.

Appendix B: Committees Not Under the Auspices of Faculty Congress

1. Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (Mark Doorley)

- a. We will continue test optional for admissions for this upcoming admissions season. After next year, we'll have four years of data to see if the test optional route impacts the performance of Villanova students. And then decide what to do moving forward with test optional.
- b. With the Supreme Court decision in mind on race and admissions, Villanova does not look at the student's racial identity during the admissions process. Once students are admitted/decide to come, we can reveal what they said about their racial identities. The numbers bear out that we continue to recruit, admit and retain a significant number of underrepresented students, nearly 30% of the admitted class. This has been a steady percentage over the last several years. A primary reason for this result is the very intentional partnering of Admissions with organizations that serve underserved communities in the US.
- c. There is going to be an increase of student enrollment (~250 a year for four years) starting in August 2026. A significant number of new faculty lines are in the budget in order to deal with this influx of students, for sure in areas like ACS and Ethics that teach all or most of our students, but also in the major departments but which these will be is not yet identified.
- d. Athletic Academic Support (Jenn Brophy) gave a presentation on the amazing work that they are doing. What was impressive to me is the degree to which they are engaged in working relationships with all aspects of the academic life of the university (deans, registrar, chairs, faculty, etc).