



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY CONGRESS

Academic Year 2024-2025

November 25, 2024

2 to 3:30 pm

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

AGENDA

Present: Jennifer Altamuro, Theodore Arapis, Sutirtha Bagchi, Farshid Baghai, Rishtee Batra, Paul Bernhardt, Glenn Bracey, Lucy Chen, Allison Covey, Joseph Drury (vice-chair), Brenner Fissell, Jason Grant, Amber Haley, Gregory Hoskins, Kamran Javadizadeh, Stephanie Katz Linkmeyer, Michelle M. Kelly, Christopher Kilby, Amanda Knecht, Brittany Koons, Rory Kramer, Daniel Mark, Michelle McKay, Max Osborn, Jared Paul (chair), Alan Pichanick, Megan Povelones, Jennifer Ross, Jacob Rozran, Andrew Scott, Rachel Skrlac Lo, Monica Sywak, Raisa Velthuis, Stephanie Walkup, Ryan Weldzius

Housekeeping

- Welcome!
- Approval of minutes from October, 2024 meeting

Minutes approved.

Special Presentation

- Tej Patel, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer

Tej provided background on his career path and notice of his love of cricket, as well as an overview of University IT team structure, responsibilities, and current and future projects.

During Q&A, faculty voiced the following concerns: OneDrive functionality; student training to use available tech; inconsistent email quarantine system; how to unreport a misreported phishing/spam email; how to report non-functional computer stations; UNIT's relationship with college-specific IT departments.

Tej responded that in January 2025, there will be a centralized IT for faculty, staff, and students. He reminded faculty needing help or otherwise to use support.villanova.edu or him email directly. Finally, he reported that the University was working toward providing increased

support and clarity by Fall 2025 and that for the long term it was aiming for better collaboration and partnership through central IT.

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

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

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

1. Academic Policy Committee (Greg Hoskins)
2. Athletic Advisory Committee (Daniel Mark)
3. Budget Committee (Raisa Velthuis)
4. Mission and Social Justice Committee (Gwendolyn Morris)
5. Student Life Committee (Rishtee Batra)

New Business

- By-laws revisions (please see Appendix C)

Bob Styer provided an overview of by-law changes and the transition from University Senate to Faculty Congress. Christopher Kilby added that by-laws have been changed to make them consistent with the updated FC constitution. By-laws revisions passed (33 yes; 1 abstention).

- Update on SEPTA Key Advantage Card Program (Jared, Joe)

Jared Paul, Joe Drury, Christopher Kilby, and Rory Kramer met with David Tedjeske and Chris Kovolski to discuss the future of the program. Joe Drury provided an overview of the findings of the pilot program (Jan-May 2024). Given the cost of the program to the University, it seemed that the program would not be made available to the entire University community in the short term. It was suggested that if certain groups had to be prioritized, that prioritization be made for groups with the greatest financial need. Faculty Congress decided to draft a letter of support for the program.

- Textbook program feedback (Jared, Joe)
 - Question for faculty: As Follett's contract is about to expire and the University may be switching bookstore vendors, what expectations do you have for working with a textbook vendor?

FC has drafted a letter reporting faculty feedback on the program and will send it to Randy Weinstein and Craig Wheeland. FC will also share this letter with graduate students who want to write their own letter.

- Cabrini (Jared, Joe)
 - Question for faculty: As a faculty member, what kind of space would you like that you do not currently have on campus?

Discussion of possible uses for Cabrini space: computer classrooms where students can work when their device is not working; overflow library space; community gardens; temporary living space/contingency plan for international graduate students; space for adjunct faculty; space for Zoom calls (cubbies); faculty lounge and faculty-only workspaces for collaborative projects.

- CLAS teaching load determinations
 - Teaching load recommendations will soon be delivered to CLAS faculty. Faculty should be aware that appeals of these determinations need to be submitted by December 2. Questions or concerns about the process can be directed to Joe Drury (joseph.drury@villanova.edu).

Joe Drury provided guidance for CLAS faculty on accessing determination of teaching load recommendations in Workflow and how to initiate appeal, if desired.

- The following resolution was presented to Faculty Congress:

“Faculty governance is a core right and responsibility of university faculty members. As recognized by the AAUP’s 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities:

Agencies for faculty participation in the government of the college or university should be established at each level where faculty responsibility is present (emphasis added).

The Faculty Congress therefore reiterates its commitment to faculty governance to promote the health of our shared academic endeavor. This includes: faculty engagement with the Faculty Congress and its work; meetings of the faculty or groups of faculty (such as program faculty, department faculty or college faculty); and meetings between faculty constituents and members of college and university administration for the purposes of maintaining and improving academic standards, guiding the development of programs, departments, colleges and the university, and furthering our shared mission. Faculty or groups of faculty may also wish to meet in the absence of faculty administrators for the purposes of facilitating open deliberation, and are encouraged to do so regularly.”

Resolution supported unanimously.

Reminders

Upcoming Congress events:

FC leadership meetings with Provost & Vice Provost

(Jared, Joe, Michelle, Greg)

~~October 24, 9:00 am~~

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. Awards Committee

Stacey Havlik has been appointed as our Awards Committee Chair. The committee is in place and will be scheduling a first meeting for December.

Appendix B: Committees with Faculty Representation

1. Academic Policy Committee

APC met for the second time this semester on Monday, October 28th. We heard updates on the transition to Brightspace, which will take place in the summer of 2026, and an update on the Follett textbook access program so far (so, through the fall to what is planned through the spring). We also created two sub-committees, and one is charged with assessing the Personal Day policy in light of the survey of students' and faculty's use and perception of the policy that OSPIE conducted in the spring of 2024.

2. Budget Committee

The budget committee met on October 30th to receive an update on enrollment and share working assumptions for the FY 2026 operating budget.

Cathy Connor, Vice Dean for Enrollment Management, provided an update on the Fall 2024 admissions campaign. Applications were the 3rd highest in Villanova's history (at 23,844). The freshmen class consists of 1,723 new students (exceeding the target by 3 students). Our yield rate (fraction of accepted students that choose to attend) remains higher than our admit rate (fraction of applicants that are accepted), which speaks to the university's selectivity. The Early Decision program contributes positively to this result. To maintain our enrollment figures while expanding the student base due to the Cabrini campus expansion and to continue to grow diversity while following the Supreme Court Affirmative Action decision, Enrollment Management is actively expanding their recruitment efforts in cities and beyond the Mid-Atlantic region. The university also engages in a new partnership to attract more international students for our graduate programs.

The Budget Office shared their current working assumptions for the FY 2026 operating budget, which were mostly in line with the current budget assumptions. Notably, health insurance expenses are expected to be larger due to increased medical claims. Larger provisions for software and technology subscriptions and library materials as well as capital replacement and renewal are planned. Continued investment in the Office of Online Programming is expected to assist graduate program revenues.

3. Mission and Social Justice Committee

In the Mission and Social Justice Committee meeting on Oct 27th, we discussed how Villanova's Holy Grounds shifted to serving Starbucks. Villanova Dining has made a five-year deal with Starbucks to serve coffee on campus. Dining Services is also looking into bringing other brands to campus. The committee discussed if Starbucks and other brands will follow Villanova's commitment to fair trade and locally sourced ingredients. Since 2013 Villanova has been a Fair Trade University through the use of Peet's Coffee. Starbucks has been sued in 2024 for false advertising due to its statements about ethically sourcing. We planned to have a meeting with Andrew Camuso (Director of Dining Services) on Nov 15th to discuss if Starbucks on

campus follows Villanova's mission. However, the meeting was cancelled. Meeting rescheduled for December.

4. Student Life Committee

The Student Life Committee met for its second of two fall semester meetings on November 8, 2024. Tej Patel, CIO of Villanova University, presented an overview of the University's Information Technology structure. Of note to faculty congress, mentioned that:

- The transition to Brightspace's D2L will begin with courses starting Summer 2026.
- In the process of working on the 3-5 year strategic plan for IT, Patel will have an advisory committee consisting of relevant stakeholders and welcomes reps from faculty congress. The advisory committee will tentatively take start in January 2025.
- A separate "A.I. Task Force" has been created to help built guidelines and identify best practices around the use of A.I. and Microsoft Copilot is being "piloted" for safer, more secure A.I. usage.
- Kevin Donahue is the point of contact for faculty regarding classroom technology and instructional design.

In the little time that remained in the SLC meeting, the graduate student body rep indicated that graduate students are unhappy with the textbook access program and are meeting soon to discuss changes they seek.