



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY CONGRESS

Academic Year 2024-2025

January 27, 2025

10 to 11:30 am

via Zoom: <https://villanova.zoom.us/j/3688604725?omn=91939463860>

AGENDA

Present: Tina Agustiady, Jennifer Altamuro, Sutirtha Bagchi, Farshid Baghai, Rishtee Batra, Paul Bernhardt, Glenn Bracey, Lucy Chen, Allison Covey, Joseph Drury (vice-chair), Brenner Fissell, Jason Grant, Amber Haley, Kamran Javadizadeh, Stephanie Katz Linkmeyer, Michelle M. Kelly, Christopher Kilby, Brittany Koons, Rory Kramer, Bo Li, Daniel Mark, Michelle McKay, Gwendolyn Morris, Max Osborn, Jared Paul (chair), Jennifer Ross, Andrew Scott, Rachel Skrlac Lo, Stephanie Walkup, Ryan Weldzius

Housekeeping

- Welcome!
- Approval of minutes from November 2024 meeting

Minutes unanimously approved.

- Announcements (*Jared Paul*):

Faculty encouraged to attend February 28 Faculty Friday to celebrate Fr. Peter's birthday.

Two letters to Fr. Peter await responses:

- 1) *SEPTA pilot program letter. FC supported adoption of program after pilot; current status unknown to FC. Informal report states that decision on program should come within two weeks.*
- 2) *Letter re: staff member presentation at conference. Three specific concerns: problem with naming of staff member in communication with faculty; academic freedom protections for staff and, if not, what policies are in place in such situations; the University's use of outside groups to do damage control.*

Several FC members requested to receive copies of the letter(s).

Proposal for FC to begin giving attention to college-specific issues, one college per meeting over the course of the year. Subsequently, a small committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, and two faculty from the college) will meet with individual college deans.

Attempt to increase faculty engagement with FC. Try to get colleagues engaged and involved. Send any feedback in this regard to FC leadership.

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)

FC needs to appoint other members to the committee.

5. Research Policy Committee (RPC; ~~Megan Povelones~~ Lucy Chen, chair)

The committee will take up travel reimbursement issues. First meeting in February, second in April. It was noted that the University and Colleges work under different policies for travel reimbursement.

6. Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee (FRRC; Michelle Kelly, chair)

R&T and emeritus issues will be taken up this semester.

7. Retired faculty members (Angela DiBenedetto)

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)

Update provided by Rachel Skrlac Lo: Brightspace courses will begin running in February; Blackboard will be transferred over (for last two years of courses). Others can be requested to be transferred over. Subcommittee working on bias in CATS report continues to work on issues and has to decide on final recommendations.

2. Athletic Advisory Committee (Daniel Mark)
3. Budget Committee (Raisa Velthuis)
4. Mission and Social Justice Committee (Gwendolyn Morris)

Focusing on sustainability, esp. plastic use. Dining Services (2 halls) beginning program to remove disposable containers and replace with reusable containers, with a check out/check in process. Feedback on this program is welcome.

5. Student Life Committee (Rishtee Batra)

New Business

- Update on bookstore vendors (~~Greg Hoskins~~ Rachel Skrlac Lo)

Current contract ends May 25; RFP published, five proposals received and reviewed by committee. Three invited to campus and vetted by committee. Top two have been selected; final decision expected by mid-February.

Questions arose about the link between bookstore and welcome center (i.e., how bookstore will be represented in this welcome center). Response: Emphasis will be on tech and retail experience. Name, Image, and Licensing also part of discussion. There is no permanent bookstore planned for the Cabrini campus, but a temporary bookstore or pop-up is possible (no final decision yet). There has been discussion on how to keep Cabrini from feeling like a satellite campus.

Question: was opt out/in part of criteria for proposal? Response: Yes.

Informal feedback from FC membership: the textbook adoption program is not going well; it is difficult to get responses to problems; implementation remains poor even after following specific rules; problems sometimes exist between bookstore and e-book vendor/paywall; problem solving is slow; the affordable materials project can cause confusion: it would be useful to receive more warning from AMP to help students know if they should opt out or stay in; frequent pre-semester emails about adopted books are cryptic and have difficult to follow instructions (though UNIT has been helpful in decoding); there is a frustrating extra layer of bureaucracy when you don't use textbooks, causing extra work for no reason.

- Report on FC and FCEC letters to Fr. Peter (Jared Paul)

See notes above.

- Addition to New Business: CPS discussion

FC membership discussed what topics would be appropriate for a meeting with the Dean. Suggestions included faculty compensation, communication with Personal Enrichment students, and summer courses.

Meeting with Christine Palus will be with Jared Paul, Joe Drury, Tina Agustiady, and Pete Watkins.

- Discussion of the state of the AI task force (Joe Drury)

AI Task force has faculty representation. Suggestion that Randy Weinstein and maybe Alice Dailey can run a webinar with faculty to know University's plans. This seems opportune time to let the University know how it can support faculty.

Suggestions/feedback: University administration would do better listening more to faculty about AI concerns. Any FC webinar (as above) on AI needs to be in a setting in which faculty provide feedback. It is important to set boundaries of how we want administrators to participate. Important to remember that this is an issue across colleges. What investment is Villanova willing to make in faculty professional development and resources available to faculty?

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~~

February 20, 9am

FCEC dinner with President

~~October 23, 6:30pm~~

2024-2025 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~~

January 27, 2025, 10-11:30am

February 26, 2025, 1-2:30pm

April 4, 2025, 10:30am-12pm

May 9, 2025, 12-1:30pm (on campus)

2024-2025 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

Nominees have been collected. The committee is meeting on 1/27 and again in mid-February. The final decisions will be announced approximately two weeks later than last year. The goal is to have the final decisions made by Feb. 14th.

2. Adjunct Faculty Representatives

3. CNT/FTNTT Faculty Representatives

4. Election and Credentials Committee

There will be elections later this semester for Rank & Tenure positions to start serving next fall.

5. Research Policy Committee

The HRPP was revised according to the RPC committee's recommendations and the committee approved the revisions. Lucy Chen will be the acting chair for Spring 2025 as Megan Povelones is on Sabbatical for Spring 2025. The committee plans to meet in February and April 2025 to discuss travel reimbursement and other related items.

6. Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee

FRRC continues to review the rank and tenure / promotion policies for parity in continuing non-tenure and tenure-track procedures, as well as emeritus procedures. As always, thank you for emailing any concerns to Michelle Kelly or a representative from FRRC.

7. Retired faculty members

Appendix B: Committees with Faculty Representation

1. Academic Policy Committee

2. Athletic Advisory Committee

3. Budget Committee

The budget committee met on December 4, 2024, to discuss capital projects and working assumptions of the FY 2026 budget. Funding for projects presently under consideration and funding for the strategic plan are major priorities for the budget office. Areas that are receiving additional attention in the budget are: graduate program enrollment and revenues, online certificate program revenues, athletic revenue sharing, employee health insurance costs, and inflation developments.

The committee received a capital projects update from Marilou Smith, VP for Facilities Management. Significant projects that are currently underway include: Drosdick Hall, Vic Maggitti Hall, HSB Garage, Welcome Center, Connelly Center renovations, Gateway at Ithan Ave, Boathouse at Whitemarsh, Bartley elevator, and Cabrini campus renovations.

4. Mission and Social Justice Committee

The committee chair, Father John Lydon, has been placed at a teaching position at another institution. Father Arthur Purcaro is now the committee chair. He has been part of the committee in the past. Due to this transition, there was lull in the committee work. We have been getting back on track as of 1/17/25 meeting.

The Mission and Social Justice Committee falls under the Office of Sustainability, which has a heavy focus on going green. One of Villanova's sustainability plan goals is to completely eliminate single-use plastic sales on campus by 2030. However, the pandemic changed consumption habits on campus with an increase use of single-use plastics.

Committee met with Andrew Camuso Executive Director of Dining Services to discuss sustainability goal projects for Villanova and Cabrini. Since COVID, Dining Services has reduced its use of plastic wrap to almost 0%. Plastic silverware and plates use is also almost 0%. Discussed with Andrew that we need to decide on what is going to be the next single use plastic to be eliminated. For example, plastic coffee lids. We need to decide on by what percentage the single use plastic should be reduced from now to next fall.

Dining Services current project is reusable takeout containers. Users will scan out a container and return the container to dinning services to wash. The project will be launched in two dining halls later in the spring. **The Mission and Social Justice Committee's role will be spreading**

the word and encouraging adoption among students and staff. Discussed with Andrew if there will be a penalty for not returning the container. In the past, students have treated reusable items like single-use items and have thrown them away instead of returning them. Fees for not returning a reusable takeout container within a certain time period is still being decided on.

At a previous Mission and Social Justice Committee meeting, we discussed how Starbucks is being sold on campus, which may not follow Villanova's commitment to fair trade and locally sourced ingredients. Andrew Camuso says the Starbucks on campus is actually Nestlé as Nestlé markets and distributes Starbucks products in markets outside of the Starbucks retail stores. Nestlé and Starbucks both claim their coffee is fairtrade. Students feedback to Andrew is they want more coffee options. Committee discussed with Andrew that ideally dining services should offer a locally sourced coffee brand as one of the options.

5. Student Life Committee