



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY CONGRESS

Academic Year 2024-2025

April 4, 2025

10:30am to 12 pm

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

Attendance: Jennifer Altamuro, Theodore Arapis, Sutirtha Bagchi, Paul Bernhardt, Glenn Bracey, Allison Covey, Angela DiBenedetto, Joseph Drury (vice-chair), Jason Grant, Amber Haley, Ann Juliano, Stephanie Katz Linkmeyer, Michelle M. Kelly, Christopher Kilby, Amanda Knecht, Rory Kramer, Bo Li, Daniel Mark, Gwendolyn Morris, Max Osborn, Jared Paul, Rachel Skrlac Lo, Virginia Smith, Raisa Velthuis

Addition: Stephanie Walkup

AGENDA

Housekeeping

- Welcome!
- Approval of minutes from February 2025 meeting
 - One change on Registrar's presentation, added to minutes
 - Minutes approved, as corrected
- Announcements
 - Faculty Forum with the Provost, Wednesday, April 30 at 2pm, PwC Auditorium (Bartley 1011)

Format will be hybrid; refreshments will be served.

- SEPTA

The SEPTA program is not going forward due to concerns over costs and changing terms.

- CPS

Reminder: complete clearances if you are interested in teaching courses that may be attractive to minors, such as some students in the VUnited Program. You cannot teach minors (under 18) without clearances.

- Elections and Credentials committee

Nominations are being accepted for CNT and University R&T committees. Please consider nominating yourself or others. Robust elections are required for Middle States accreditation. In other words, faculty are encouraged to be actively involved in governance.

Additional announcements

- Kill the Cuts event: <https://www.killthecuts.org/>
- Hiring Craig Wheeland's replacement:

Jared, Joe, Michelle, and Greg will meet and review final candidates. Please share questions with FCEC. One suggestion was to ask finalists about how they envision faculty governance and increasing shared governance.

- Distracted Driving Month. Pay attention when on the roads

Special Presentation

- Matthew Harris, Office of Admissions (Erica Woods could not attend)

Matt Harris, VU Alum, BA (2006) MPA (2014), provided an update on admissions. VU hosted over 51,000 visitors for the class of 2029, for a goal of a class size of 1,770 (+50 from Class of 2028). Applications received were a record 26,300 from 6,000 high schools, 49 states, and 123 countries. The goal for the class of 2030 is 1,970 students (+200 across colleges).

A robust discussion ensued regarding the acceptance rate of qualified applicants, attrition rates, the status of test optional applications, international students, impacts of the "academic cliff" and current political climate, risks and benefits of a high applicant and low yield rates, and efforts to target economically disadvantaged students.

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)

Facultas Award under review. Qualtrics survey to be put together and sent out for FC votes.

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; Lucy Chen, chair)

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

Survey of retired faculty being prepared to consider relationships between retired faculty and university.

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)

Questions about update on review of Personal Day Policy and Book store vendor decision and any impact on textbook adoption procedures.

2. Athletic Advisory Committee (Daniel Mark)

Work being done on relationship between investment in athletics and impact on other areas of operations, including academics.

3. Budget Committee (Raisa Velthuis)

Met recently with Director of Investments for Endowments. The operating budget is steadily increasing, performance is exceeding peer institutions.

Rosemont College impact: Villanova's position is strong. The terms for transition date are fixed. There is a difference between acquisitions (Cabrini) vs. merger (Rosemont) with possibility for more liability for Rosemont, but small size of Rosemont suggests impact would be limited. Rosemont tenured faculty would have to apply for tenure again. Numbers are small with minimum impact at Villanova. There was no discussion of whether these faculty would take the positions promised in the Strategic Plan.

4. Mission and Social Justice Committee (Gwendolyn Morris)

5. Student Life Committee (Rishtee Batra)

New Business

- Update on VSB meeting (Jared Paul, Rishtee Batra, Christopher Kilby)

Meeting last month. Productive discussion about shortage of faculty. Work to build courses that will attract students from beyond VSB: personal finance, global business concentration. VSB CNT Town Hall on accreditation concerns: 4/22 @ 9am.

- Charles Widger School of Law discussion (Jared Paul, Ann Juliano)

Coming up soon. Brenner, Joe, Jared, Ann Juliano. Talking with faculty already about concerns. Email additional concerns to Joe.

- Feedback on Faculty Forum with Fr. Peter

Proposed idea of collaboration with other colleges or universities. Reminder of AAUP chapter meeting, with attendant questions about the relationship between AAUP and FC (still tbd). FC will work on a document for outreach. Send comments and concerns to Jared and Joe.

- Rosemont College

FC leadership was kept in loop with NDA but not part of discussion. Questions can be sent to Jared and Joe. We will find out more in the next 4 weeks.

Concern over impact of Cabrini and Rosemont on Strategic Plan, though there is some alignment with the Strategic Plan and property acquisition.

Reminders

Upcoming Congress events:

FC leadership meetings with Provost & Vice Provost (Jared, Joe, Michelle, Greg)

~~October 24, 9am~~

~~December 3, 9am~~

~~February 20, 9am~~

May 13, 9am

FCEC dinner with President

~~October 23, 6.30pm~~

Addition: ~~March 17, 6pm~~

2024-2025 Faculty Congress general

~~meetings September 23, 2:00pm to~~

~~3:30pm October 22, 10:00am to~~

~~11:30am November 25, 2:00pm to~~

~~3:30pm 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

The Awards Committee will be reviewing the Facultas award in April. The notification will be sent out this week. Other awards have been reviewed and submitted to the executive committee.

2. Adjunct Faculty Representatives

3. CNT/FTNTT Faculty Representatives

4. Election and Credentials Committee

The Faculty Congress Elections and Credentials Committee is seeking new members. If you know a colleague who might be interested in serving on this committee, please contact Jared Paul or Joe Drury.

We are soliciting nominations for three seats on the University Rank and Tenure Committee and three seats on the University CNT Promotion Committee. The deadline for nominations is September 3, with elections to be held in early to mid-September. As was pointed out in the Middle States report, several elections were uncontested, which was interpreted as a lack of faculty interest. It is important for faculty governance for these seats to be contested elections so please nominate qualified individuals to run for these six seats.

Nominate yourself or a colleague for the University Rank and Tenure Committee or the University CNT Promotion Committee. Three seats will be elected this fall: Engineering, VSB, and Undesignated. Please submit your R&T nomination [here](#), and your CNT nomination [here](#). For more info, [click here](#). Elections will take place in early September.

5. Research Policy Committee

6. Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee

FRRC continues to address issues raised by faculty and administration regarding the policies and procedures related to the Faculty Handbook. Current work includes:

1. Third year review process: Updates are finalized and will be reflected in the R&T Policy.
2. Evaluation of Deans: Next stage of revisions are being discussed at the April FRRC meeting.
3. CNT promotion policies: Clarifying procedures including term limits for University committees and consistency with other procedures is ongoing.
4. Emeritus promotion: Angela DiBenedetto & Christopher Kilby are leading this process.
5. Teaching loads: Updating the description to reflect the strategic plan.

We are being attentive to the concerns raised by the national climate and will be monitoring how faculty are affected by decisions. As always, please bring any concerns related to faculty rights to Michelle Kelly or any member of FRRC.

7. Retired faculty members

A first draft of the survey for retired faculty has been developed and will soon be distributed.

Appendix B: Committees with Faculty Representation

1. Academic Policy Committee

At the March meeting of the APC, the committee heard a report from the Subcommittee on the Personal Day excused absence policy, and the chair of the APC re-introduced a proposed change to the Attendance Policy for first-year students. Working on the assumption that it is too soon to adequately assess the impact of the Personal Day excused absence policy, the subcommittee proposed minor revisions that would ease restrictions on when it could be used (for instance, the excused absence might be used twice in the same week, for a 3-day a week course). However, the new excused absence has only exacerbated long-standing challenges to attendance in courses for first-year students. This new excused absence coupled with the post-Covid practice of encouraging students to engage in self-care of minor illnesses, has created a real mess for those faculty trying to adhere to the stipulated attendance policy for first-year students. A key element of the proposed revision to the Attendance Policy, along with the elimination of the specific policy for first-year students, is an additional sentence in the second paragraph indicating that it is the student's responsibility to adhere to the attendance policy of each course and that "some colleges, department, and programs" may have their own attendance policies. The current Attendance Policy [can be accessed here](#).

2. Athletic Advisory Committee

I have scheduled a series of meetings with key stakeholders. On March 6, I met with Prof. Jeremy Kees, our official NCAA faculty athletics representative. , On March 26, I am meeting with the new athletics director (and VP) Eric Roedl. I am awaiting scheduling of a meeting with Jenn Brophy, the director of academic support for athletics. I have also emailed Katie LeGrand, the associate AD in charge of compliance, and am awaiting a response. It is a time of momentous changes in college sports due to NIL and the pending *House* settlement, so I look forward to thinking carefully with all the stakeholders about what this means for everyone going forward. I anticipate having more to say after I've had these meetings.

3. Budget Committee

4. Mission and Social Justice Committee

The Mission and Social Justice Committee discussed the letter the Villanova Student Government Association sent out in early March encouraging the student body and the general Villanova community to embrace the university's Augustinian values.

As a committee, we continue to offer recommendations to the president for continued communication with the student, staff, and faculty members during this stressful time. We are grateful for Father Peter taking the time to listen to the faculty, but staff and students feel they should have similar dialog sessions. Perhaps the Office of Mission and Ministry could host these sessions, so leadership is not at risk of making public statements that could be misconstrued. The

committee is asking the office of the president if any additional information can be shared with the Villanova community, even if the message is, “We continue to monitor the situation.”

5. Student Life Committee