



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Faculty Senate

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Hon. President	Gregory Acevedo	Dawn Lerman	John Seitz
Eve Keller, President	Dana Alonzo	Patricio Meneses	Falguni Sen
Berish Rubin, Vice President	James Cohen	Haim Mozes	Grace Shen
Patrick Hornbeck, Secretary	Jeffrey Colon	David Myers	Grace M. Vernon
	Stephen Grimm	Francesca Parmeggiani	Lori Wolff
	David Hamlin	Jacqueline Reich	Sarah Zimmerman
	Amir Idris	Diane Rodriguez	
	Judith Jones	Barry Rosenfeld	

Present: Senate President Keller; Senators Acevedo, Alonzo, Colon, Grimm, Hamlin, Hornbeck, Idris, Jones, Lerman, Meneses, Mozes, Myers, Parmeggiani, Reich, Rosenfeld, Rubin, Seitz, Shen, Vernon, Wolff, Zimmerman

Excused: Senators Cohen and Rodriguez

Guests: Jonathan M. Crystal, Vice Provost

Call to Order

Senate President Eve Keller called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.m.

Invocation and Introductions

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., delivered an invocation. Members of the Senate and invited guests introduced themselves.

Presentation from the President

Fr. McShane addressed the Senate. He spoke about the following topics:

- *Fundraising:* Last year, the University concluded its “Faith and Hope” financial aid campaign, raising more than \$175 million. Fiscal year 2019 was the second best year for fundraising in the University’s history. With the conclusion of the financial aid campaign, funds raised over the last fifteen years total more than \$820 million. A new campaign, focused on elements of the student experience such as STEM programs, undergraduate retention, and the construction of an addition to the student center at the Rose Hill campus, has already begun. Fr. McShane noted that the University has spent a total of \$620 million on capital projects in recent years, \$420 million of which has gone to the Lincoln Center campus. It is now time to turn our eyes to Rose Hill. The first phase of the campus center construction project will last twenty-one months; the building is scheduled to be completed in thirty months.
- *Rankings:* Various publications have recently issued their rankings of colleges and universities. In the *Wall Street Journal*, Fordham is ranked #176 overall (#111 among national research universities and #70 among private national research universities); Fordham is ranked #141 overall in *Forbes* (#77 among national research universities and #48 among private national research universities). In *U.S. News and World Report*, Fordham is ranked #74 among national research universities and #48 among private institutions. Fordham is ranked #34 in Best Undergraduate Teaching. However, the overall ranking is down four since last year, when Fordham was ranked #70 overall. Fr. McShane pointed to several factors that produced this result.

Carnegie classifications of universities changed, and more than 100 institutions came into Fordham's category; among these are Santa Clara University and Loyola Marymount University, both now ranked ahead of Fordham. At the same time, Fordham's ratings in the areas of peer assessment, graduation rates, and retention rates are less strong than they might be. Fr. McShane reported that work is underway to improve these ratings, as well as to maintain our ratings in the areas of selectivity (where we are ranked #70) and faculty resources (ranked #54). Expressing deep disappointment with the results, Fr. McShane noted that the University's *U.S. News* ranking is incongruent with the quality of students and faculty.

- *Enrollment:* Fr. McShane shared several documents containing data on undergraduate enrollment, which this year was stable overall compared to last year. He observed that many of the University's traditional feeder states have remained strong, and new markets are emerging in Texas, Florida, and the Carolinas. Several trends are worrying, including a decline in the number of young persons in the Northeast and Rust Belt (despite the presence of a substantial number of institutions of higher learning in these regions) and a near-halving of undergraduate enrollment from China. Declines in Chinese undergraduate enrollments are offset, but only partially, by growth in enrollment from countries including Vietnam and India. Standardized testing scores of incoming students are slightly lower in Fordham College at Rose Hill in comparison to the other undergraduate colleges, and Fr. McShane said investment is particularly needed in FCRH. Enrollment of African-American students is down; enrollment of Hispanic students is up; far more women than men are enrolled across the undergraduate colleges.

Senators engaged with Fr. McShane in discussion of these topics. Among the points raised and questions asked were the following:

- With regard to the rankings, institutions are often judged on the quality of the highest degrees that they offer. If Fordham's doctoral programs are underfunded, that will likely hurt us with regard to peer assessment.
- Does the University track where undergraduate students who transfer out of Fordham go? Fr. McShane turned to Jonathan Crystal, Vice Provost, who noted that the Gabelli School and the undergraduate liberal arts colleges have begun to conduct undergraduate exit surveys. The leading reason for students to transfer is to attend an institution that is more academically prestigious. Overall, some 94% of students who begin their studies at Fordham receive undergraduate degrees from some institution, even if it is not here.
- Why is it that undergraduate standardized test scores are so important? Fr. McShane said that he is not eager to endorse any ranking system, but since universities are judged by these rankings, it is necessary for Fordham to "play the game." The University is not driven by rankings, even though we recognize that others consider them important.
- Departments and their chairs struggle sometimes to obtain data on undergraduate retention by major. It was noted that some of these data are available through the Student Success Collaborative software, but they may be hard to access. Dennis C. Jacobs, the Provost, noted that too much disaggregation can result in data points being identifiable in connection with particular individuals. The Chief Diversity Officer, Rafael Zapata, has generated a set of reports that aggregate students by school, college, and racial/ethnic identity.

- Should Fordham be involved in efforts to change the ranking systems? Fr. McShane commented that institutions that choose not to submit information requested by the publications are penalized. In addition, it appears that the formulas according to which rankings are calculated are changing more frequently than ever.

Key Conversation: Meet the Provost

Senate President Keller introduced Dennis C. Jacobs, who thanked the Senate for the opportunity to be in a collaborative dialogue, and then shared some of his personal and academic background. Dr. Jacobs said that he sees his role as helping to position Fordham to find its best possible place within U.S. higher education. He noted that Jesuit universities are engaged in both transforming individual students through a rigorous, holistic education and being change agents in society.

With regard to strategic planning, Dr. Jacobs is looking forward to co-chairing the Continuous University Strategic Planning (CUSP) Committee, along with Peter Stace and Patrick Hornbeck. CUSP is working on two tracks this year to finalize this stage in Fordham’s strategic planning. First, working through a set of teams, CUSP will be prioritizing initiatives for implementation over the next 1–3 years. Second, CUSP will be considering where Fordham, the world, and our students will be a decade from now, and anticipating those needs by positioning Fordham ambitiously in light of our strengths and values. Dr. Jacobs is eager to work with faculty and believes strongly that academic programs need to drive the University’s thinking. In this regard, he has asked Patrick Hornbeck to serve as a faculty advisor to him for strategic planning. By the end of the year, CUSP will deliver to the Board of Trustees a concrete plan, including objectives, timelines, metrics, and budgets.

Dr. Jacobs said he welcomes faculty input and indicated that he will be making himself available for conversation in numerous venues, including meetings of department and area chairs and school and college councils.

Senators engaged Dr. Jacobs in discussion about his presentation. Among the points raised and questions posed were the following:

- Asked about the upcoming search for a permanent dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Jacobs said that all searches for deans and other senior academic leaders should be national searches supported by highly experienced search consultants. This will require more resources than conducting searches “in-house,” but it will also produce the strongest pools of candidates.
- How will it be possible for Fordham to undertake the kind of internal transformation that CUSP has been envisioning without the resources of larger and better endowed institutions? Dr. Jacobs answered on two levels: in the present, Fordham needs to continue developing and refining programs in each of its schools that meet the changing needs of current and prospective students. Our peer institutions are continually innovating the programs that they offer, and if Fordham does not do likewise, we run the risk of being passed over. In the future, for Fordham to be truly excellent will require much more than new revenue from tuition. Dr. Jacobs believes that there is great potential for the University to attract substantial new philanthropic support, but donors are inspired to give only when they are excited by the University’s ideas and vision. It is the University’s task to stake out greater ambitions for itself. Dr. Jacobs is working with the deans to develop bold proposals that cross schools in seeking to engage with major regional and global challenges.

- Senators from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences thanked Dr. Jacobs for having authorized a higher than usual number of tenure-line faculty searches. The likely number of incoming new colleagues will put extra pressures on academic spaces that are already overcrowded. Dr. Jacobs noted that the Provost's Office is engaged in a study of the utilization of all academic space, to identify which areas are underutilized and which areas need more space. The results of this study could form the basis of a justification for new academic buildings.
- Dr. Jacobs has now been at Fordham for two months; what does he think about Fordham? He responded that he has been warmly welcomed and finds faculty members to be highly committed to students, to one another, and advancing Fordham as an institution. In higher education, this is fairly rare. He noted that the barriers between units of the University, including the campuses and the schools, are higher than he might have expected. Therefore, it is a goal to lower the barriers and to incentivize interdisciplinary work.
- Given the importance that the rankings place on standardized testing, and given what we know about the racial inequities in testing results, should Fordham consider becoming a "test-optional" school? Dr. Jacobs responded that there are a variety of factors that predict student success. What limits Fordham's ability to be as diverse as it aspires to be is primarily the limitations on our capacity to meet the full financial need of students in a competitive marketplace. At the undergraduate level, only approximately 10% of students whom the University admits choose to attend; we must do more to convince them to come to Fordham.

The Senate went into executive session at 1:29 p.m. The Senate emerged from executive session at 1:42 p.m.

Senate Input: Social Media Policy / University Marketing and Communications

Senate President Keller noted that in recent months, communications between the Senate and elements of the university have resulted in more effective outcomes in which faculty input has been substantive, if not necessarily determinative.

In that spirit, Senate President Keller shared with the Senate a draft proposal for revision of the University's social media policy, which governs official Fordham social media accounts. She noted that it had previously been reviewed by the Executive Committee, all of whose suggestions for revision had been integrated into the current draft. In ensuing discussion, Senators expressed the need for including stronger and clearer statements about preserving academic freedom and for articulating a positive and aspirational tone. Some Senators suggested that, at minimum, language concerning employees' personal social media accounts should be changed from "must" to "should"; others recommended eliminating references to employees' personal social media accounts entirely, as such accounts do not fall within the stated ambit of the policy. In this vein, it was suggested that the title of the policy be clarified to refer to Fordham's social media assets, rather than to social media in general.

Before addressing the next agenda item, the Senate concurred by acclamation in a request to extend the length of the meeting by ten minutes.

Online and Hybrid Learning Committee Update

Senate President Keller introduced Senator Sen, who as chair of the Online and Hybrid Learning Committee provided an update on the committee's work to date. The committee includes representation from the Senate, members of the Provost's Office, and representatives elected by the curriculum or online learning committees of the schools.

The committee has a full agenda for the year ahead and is intending to meet approximately monthly. Among the items on the committee's agenda are harmonizing the coding of the types of online and hybrid courses being taught, developing a set of best practices for a common process for creating online offerings, rationalizing in-house and vendor-based online learning, assessing online learning in light of mission, and resolving compliance issues. In discussion, Senators requested that the committee consider not only existing online and hybrid programs but potential future programs, especially in Arts and Sciences. It was also noted that there is not presently a university-wide definition of a hybrid course.

Senate President Keller thanked Senator Sen and the committee, noting that since Fordham's adoption of online learning was swift, the committee's task is in part to survey what has happened and make recommendations for the future.

Approval of Minutes

The Senate approved the minutes of two meetings held May 6, 2019. The minutes of the meeting of the academic year 2018–2019 Senate were approved by a vote of 15-0-4. The minutes of the meeting of the academic year 2019–2020 Senate were approved by a vote of 15-0-3.

Approval of Committee Memberships

The Senate approved (21-0-0) a slate of nominees for various Senate, Presidential, and University committees, including faculty representatives on committees of the Board of Trustees.

Announcements

Senate President Keller announced that the Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee had met, electing Senator Mozes as its chair. Interactions with the administration's salary negotiation team have begun. She also announced that the key conversation for the October meeting would concern strategic planning.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Secretary