



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Faculty Senate

Joseph M. McShane, S.J., Hon. President	Gregory Acevedo	Margo Jackson	Aditya Saharia
John Drummond, President	Andrew Albin	Judith Jones	Falguni Sen
Dana Alonzo, Vice President	Ida Bastiaens	Mark Mattson	Henry Schwalbenberg
Francesca Parmeggiani, Secretary	Jeffrey Colon	Matthew McGowan	Grace Shen
	Stephen Grimm	Alesia Moldavan	Grace M. Vernon
	Ralf Hepp	Haim Mozes	Ian Weinstein
	Patrick Hornbeck	Giorgio Pini	
	Amir Idris	Berish Rubin	

Present: Senate President Drummond; Senators Acevedo, Albin, Alonzo, Colon, Grimm, Hepp, Hornbeck, Jackson, Jones, Mattson, McGowan, Moldavan, Mozes, Parmeggiani, Pini, Rubin, Saharia, Schwalbenberg, Sen, Shen, Vernon, Weinstein

Excused: Senators Bastiaens and Idris

Guests: Dr. Dennis Jacobs, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Vice Provost

This meeting of the Senate was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Committee, having determined the existence of continued extraordinary circumstances, authorized the Senate to meet via Zoom.

Call to Order

At 11:30 a.m., Senate President Drummond called the meeting to order and welcomed all present to the first meeting of the new academic year.

Invocation

Joseph McShane, S.J., delivered the invocation, wishing Jewish colleagues an easy fast for Yom Kippur and remembering the victims of September 11 and their families, those who have been infected by Covid-19, and those who have died in the world because of racial injustice.

President's Report and Q&A

Fr. McShane's report focused on five main topics: 1) Storm Ida, 2) Covid-19, 3) Graduation, 4) Enrollment, and 5) Fundraising.

- 1) Fr. McShane recognized that the storm caught the university by surprise. Some buildings on the Rose Hill campus were greatly affected, and repair work is underway. The basement of the Walsh Library was substantially damaged but hopefully, repair work will be completed in the next couple of weeks. Water damage was reported in the old and new sections of McGinley Center and some dorms.
- 2) On the "Covid front," Fr. McShane underscored that we operate as a universally vaccinated campus thanks to a very high vaccination rate. As regards students, he reported that vaccinated undergraduate and graduate students combined are 94.1% (undergraduates: 98.3% [FCRH 99.1%, Gabelli RH 95.5%; FCLC 98.25%, Gabelli LC 98.63%]; graduates/PCS: 87.67%). Ninety-nine students received an exemption and this represents 38% of those requesting exemptions. He

emphasized that unvaccinated individuals undergo weekly surveillance testing. 100% of the full-time staff and 95% of the part-time staff are fully vaccinated. Vendors and other service providers must be fully vaccinated to be on campus. In compliance with NYC regulation, the University is following a universal mask mandate. Safety remains a primary concern and the University will continue to follow local, state and federal regulations and update its response based on their recommendations. As regards boosters, Fr. McShane noted that there is still some lack of clarity about their timing, availability and efficacy, but the university plans to have them available. Only vaccinated or officially exempted individuals can be on campus. In response to senators' questions, Fr. McShane explained that the lower percentage of vaccination among graduate and PCS students is due to the School's programs, many of which are online, and observed that of those students who applied for but did not receive an exemption, only a small percentage walked away or deferred college.

- 3) Multiple diploma ceremonies occurred in May, at the end of last academic year. The University is preparing for four additional ceremonies in the coming weeks. Information, also regarding Covid-related protocols, will soon be shared with the community. Proof of full vaccination will be required to attend.
- 4) Fr. McShane noted that this year's undergraduate enrollment has been particularly strong and the University fared better than its peer institutions. In fact, this is the largest and most diverse class of recent years, with significant percentage increases of Latinx (57%), Black (155%) and Asian American (30%) students as compared to last year. Enrollment in the Law School has also been very strong. Data on the graduate schools is not available yet. Enrollment patterns are in line with the University's strategic planning and commitment to social justice and diversity. Although the majority of students continue to come from New York, New Jersey and California, Fr. McShane noted an increase in the number of students from Texas, perhaps a positive signal of the University's expanding pool in the South. With respect to international students, the number is up by 54% from last year; the decline of students from China has been counterbalanced by an increased number of students from India and Vietnam.
- 5) Fr. McShane noted that fundraising is going well and that the "Cura Personalis" Campaign will go public in a couple of months.

Fr. McShane concluded his report by mentioning that this will be his final year at Fordham, after 25 years of service. On behalf of the Faculty Senate, Senate President Drummond extended him the Senate's good wishes in this and future years, expressed the Senate's appreciation for his dedication to Fordham, and affirmed the Senate's commitment to work with him in the coming months.

Provost's Report and Q&A

Dr. Jacobs began his remarks by clarifying that students' vaccination percentages reported earlier included only fully vaccinated individuals. Those students who are in the process of being fully vaccinated (e.g., students who are awaiting the second shot, or international students who did not receive an FDA- or WHO-authorized vaccine) are treated as unvaccinated, and must undergo weekly testing per surveillance protocol until they are fully vaccinated. Dr. Jacob's report covered various aspects of academic life during the pandemic:

- 1) Following the town hall meeting for instructors of August 30, the FAQ for instructors on the "Fordham Forward" site has been updated. Faculty members are encouraged to consult this site, and continue to direct their inquiries to the Provost's Office.

- 2) Dr. Jacobs underscored a key difference in official regulation from last year: asymptomatic and vaccinated individuals who have been in close contact with Covid-19 infected individuals do not need to quarantine, but should monitor their condition and be tested 3-5 days after exposure.
- 3) He reviewed what a change of status from B, where we currently are, to C would mean for the institution and for faculty's teaching should conditions warrant it, in order to maintain "the relational aspect of in-person learning" at the core of Fordham's pedagogy. Additional guidance for scenario C will be shared with the faculty so they can prepare in advance should a change in status occur. Dr. Jacobs recognized that storm Ida caught them off guard, and while his office and the Deans worked closely to address the emergency, he acknowledged the need to do a better job and to be better prepared in the future. He further elaborated on classroom capacity and pivoting to hybrid teaching if we have to return to social distancing (3ft or 6ft). Based on a survey of classroom space at the university and upon consideration of different scenarios, it was estimated that if a 3ft distance were applied, about 2/3 of course sections would not be affected. With a 6ft distance implementation, the impact would be greater: about 1/3 of sections would not be affected, 2/3 would be. A message will be sent out to the faculty in the next few weeks with information about classroom modified capacity should social distancing be reintroduced, so that instructors can plan accordingly.

Dr. Jacobs concluded his remarks by noting that as the President will be stepping down at the end of the year, the University has engaged WittKieffer in assisting with the Presidential search. The WittKieffer consultants will hold two "listening sessions" for faculty on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

Senators raised a number of questions regarding Covid-19, specifically about any accommodations or flexibility with faculty with children or unvaccinated family members, the relaxation of the mask mandate resulting from a change of status (e.g., B to A), data on current volume of testing on campus, and disciplinary measures with non-compliant students with the mask mandate. With regard to accommodations for high-risk individuals, Dr. Jacobs responded that faculty should work with HR since they can address specific medical questions confidentially. Faculty can petition and request a "reasonable accommodation." Pivoting to fully online teaching is not the only or first option when an individual qualifies for an accommodation. There are other possibilities to consider, for example the assignment of a larger classroom. Faculty should contact first HR, and then HR will consult with the Dean's Office. Dr. Jacobs agreed with Senate President Drummond that there has been a shift in considering job-related accommodations given the introduction of highly effective vaccines but also the acknowledgment that vaccines are not 100% effective. Dr. Jacobs then commented that changes in the current mask mandate could occur based on changes in the local situation and the data available. They are also considering other scenarios. He added that at present, a few hundred people are undergoing routine testing. He finally underscored that students who do not comply with the mask mandate can be reported to the Dean of Students since this is a case of violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Extension of Adjustments to Statutory Requirements to Allow for Remote Meetings

The Senate voted (20-0-0) to continue meeting remotely this year due to the persistence of extraordinary circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, as a general precaution and a time-saving measure, to minimize exposure by travelling between campuses, and on account of the lack of clarity about large spaces available to meet on campus. One senator noted the importance of in-person meetings for collaboration and community building, and encouraged the Senate to find a better long-term solution and strike a balance between online and in-person proceedings given the new and lasting reality that the pandemic has brought into existence.

Approval of Committee Rosters

A list of nominees was circulated in advance of the meeting. Senate President Drummond confirmed that all vacancies on various Senate and Presidential committees have been filled, including a remaining one on the Faculty Hearing Committee. The Senate approved (20-0-0) all nominees.

Election of Chair, OHLC

The Senate elected Dr. John Craven Chair of the Online and Hybrid Learning Committee by acclamation.

Nominations for Presidential Search Committee and Update on Salary & Benefits

Senate President Drummond informed the Senate that the Presidential Search Committee will comprise 19 members: 11 trustees or alumni, 4 faculty members, 2 administrators, and 2 students. It is not known whether a graduate student will serve on the committee or how trustees and alumni will be selected. The search committee should move relatively quickly, with a first meeting scheduled on September 24, a list of candidates prepared by the end of the year, interviews in early 2022, and the announcement of the new President in the Spring semester. It is an ambitious timetable, which raises concerns among senators about the thoroughness of the search.

The Senate Executive Committee presented a slate of nominations. Vice President Alonzo explained the criteria that the Committee used in identifying nominees: representation across campuses and schools; diversity; support for teaching and research. As senators had questions, upon a seconded motion and following discussion, the Senate voted unanimously to enter executive session.

The executive session began at 1:10 p.m. and ended at 2:18 p.m. During the executive session, the Senate voted unanimously to report the result of its deliberation: the Senate approved the Executive Committee's nominees for the Presidential Search Committee. The topic of Salary & Benefits was also discussed.

Approval of Minutes

The Senate approved the minutes of three meetings, one held on April 23, and two held on May 4, 2021. The minutes of the two meetings of the academic year 2020-21 Senate were approved by a vote of 15-0-5. The minutes of the meeting of the academic year 2021-22 Senate were approved by a vote of 20-0-0.

New Business

Senate President Drummond reminded senators of a remaining issue from last year, faculty's ownership of the curriculum. One senator brought to the Senate's attention several concerns from the faculty about the new portal. Faculty members are encouraged to share their concerns and feedback with the Faculty Committee on Technology.

At the end of the meeting, Senate President Drummond took a moment to recognize Fr. Joseph Koterski, S.J., who passed away unexpectedly during the summer. A significant presence on campus, Fr. Koterski was a dedicated colleague from the Philosophy Department and a longtime member of the Senate, in which he also served as a Secretary.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Francesca Parmeggiani, Secretary