



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Faculty Senate

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Tamique Ridgard

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Aditya Saharia

Falguni Sen

Henry Schwalbenberg

Grace Shen

Grace M. Vernon

Ian Weinstein

Lori Wolff

Present: Senate President Drummond; Senators Albin, Alleyne-Green, Beaudoin, Dietrich, GoGwilt, Goldkind, Hepp, Idris, Mowlabocus, Ridgard, Rubin, Saharia, Sen, Schwalbenberg, Vernon, Weinstein, Wolff

Attending via Zoom: Senators Bastiaens, Baur, Jones, Mozes

Excused: Senators Pini, Shen

Guests: Dr. Dennis Jacobs, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Joshua Jordan, Chair, Fordham Faculty United (FFU).

Call to Order

At 11:32 a.m. Senate President John Drummond called the meeting to order in 109 McMahon Hall, Lincoln Center

Invocation

Senator Colon delivered the invocation.

President's Report and Q&A

Thanking Senator Colon for his invocation remarks, President Tetlow expressed her appreciation at seeing so many faculty at the inauguration ceremony the week before. It was a beautiful ceremony and she said she has often thought that this is one of those things that higher education does well. We look so good in our robes. The President announced that she was planning town hall events in early November, one at Lincoln Center and one at Rose Hill, to begin sharing a lot of data. The data won't be from just one moment in time, but showing trend lines over time – where we're heading on all sorts of topics. At these meetings we can drill into questions. It's the kind of data that we won't want to put on our website or on Youtube. That's why these will be in-person events at each campus, inviting people to ask questions directly.

She announced the success in securing a new chair in the sciences with a gift from Kim Bepler and invited the Provost to explain briefly the terms: the endowment was written in such a way that it will support not only an accomplished scholar and teacher in the natural and applied sciences, but someone who can engage the frontiers of science in each era; Kim Bepler being very amenable to creating flexibility in a chair that will honor her late husband who, though not a scientist himself, recognized Fordham's great need in the area of the natural and applied sciences. The Provost added he is excited to invest more in the natural and applied sciences. Almost a third of entering students want to major in STEM and currently our yield is extraordinarily low in this area; regrettably, Fordham's underinvestment in the sciences, both in academics and in the physical plant itself, extends back to the 1920s.

The President announced that her biggest priority this year is to improve the Budget process. Her aim is to go from the retrenchment mode of crisis management to forward-looking strategic planning. It is not that some central figure has micromanaged the budget without input. Instead, during a crisis, we have acted incrementally to find savings. Strategy, now, is the ballpark for us, since our costs are rising higher than our revenue. We need to focus on reducing waste where we find it, being careful with costs, but not just that. We don't do zero-based budgeting in universities, since we are more committed to our people and our long-term commitments. But we do need to become more efficient. Of course everyone believes in eliminating waste except where it affects their own sector. We need to take a moment where we create the right incentives; where we sit down with the Deans of each School and the VPs and, given sufficient resources, consider providing incentives for individual programs, departments, schools, to say: where you can find cost savings and efficiencies, you can invest that and use it. In that way, we can redeploy resources with greater efficiency. She said she was very eager to make much more manifest shared governance in this regard. She has talked to the Senate President about having a brain-storming session with faculty about how to do that best, but we should prioritize using existing structures, namely, the Budget Planning Committee. We want input into our constrained choices, not just up and down votes on whether we care about individual areas. And we need to ask of leadership to reconsider sacred cows, stop kicking the can down the road. The longer we wait, the bigger the hole. This is an unbelievable amount of work for everyone involved, but it is critical. It represents our possibility and our future. There is no greater expression of mission and strategy than our budget.

In the Q&A, one senator said that it was refreshing to hear the President talk about incentives to allow individual units to generate efficiency and preserve the savings for that unit. But what would the unit be? Programs? Schools? How would the discretion for strategic planning be decided (at the level of Schools, departments, programs) and how would shared governance be realized?

In response the President noted that there are trade-offs. You want to decentralize, but, on the other hand, you have to ensure you also reallocate from one inefficient unit to another desperate for resources. This is what the President is grappling with. There's a world in which you tell Schools and departments: here's your money, be strategic. There are lots of areas where, even if something isn't wasteful, it's not how best to spend the money or, to avoid conflict, you haven't fired someone you should have. There may be units that may be more comparatively flush by contrast to others that are more constrained. That's what we have to figure out. The President is asking for the analysis, starting with the Schools themselves. Our systems are a little clunky, so it will take a while to get that analysis. Then you have the analysis at the department level. Assessing revenue and efficiencies at that level is not simple; how we create incentives depends on comparative needs across Schools. There's a question of redistributive justice that needs to be balanced in relation to creating incentives in decentralizing the budget. Moving to a more decentralized budget, where people can own their own process, has been effective at other institutions. To jump start that is tricky. The President's instinct is to say: each unit starts with what they have, and you won't be punished by making savings. In response to the senator's concern about the risk of focusing on efficiency, the President noted that the question of how to grow was a key part of the brainstorming. There's a need to provide seed money for growth – and this is where the Board comes in. How to balance the big ideas, the details of planning, levels of risk, the comparative cost of doing this at the same time as that. For that we need the analysis.

Another senator asked if they might tell their colleagues we seem to be moving toward a School or Department based budgeting. Will the School Dean now have the authority to move money from X to Y, rather than being told that, if you cut X you lose X. Is this moving toward a Harvard model of eating what you kill, rather than a socialist model of sharing? The President responded by noting she could not answer this, since it depends on what the facts are. She wants to find a forgiveness moment to promote incentives for efficiency. We still need to know how much more money there is for next year; whether there will be normal increases or not. So where we

land at this first stage isn't certain. It is the President's hope that this year, wherever units find themselves (in the red or in the black), they can use this moment to be more strategic with the budget. Whether we have a School-based budgeting model depends on this. If half of our Schools are deeply in deficit and don't meet the expenses of that School, that's a challenge for developing incentives. This is what the President has to figure out. Law is a good example because whereas it once generated revenues that supported other elements of the university, after the Great Recession, when legal education went down, it ended up being subsidized by other Schools. Arts & Sciences does more to sustain itself than people realize, partly because of lower salaries than law and business. So this balance is what needs to be figured out.

Responding to a senator's question about the implications of the resources of space for strategic planning, the President agreed that this was an important part of the budget planning process. She said she was delighted that Fordham has hired Sasaki, the architecture firm, to do a campus master plan, starting with Rose Hill, to think through the big issues of planning: how to activate underutilized spaces. She noted that she will need help to avoid stepping on the third rail of space issues between departments in order to prevent the hoarding of physical space. There is a lot of real estate in offices we don't use (places essentially used as book storage). This is part of the balance between redistributive justice in budget allocation and producing incentives to create efficiencies. The President is looking for suggestions on how to address these questions in terms of shared governance.

One senator asked about the dilemma faced by departments in developing long-term strategic hiring plans. In response, the President talked about the need to plan at the School level rather than just at the department level. The President is still working on long-term projections. Right now the picture is not promising. The fact is that the cost to educate students is rising more rapidly than the revenue from tuition. We need to work to address that not through retrenchment, but through creating greater efficiency in the budget process.

One senator asked if the President could name some of the institutions where decentralized budget planning had been effective. The President cited the example of the University of Pennsylvania whose Responsibility Center Management (RCM) model was adopted at Tulane University when she was chief of staff there. She referred senators to articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Saying that it is not at all a panacea, it can create barriers to interdisciplinarity (something the President said she valued), and can have unintended consequences. She said she doesn't know if it will work here, although it's about making sure that people feel motivated to do the things that keep us nimble.

One senator, noting that efficiency and resources can look very different depending on the discipline, wanted to emphasize that in the humanities the precious resource of time can sometimes look like inefficiency. They expressed concern that if resources and efficiency are the buzzwords, there's a danger of slippage where those terms negatively impact the disciplines whose work isn't easily measured that way. The President responded by addressing two different things. First, she noted that she understands we hire faculty both to do research and to teach, and so we don't measure efficiency by teaching load. Research is important and lifts the university's profile, and ultimately rankings. Second, there is a rather different issue of time efficiency we need to take very seriously, too. As you think about the fact that we, like most universities, have fewer tenure/tenure-track faculty, the decision not to ask the non-tenure-track full-time instructors to do service has budget implications. Research time gets reallocated to service. To exclude that group of teachers from service – not to call them faculty – this may be a moment you want to reconsider that. Can we reconceive the balance of these things? In general, the President described taking very seriously the desire to find new efficiencies – through better processes and automating systems where possible – to claw back valuable time.

One senator asked the President her thoughts on what the university might do to create the moral energy needed to counter feelings of exhaustion following the effects of Covid-19, given the amount of time spent dealing with trauma at every level, and given the climate of scarcity and the competitive thinking that has accompanied the

crisis-mode of handling things.

The President agreed that people are exhausted right now and noted that it's important to be careful to triage what matters most. She said she wanted to be invitational on the question of shared governance, not to impose on faculty the extra labor required to address these issues. She repeated her desire to find efficiencies to protect time and energy. Beyond that, what the President has at her disposal is her words – and she referenced her [inauguration speech](#) – that we guard against the temptation of unrelenting cynicism; that we have the courage to hope in these unhopeful times.

A senator noted that one thing feeding frustration and cynicism was the lack of tangible outcomes from the efforts faculty have made in developing proposals, writing reports, and outlining strategic plans. All too often that work disappears into a vacuum, and faculty never sees the results of that work.

The President said she understands she will need to deliver results to earn the faculty's trust. She asked faculty to suspend cynicism and allow her to prove herself.

The President concluded her remarks and the Q&A at 12:21 pm.

Provost's Report and Q&A

Provost Dennis Jacobs began his report to the Senate by addressing the variety of responses to the University's policy mandating the bivalent booster. He hoped that the email circulated that morning provided more clarity. He emphasized that the policy, based on the CDC recommendations on vaccines, is intended to make sure the campus is as safe as possible, while at the same time respecting individual autonomy. He reminded those who feel their own circumstances warrant a different direction, that the University has always had and continues to have a policy on exemptions. Anyone who files a petition for exemption will be considered with careful attention.

Reiterating the President's focus on budget, the Provost noted that at the Council of Deans meeting the day before they were very much focused on the new budgeting mindset. The Deans are eager to work within this new framework. At this time, we live under significant budgetary constraints. 85% of the university's revenue comes from tuition, room, and board. Looking at credit hours attempted, which are the best indicator of tuition revenue, and looking across the last 5 years (including covid and non-covid years), some may be surprised to know that this fall is only the fourth highest of those 5 years. The largest challenge over these 5 years has been the drop in enrollment in our graduate and professional Schools. Each School or program has a unique story. But some general observations apply to many of the Schools. At this weird inflection point in our economy, the jobless rate is incredibly low, leading people thinking about pursuing an advanced degree to reconsider. We have always competed with other graduate programs. Now we are also competing with a fierce job market in which companies are aggressively working to attract and retain talent. Another piece of the graduate enrollment puzzle is that we have been highly reliant on international populations. Both geopolitical conflicts and covid-related travel restrictions have made this a very challenging market. Programs heavily reliant on international students (especially from China) have seen the greatest effects. We also have seen challenges in the retention of international students.

The Provost gave a quick update on the Student Success Hub, the new initiative to connect students with support services, (including academic advising, counseling, disability resources, career services, and student clubs). It was launched September 15 for first-year undergraduate students. In the first month there were 3,000 logins leading to more academic advising appointments with first-year students than ever before. By January, the Student Success Hub will expand to all undergraduates. Over time, graduate students will also be layered in.

This is a tool that connects not just virtually but also sets up face-to-face appointments, so students don't get constantly passed on to others. It connects students with information, people, and resources. We hope it will make their less frustrating and help promote success in student engagement and retention.

Another area where Fordham has made strides forward is in creating a more diverse community. There is still a lot of work to do. Looking at a ten-year period, a decade ago 30% of our undergraduates were students of color; the current entering class is 42% students of color. On the graduate student side, a decade ago 25% were domestic students of color; now it is 35%. For full-time faculty, we have steadily improved from 17% to 26% faculty of color over the past decade. There is still a lot of work to be done across all areas, but we should acknowledge great progress on this front. The Provost wanted to convey his grave concerns about two Supreme Court cases to be heard Oct 31: *Students for Fair Admissions (SFA) v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*; and *SFA v. University of North Carolina*, both attempting to prevent the use of race as a factor in admissions through arguments around the 14th Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Fordham has joined amicus briefs against SFA. ACE, a major national organization for Higher Ed has called attention to Fordham in particular, for its partnership with Alvin Ailey – a historically black dance company, to point out how these kinds of partnerships are at the core of what Higher Education is all about. The Supreme Court decision has the potential to completely disrupt much of what we do across our institution. UC Berkeley struggled to retain their commitment to diversity, in light of new California regulations. California law of course doesn't apply to us, but the Supreme Court ruling could significantly affect us.

The Provost announced another upcoming effort to watch for, the regional accreditation process of Middle States, which comes every 10 years. Spring 2025 is when the Middle States site team would come to campus. Before that, Fordham needs to produce a self-study report (an approximately 200-page document). What's different this time is that Fordham has the opportunity to identify approximately three priorities around which to build the report. We could, for example, advance the particular goals of DEI or Core Curriculum as priorities. Building a report around aspirations is a different exercise from focusing on having met specific standards. We will have to do the latter to some extent, but that's not the be-all and end-all of the self-study. This opens the door to be more forward thinking. It will involve setting up committees, and we will be asking faculty to be part of the process, since faculty involvement is critical, but we will try to use everyone's time wisely and efficiently (e.g., building on existing committees whenever possible).

The Provost closed by talking about the inauguration activities, including the academic forum around the theme of hope in a fractured world, underscoring how our students can make a difference. He noted, too, another celebration coming up the week following: the 10th-year anniversary of the Foundry, Fordham University's Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

In the Q&A one senator asked, about the upcoming Supreme Court cases, what we can do in the meantime as an institution to prepare to counter a negative outcome. How can we continue the work of diversifying our student body and faculty in a way that is both legally consistent and still true to mission? The Provost noted that Fordham, like every university, needs to be compliant with whatever Supreme Court decision is rendered, because we rely on federal support. Nonetheless, he suggested two ways the university can work alongside whatever restrictions might be coming if affirmative action is dismantled. First, there's our commitment to those in less privileged socioeconomic conditions. About 20% of our undergraduate students receive Pell funding; we can work to make sure we are prioritizing those that have a demonstrated financial need – and this has strong overlap with supporting a diverse community. Second, we can continue to focus on neighborhoods, such as we do with the neighborhoods around Rose Hill, where we provide additional aid within a 5-mile radius of the campus. Such programs would have a positive benefit on diversity while being permissible if the Supreme Court rules against race-conscious admission practices.

One senator said they were glad to hear about the Bronx program, would love to hear more about this program in the news, and would love to see it expanded from the Bronx to Washington Heights. Are there more plans for programming related to these initiatives in Arts & Sciences?

The Provost responded by saying that PCS today offers a set of undergraduate degrees in conjunction with Fordham College and Gabelli, using faculty from those schools along with adjuncts teaching typically part-time nontraditional students. PCS is very interested in promoting a program that supports such students in their first and second year enabling them to transition to Fordham College LC or RH. These avenues exist today and are being targeted; but those markets, compared to three years ago, are challenging – in terms of the ability of students to pay, their ability to balance conflicting demands. It is more difficult to recruit students into these programs today than it was three years ago.

One senator urged the Provost, regardless of the outcome of the Supreme Court’s decision, to put out a statement to the whole Fordham community about the university’s commitment to addressing the issue of diversity. Such a statement would go far in bolstering current and ongoing hiring efforts.

One senator asked about the new advising system, and the Provost offered a brief overview, explaining how the new Academic Advising Center, with its emphasis on the use of professional advisors, emerged from an A&S faculty task force. If there were specific questions or concerns, the Provost encouraged faculty to speak to their Dean.

The Provost was asked questions about COVID-19 policies, and notably the mandate to be up-to-date with one’s vaccinations, as defined by the CDC. One senator questioned whether there was enough evidence about the efficacy of the bivalent booster to warrant the mandate. In response the Provost noted that the university’s guidance comes from the CDC. Asked what faculty can expect come November 1 if they have not been fully vaccinated, the Provost said those individuals would be contacted so the university can engage in a conversation. Last spring, in 99% of cases, the issues were resolved through such a conversation. Another senator criticized the initial communication from the administration about the mandate, noting that there was nothing like the outreach through town hall meetings and other events that had occurred earlier.

Presentation: Joshua Jordan, Chair, Fordham Faculty United (FFU)

At 1:10 Senate President Drummond invited Joshua Jordan, chair of Fordham Faculty United (FFU) to address the Senate. Contingent (non-tenured and non-tenure-track) faculty unionized in 2017, Joshua Jordan explained, and FFU negotiated its first contract in 2018. FFU is in the midst of a second collective bargaining agreement between the union and the Fordham administration. Joshua Jordan thanked those who have been standing strong in support for FFU, signing letters of support as individuals and departments. He hoped that today would provide an opportunity for further understanding and solidarity between faculty groups. Before addressing the three central priorities informing the current negotiations, he offered a quick overview of FFU.

FFU is a bargaining unit consisting of about 650 people, 130 of whom teach full time and are called Lecturers in some departments and Clinical faculty in others. They enjoy the same benefits as tenure-track faculty. Out of the total 650, about 520 are part-time adjunct faculty. All these together are the people affected by the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations. Introducing himself as chair of FFU, and as a senior Lecturer in Modern Languages and Literatures, Joshua Jordan foregrounded the fact that we are all colleagues at Fordham, seeing each other in the corridors, teaching the same students, and invested in the same kind of care for the wellbeing and success of our students. At FFU there is a saying that our working conditions are our students’ learning conditions. Our workplace is our students’ learning place. And this “our” means all of us, he emphasized, including the faculty in the Senate.

He circulated a handout with details on compensation (see Appendix). On one side (first page) is the administration's current proposal; on the other side (second page) is the FFU proposal. He noted that once an agreement is reached, the compensation would normally be retroactively applied. The CBA was set to expire this summer and, over the course of negotiations, FFU and the Fordham administration have agreed to three 1-month extensions. The terms of the CBA still pertain, but not the compensation and other proposals subject to negotiations, until November 2, the end of the current CBA extension. Negotiations have been going on since March 2022. The first CBA was ratified in 2018. This is our second round. In 2020, we negotiated an impact bargaining agreement, due to COVID; and in summer 2021 we negotiated a one-year extension of our current CBA. The latter brought up all FFU members to the salary rates indicated for the third year of our CBA, albeit a year late.

Throughout current negotiations FFU has had 3 main priorities: 1) higher compensation; 2) pay parity across Schools; 3) health benefits for adjuncts. The one overarching objective has been to raise up the most vulnerable and precarious of our Fordham faculty colleagues.

Starting with health benefits, full time contingent faculty already have the same health care and retirement benefits as tenured and tenure-track faculty. For part-time and adjunct faculty, a variety of different kinds of access to health care have been proposed/discussed, starting with no longevity requirement and immediate access to health care and extending to a fairly steep longevity requirement, and different levels of employer contribution. The administration has said that the current insurance plan for full-time faculty cannot serve faculty teaching less than 27 hours (3-4 credit course is counted as 9 hrs.). Since adjuncts cannot teach more than 2 courses per semester and the administration has refused to raise that cap, adjuncts remain beneath that threshold. As was the case in 2018, unfortunately, the administration has refused to entertain working creatively to find some level of health benefits to adjunct faculty. Some of you may be familiar with the so-called Bronze plan? Based on information from the administration, out of FFU's 650 members, only one person has availed themselves of this plan. It's a lousy plan. It's important to note that the administration has not been willing to entertain how we might move toward a health benefit plan in this contract. Elsewhere, at other universities in NYC, adjuncts do have health benefits (e.g., NYU, CUNY, Barnard, and the New School). One thing the administration has proposed is a one-time lump sum payment, meant to assist with health care costs. Those who taught in academic year 2021-2022 would receive \$200 per course. FFU has proposed to increase this to \$400 per course, but it is still inadequate for health care and entails real precarity.

On the matter of pay parity, the handout illustrates the pay disparity across Schools, between part-time, adjunct faculty in A&S, GSRRE, and GSS. In GSS you have as little as 4900; in GSRRE 4600. This is in Schools that represent Fordham's mission of social justice. In the initial proposal FFU called for one-for-one parity, starting in year one of the CBA. To explain the continued disparity, the administration has mentioned the marketplace, the fact that those teaching in Social Service are generally paid less in the current marketplace, and we've also heard the arguments that adjunct work is secondary work for GSSS adjuncts (they're getting their income from elsewhere); and that GSSS has lower tuition and its students receive a higher level of financial aid – A&S cannot be expected to pay for GSSS faculty. FFU believes equal work deserves equal pay. It might be noted that the Social Services are represented by a greater number of women and people of color.

Turning to the third priority, higher compensation, the administration has remained attached to the 3% that appears on the handout showing the administration's proposal. Part of the thinking communicated to FFU is that, following significant raises in 2018, now everyone should be treated the same. The rationale is that all groups (teamsters, clerical unions, etc) should be held to the same 3% increase. The reason for putting dollar amounts to this 3% increase on the handout is to draw attention to the fact that 3% of not much is not much. This draws attention to the growing precarity of more than 520 part-time faculty in our community.

Joshua Jordan gave some figures about where the marketplace is going in New York City. Barnard just ratified a new CBA: from its current \$10,000 per course, this year it will be \$11,500 going up to \$14,000 in year five of their contract. By comparison, FFU's proposal asks for a \$500 increase (with some exceptions as high as \$1000) ending at \$10,000. Granted, Fordham isn't Barnard. We're asking for it to be 1/3 of Barnard. He noted similar comparisons to the compensation currently being negotiated at NYU and the New School. FFU is asking the administration to keep up with the marketplace. On average an adjunct at Fordham is paid about \$7200 per course; that comes out to \$28,800 maximum from teaching at Fordham – and without health benefits. This puts Fordham's adjuncts into a precarious living situation. It is not good for our faculty; it is not good for our students.

Much of the response to this presentation underscored the shared concerns between the contingent faculty represented by FFU and the faculty represented by the Senate.

One senator drew on their experience working on the Salary and Benefits Committee and noted that the FFU proposal makes perfect sense in light of current inflation, later noting that the government had just increased social security benefits by 8.7%; and, indeed, this senator suggested FFU should have been more aggressive in asking for higher percentage increases for full-time faculty. This senator noted that the administration's proposed 3% increase is insulting, especially so since it was fixed over the next 3 years, and also since it appears to be what they are wanting to insist on for other groups across the university.

One senator asked whether the data given in the handout included the full-time non-tenured/tenure-track instructors in the School of Education. When Joshua Jordan said that it included only part-time members, this senator noted that it was their understanding that the full-time Clinical faculty in the School of Education are included in the union, but that adjuncts were not.

One senator noted the dollar difference between the administration's proposal and FFU's (around \$500,000 in the first year). This senator wondered if there is some legal issue preventing leadership from the Senate and from FFU – and from other units and unions – from conferring. This led to a discussion of the merits of such leadership liaisons, the best timing for such consultation, and the need for solidarity. The Senate President noted that there has been communication between different leaders of the different units, but that, speaking for himself, he did not think it was necessarily a good idea to confer during the negotiation process itself.

One senator, expressing outrage at the numbers for Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, made a point of quoting the University President's words from earlier in the meeting: "there is no greater expression of mission and strategy than our budget." This senator said the Senate would benefit from having more communication with FFU and asked Joshua Jordan what they needed from us today. Joshua Jordan said that any way of making support for FFU visible and vocal (petitions, letters, ad hoc advocacy) would be welcome and appreciated. There was some discussion of the efficacy of letter-writing, with some concrete offers to write letters about the reasons so many classes had to be cancelled (because of the difficulty in securing adjunct faculty to teach under the current working conditions). Joshua Jordan noted that the university needs to know we are not alone, the "we" comprising all the various constituencies (contingent faculty, full-time faculty, graduate school workers) across the university.

There was some discussion of the way the University Statutes uses exclusionary language in its definition of "faculty." It was suggested that the Senate may want to rethink that definition, with the invitation for the Handbook Committee to take the matter up. Some senators cautioned that changing the definition of faculty in the Statutes could lead to a slippery slope, noting that some Deans have already attempted to include contingent faculty on committees that the administration can manipulate more easily than with tenured and tenure-track

faculty. Others noted that, with increased job security and benefits, contingent faculty would be less susceptible to administrative manipulation.

Discussion ended at 1:50 pm

Salary and Benefits Committee: Pregnancy-Related Leave and Workload Relief Policy, Ralf Hepp, Chair

At 1:50 pm Senate President Drummond turned to the Pregnancy-Related Leave and Workload Relief Policy proposal presented by the Salary and Benefits Committee. He thanked Senators Mozes and S&B Committee member Lauren Kopajtic; and he thanked S&B Committee chair, Senator Hepp for his efforts to advance this proposal through the relevant administrative channels for approval before presenting it to the Senate.

Chair of the S&B Committee, Senator Hepp introduced Senator Mozes' presentation of the policy by noting that it had taken two years of work to craft the current policy. Although the policy being proposed has yet to be approved by the Senate (and also the Trustees), the administration has already begun to implement the policy this semester. Senator Mozes explained that the Statutes were confusing on what constitutes "maternity leave" and "course reduction" in relation to "sick leave." Since the initial policy on "maternity leave" was drafted, New York State implemented "paid family leave." In the past when a faculty member was granted release for parenting, they would technically still be obliged to do service, and the ambiguity of the policy meant faculty and chairs always ended up going to administration (Ben Crooker) to sort out the details on a case by case basis. The new policy fixes those problems. Regular sick leave during pregnancy is treated the way illness is treated. The policy combines the university's course release policy with New York State's paid family leave. It's not just a course release, but complete leave (without the obligation of service). Where there are two parents who are Fordham faculty both are eligible for course release (although if they are in the same department, the university can request that the leave be taken in consecutive semesters rather than in the same semester). Combining New York State Paid Family Leave with the Fordham plan, it turns out, is good for both faculty and the university. The \$800 a week under the New York State plan goes to the University and the University arranges for parental leave. What was distributed to the Senate (see Appendix) is the Statutory language. A FAQ will be written and distributed later.

Following the presentation there was some discussion about how gender inclusive language had been used to describe those eligible for the benefits of the policy (it applies not just to "women" but to spouses, in addition to cases of fostering and adoption).

There was a motion from Senator Saharia to approve the policy that was ultimately seconded by Senator Beaudoin. The Senate unanimously voted to approve the policy.

Discussion: BRI and Commuter Benefit Transactions, Aditya Saharia

At 2:05 pm the Senate turned to discussion of BRI (Benefit Resource Inc) and Commuter Benefit Transactions. Senator Saharia drew the Senate's attention to problems he and colleagues had encountered in managing the automatic payments into their BRI accounts. There are instances where large amounts of money have been accumulating in individual faculty accounts without faculty realizing. Inquiries sent to HR/Payroll have gone unanswered (for example to confirm whether or not contributions had actually been stopped). There were some cases where the amount of the contributions had accumulated into several thousands of dollars, and there is no way to get that money back. Other senators offered variations on this theme. One noted that there had been some response from HR, but much delayed, and the argument was that it wasn't the responsibility of Payroll to manage the contributions. Another senator later noted that there were significant delays in BRI's response to inquiries. It was suggested that the Chair of Salary & Benefits write a letter to Michael Hayes in Payroll (with

copies to Kay Turner, Nick Milowski and Martha Hirst – it was suggested the Provost also be involved) noting that this ongoing issue has been brought to the attention of the Senate.

Discussion: Anti-Covid policies

At 2:13 pm, Senate President introduced discussion of anti-Covid policies. He began by addressing complaints he had received about the Executive Committee's decision to forward the petition calling for rescinding the university's mandate on vaccinations. Given the deadline for everyone to receive the bivalent booster (November 1), the EC decided to allow the use of the Senate's full faculty list. They viewed it only as providing a mailing list; but rather than turn over the list itself, they sent the petition out through one of the Senate's addresses. It's clear this shouldn't ordinarily be used for this purpose. They thought this was a special case. The Senate was already on record as having voted (at its [January 14, 2022 meeting](#)) for a strong recommendation for a booster, rather than a mandate. The Executive Committee was absolutely clear that it didn't take a stand on the petition. That point was made twice in the course of the email. Senate President Drummond found it disappointing that people thought they were advancing the claims of petition. At any rate, there was considerable blowback.

There was initial acrimony amongst some senators over the claims and counter-claims generated in response to the circulation of the petition. This modulated into a more sustained discussion of whether petitions should be sent out using the Senate's mailing list. The Senate President said it would be useful to develop norms for when the mailing list can be used. One senator argued that greater caution needs to be taken before forwarding petitions, since they tend to make people crystallize around oppositional poles.

Looking ahead to the special meeting that is planned to address this issue, a number of senators argued that the Senate focus on broader questions than the merits or demerits of the bivalent booster. One senator urged the Senate to keep its eye on the broader process issues, noting that the controversies that have been generated by the circulation of the petition began with the administration's botched messaging. Other senators noted that the special meeting should look at the whole swath of measures needed to keep the campus safe (the vaccination and booster being only one facet of other measures, including air filtration systems, masks, preventing overcrowding in classrooms).

At close to 2:30 pm a motion was made to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. The motion passed by a vote of 21 – 2 – 0.

In further discussion it was proposed that the rule against having guests attend via Zoom be waived for the upcoming special meeting.

Approval of minutes

At approximately 2:30 pm with a motion from Senator Vernon, seconded by Senator Morrison, the Senate voted to accept the minutes from the September 9 meeting. The motion passed by a vote of 21 – 0 – 3.

New Business

Senate President Drummond announced a follow-up to last meeting's vote to have the Executive Committee consult with the Provost's Office regarding a return to the statutory norms for holding personnel meetings in person. In consultation with the Provost, the Executive Committee will be forming a subcommittee to develop permissive statutory language enabling the use of Zoom for personnel meetings. Units will be allowed to

develop their own modality (in-person, hybrid, or fully Zoom). In the meantime, we are extending the terms of last year's use of Zoom to conduct personnel meetings.

There was some discussion about the merits for and against using Zoom for personnel meetings, and Senate President Drummond noted that it will take some time to develop the language for modifying the current statutory norms.

A motion to adjourn (from Senator Colon seconded by Senator Jones) was unanimously approved.

The Senate adjourned at approximately 2:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher GoGwilt, Secretary