



**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**Faculty Senate**

Tania Tetlow, Honorary President

John Drummond, President

Ralf Hepp, Vice President

Christopher GoGwilt, Secretary

Andrew Albin

Binta Alleyne-Green

Ida Bastiaens

Michael Baur

Thomas Beaudoin

Jeffrey Colon

Christopher Dietrich

Lauri Goldkind

Amir Idris

Judith Jones

Sharif Mowlabocus

Haim Mozes

Giorgio Pini

Tamique Ridgard

Berish Rubin

Aditya Saharia

Falguni Sen

Henry Schwalbenberg

Grace Shen

Grace M. Vernon

Ian Weinstein

Lori Wolff

**Present:** Senate President Drummond; Senators Albin, Baur, Beaudoin, Dietrich, GoGwilt, Hepp, Mozes, Mowlabocus, Saharia, Sen, Vernon

**Attending via Zoom:** Alleyne-Green, Jones, Ridgard, Rubin, Wolff

**Excused:** Senators Bastiaens, Goldkind, Idris, Pini, Schwalbenberg, Weinstein

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

**Call to Order**

Senate President Drummond called the meeting to order in O'Hare Special Collections, Rose Hill, at 11:35 a.m.

**Invocation**

Senator Baur delivered the invocation at 11:37 a.m.

**President's Report and Q&A**

Noting that all of us are divided and collectively torn over the decision to mandate the bivalent vaccine booster, the President emphasized how valuable she found all the various arguments made at Wednesday's special meeting, and said she will welcome further input for future decisions. Noting that there will always be vaccine mandates of various kinds for students, she acknowledged that there are different calculations when it comes to faculty and staff, and those calculations should be considered once the urgency of the pandemic has lessened.

Turning to budget matters, she said she was continuing to work to find ways to free up resources to invest in advancing our research profile and the quality of our teaching. She addressed the need to find a process for shared governance, which requires transparency, and a shared understanding of constrained choices. She talked about the upcoming town hall meetings at Rose Hill and Lincoln Center, noting that the data she will be sharing at those meetings would be data she wouldn't want shared publicly (i.e. on the website, on Youtube). The data will consider the balance between faculty compensation and expenditures elsewhere, in order to consider where there is wiggle room for freeing up resources. The town hall meetings, which she hopes people will attend in person, will share data in the form of pie charts and graphs not just from one year, but going back several years, on matters of (mostly undergraduate) admission, student body, acceptance, yield, discount rate, etc.. In opening to questions, the President asked for suggestions on other kinds of subjects people might want addressed at these town hall meetings.

The Q&A began with a question about whether negotiations with the Salary and Benefits Committee were planned to begin after negotiations with the union. The President and Senate President Drummond confirmed that the teams for the current negotiations had just been approved (the slight delay coming from the Senate's side).

One senator voiced concern that the President had singled out health insurance as one of the issues up for negotiation, going on to note that having a good insurance plan was a crucial element in recruiting faculty. This senator then went on to express concern that, in pivoting from a covid-emergency-based budgeting model to a responsibility-centered-management model (RCM), the baseline for individual units' budget would be set at the emergency-level budget. Certain things (food for a senior symposium, for example) are currently out of the reach of programs' budgets. In response the President noted that the RCM model can only work when there's a relative parity between Schools and we are far from that. Addressing the point about the way operating budgets have been squeezed, she noted that, as revenue went down (we've gone a year without a tuition increase), the easiest place to make savings was in the operating expenses. This is an example of working with constraints. Emerging from covid restrictions there needs to be an adjustment – for example it is critical to support research through travel to conferences, and also for fundraising and recruitment. We're going to have to make decisions about priorities – for example, prioritizing travel over food. That is why we need to look at the data: to see if we have enough to increase salaries and support a generous health care plan. At Fordham about a third of faculty compensation comes in the form of fringe benefits not wages; so how to prioritize what is a decision that needs to be made collectively. We don't want to work in a mode of constant austerity, but we need to prioritize. Choosing how we spend money is an expression of mission and strategy.

One senator asked how the financial implications of these decisions about priorities should be part of curriculum planning, for example in revising the core curriculum. How much should that planning be visionary, without regard to costs; and how much should creative and visionary planning be subordinated to considerations about financial constraints? Noting that it was impossible to answer with specificity, the President said there are constraints and that it is as well to be aware that creative ideas that cost less money than those with an enormous price tag are more likely to be realized. At the same time, it is important to go ahead and dream and leave until later how to figure out the costs. What is most important is to focus on what matters most to us. One of the purposes of the town hall meetings is to allow us to see the big picture. It is important to understand that most of the resources we have come from student tuition. This will be a topic for discussion at the town hall meetings: how to spend their money and do right by them. So, in curricular planning we need the quality of your creative thinking and we need to realize that in an efficient and strategic way – measuring what we provide our students according to what we are charging them in tuition.

One senator asked what the shared governance process should be going forward for determining the mixture of tenure/tenure-track, clinical, and adjunct faculty, noting that, in the past, faculty were not involved in the decision-making process. In response, the President said there was going to be a discussion of governance process, at the Senate President's urging. Addressing the question of process, she then discussed the problem of representing all the different groups: whether as a whole faculty, through unions, Schools, as represented by Deans, and given the number of different ways faculty is divided into ranks and statuses. She said as a starting point the Budget Planning Committee needs to be made a meaningful place of engagement across all the different sectors. She has spoken to the CFO about ensuring this Committee's meetings are not simply performative.

In response to a question about how much online teaching the university wants to prioritize, the President said that the choice of modality (online or in-person) was less important than the goals (impact and mission), and how much to develop online teaching depended very much on the circumstances of individual programs.

Asked about the challenges ahead posed by the declining demographic of undergraduate student population (including the disparities in gender that currently exist), the President acknowledged the importance of the demographic decline for strategic planning, saying that this is why we are focusing on nationalizing the student body. She noted that this is also why we need to address weaknesses in STEM. She added that the gender imbalance is a real problem (something she herself has written about in the [Hechinger Report](#)).

Returning to the topic of the budget process, a senator asked if the Budget Planning Committee would be meeting soon; and whether data, including sensitive data, would be shared with committee members. The President answered in the affirmative and said that the data is being prepared now, including revenue projections for next year. She reiterated the importance of having the Budget Planning Committee engage in substantive consultation based on shared data and with faculty involvement.

One senator asked if there was an update on the status of DACA. Thanking the senator for this question, the President said she had not heard of any update.

A senator expressed concern that, with the current focus on finance and budget matters, we not forget the commitments the university made during the 2020 racial reckoning nation-wide. Already colleagues feel there has been some backsliding and backlash against commitments (such as trying to diversify the faculty). Unless those commitments are part of the budget and finance conversation, they will likely fall by the wayside. The President affirmed the importance of this point, emphasizing that it is absolutely at the core of who she is, going back to what she wrote as a law professor about race and the constitution. She noted that she had presented data to the Board on race, admission, retention, and graduation rates. She also noted that we must continue to teach ourselves better on how to address the matter of racial inequities.

A senator on Zoom (noting the technical problems of static for those on Zoom) questioned a formulation the President had used to describe health care, worried that the phrase “generous health care” plan might presuppose an understanding of health care benefits not shared by those faculty for whom the plan does not feel so “generous.” The President’s response, while acknowledging the unfortunate phrasing, noted that, while it may not feel generous, health care costs have risen so steeply that those costs take on a higher percentage of the overall compensation package.

Asked whether there would be a Town Hall meeting at the Westchester campus, the President said no, but that extra effort would be made to invite Westchester-based faculty to come to either the Rose Hill or Lincoln Center Town Halls.

At approximately 12:30 pm Senate President Drummond thanked President Tetlow for her remarks and turned to the Provost’s report.

### **Provost’s Report and Q&A**

The Provost began by taking up the question of online learning to note how variable and changing the landscape is and how far the competitive context extends beyond New York. He then turned to provide an update on the ongoing search for the Dean of Gabelli, which is in its finalist phase, having looked at over 70 applications, interviewed 11 semifinalists, with the plan that 4 will come to campus for 2-day interviews. He expects that all the top candidates will have been assessed by early December.

The Provost reported that he had been in conversation with the Executive Committee about organizing a retreat, or summit, to bring together faculty and administrative leaders to talk about the principles of shared governance. Discussions are ongoing about the size and composition of this group.

The Provost returned to the Supreme Court cases discussed at the last Senate meeting. Most pundits have signaled there will likely be an announcement in the summer with a more restricted use (or no use at all) of considerations of race in admissions decisions. In light of the significance and the timing of the decision, the Provost has spoken with the Executive Committee about inviting those involved in recruitment and enrollment to come to the Senate to discuss creative ways to work around any likely impending legal restrictions against considering race as a factor in admissions. Although the Supreme Court has yet to make a decision, now is the time to strategize, because it would be too late to do anything about fall admissions in the summer.

The Provost concluded with the announcement of an upcoming event planned for January 26, 2023: “Remembering: Talking about the Holocaust in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” This will be an event jointly sponsored by the Provost’s Office, Jewish Studies, the PBS [UnderTold Stories](#) Project, and the Jewish Museum of New York.

Before inviting questions, Senate President Drummond noted that senators can expect in December the Faculty Composition report (not including part-time numbers) from Ji Seon Lee, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs; and he is planning to invite a panel of Graduate Deans to discuss graduate enrollment and representatives of the Enrollment Group to discuss undergraduate recruitment.

The Provost was asked how the University was planning for the “demographic cliff” (or expected drop in undergraduate enrollment). In response, the Provost suggested it was less a “cliff” and more a step when, in about 2026, the demographic population of 18-year-olds will take a drop. He suggested that Fordham, as a selective institution, will probably be insulated against this “step” more than some institutions. Nonetheless, it will be important to distinguish ourselves as an institution of choice. Some ways to weather the drop is to look to geographical diversity (drawing from countries other than China – India and Vietnam, for example – and working across the Southwest and the West of the US). VP Jonathan Crystal added there would be a shift in emphasis from recruitment to keeping the students we have, hence the intensifying focus on retention, advising, the student hub, etc..

In response to a question about the trade-off between tuition revenues and the quality of applicants, the Provost acknowledged that students whose education has been disrupted by the COVID-19 years may not have had access to the rigorous and effective education one has come to expect. We have to understand and address the needs of such students.

A senator noted they didn’t see a demographic shift in graduate enrollment. The Provost responded that the biggest two factors impacting graduate enrollment are 1) the economy, as the job market puts the commercial sector looking to hire in competition with graduate schools looking for students wanting to go back to school; and 2) the geopolitical environment, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 on travel and visa restrictions. These two factors are more important for graduate enrollments than the so-called demographic cliff.

One senator asked how the new logic of budget planning, associated with RCM (Responsibility Center Management), might shape hiring. How would this affect hiring authorizations? Would some programs get more than others? In response the Provost sought first to clarify what President Tetlow has signaled about RCM: namely, that Fordham is not well positioned to adopt the model of RCM today, while at the same time we need to find ways to create the kind of incentives for better resource allocations associated with RCM. For any institution at any single moment, there are likely growth areas and areas of contraction. The challenge is to prioritize hiring needs in that environment. When we move to hiring authorization, each dean is responsible for setting up the priorities, to determine our most important faculty needs. Each Dean’s list is longer than we can afford and could realistically be a 5-year list, but it’s a list that is prioritized for today, from most to least important. In the Provost’s Office there is then a conversation with each of the Deans to understand the

justification for the priorities. The justifications vary – in some cases, it rests on the growing percentage of enrollment; but there may be other factors (e.g. focusing on long-term plans); so the Provost looks at the long-term plan to create a master priority list for the university. When going back to the Deans, the Provost will say your School has authorization to move forward with, say, the top 10 lines, according to the Dean's prioritized list.

One senator said it would be useful for Deans to have a clearer understanding of what goes into the Provost's determinations; so that the Deans could communicate to departments how they should shape the narratives used to justify their hiring plans and priorities. Is it possible to communicate these things clearly from Provost to Deans to departments? In response, the Provost indicated he appreciated the question. The most accurate answer would be that there are distinctions across the Schools. The Professional Schools, for example, have professional accrediting bodies that hold them to certain standards, and those standards play a key role in the authorization for hiring lines. In Arts & Sciences, in addition to enrollment trends, the Deans are also very attentive to the composition of faculty in a given department, considering also the percentage of graduate and undergraduate courses taught by tenured/tenure-track faculty. The relative strengths of departments in meeting their teaching needs plays an important role in hiring authorization decisions, as does the track record of departments in successfully hiring for diversity and quality.

Linking this discussion of hiring authorization with the proposed summit on shared governance, one senator requested that the results of the summit be clearly communicated to the Deans. This led to a discussion about the multi-step process envisaged for implementing whatever emerged from the summit on shared governance, the Provost outlining an analogy between the distinction between University and School levels of university governance and the distinction between Federal and State levels of U.S. government.

Discussion ended at approximately 1:26 p.m. and Senate President invited Senator Hepp, Chair of Salary and Benefits, to give the Senate an update.

#### **Salary and Benefits Committee**

Senator Hepp noted that we had just learned from President Tetlow that the administration has assembled its team and is ready to negotiate the next 3-year contract.

**At this point the Senate unanimously voted to go into executive session, following a motion from Senator Saharia, seconded by Senator Dietrich.**

At 1:18 pm the Senate went into executive session to discuss matters of Salary & Benefits negotiation.

**At 1:55 pm the Senate voted unanimously to come out of executive session, following a motion from Senator Albin, seconded by Senator Mowlabocus**

#### **Discussion: Post-special-meeting**

There was a spirited follow-up discussion on the November 9 special meeting to discuss the vaccine mandate. A number of senators began by thanking Senator Rubin for his presentation of data at that meeting. Most of the discussion focused on President Tetlow's assertion that exemptions to the bivalent booster mandate were now easier to obtain; and that if a faculty member feels from a medical perspective that taking the bivalent booster will be detrimental to their health, that will be sufficient to receive an exemption. Some senators presumed this meant a shift toward more lenient enforcement of the mandate, especially in the wake of the special meeting itself. Other senators expressed concern about a mandate that lacked effectiveness. One senator relayed a proposal emerging from a Business School Council that the Senate provide marching orders for the faculty, inviting individuals either to take the booster or not as they choose; and, if need be, for faculty to teach their

courses hybrid or online. There was further discussion about the scientific data surrounding the mandate and how to interpret it: Senator Rubin offered further data contradicting the administration's data; another senator referred to recent data that further supported the efficacy of the bivalent booster.

A considerable amount of discussion focused on the need to press for the administration to involve faculty – and specifically the Faculty Senate – in the decision-making process.

**Approval of minutes**

At approximately 2:30 p.m., on a motion from Senator Vernon, seconded by Senator Saharia, the Senate unanimously (with one abstention) approved the minutes from the October 21<sup>st</sup> Senate meeting.

**A motion to adjourn (from Senator Mowlabocus, seconded by Senator Dietrich) was unanimously approved.**

The Senate adjourned at 2:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher GoGwilt, Secretary