

**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**Faculty Senate**

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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, Colon, Dietrich, GoGwilt, Hepp, Idris, Mowlabocus, Mozes, Rubin, Saharia, Schwalbenberg, Sen, Vernon, Weinstein, Wolff

**Attending via Zoom:** Senators Alleyne-Green, Bastiaens, Beaudoin, Goldkind, Jones, Pini, Ridgard, Shen; guest: Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, co-chair, Faculty Life Committee

**Guests:** Dr. Dennis Jacobs, Provost; Dr. Jonathan Crystal, Vice Provost; Melissa Labonte and Greer Jason, co-chairs, Middle States Self-Study; Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, co-chair, Faculty Life Committee (attending via Zoom)

**Call to Order**

Senate President Drummond called the meeting to order in the 12<sup>th</sup> Floor Lounge, Lowenstein, at 11:33 a.m.

**Invocation**

Senator Goldkind delivered the invocation.

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

President Tetlow reported on the success of the recent Board of Trustees' meeting where reports from the Provost and the Senate President described our academic needs (the Provost emphasizing the need to catch up in the sciences, the Senate President reporting on the value of research as such). The Board was unified in affirming the importance of our academic facilities and the priority of research as what matters most.

The President reported on her trip to Washington, DC, where she met with other presidents of Jesuit universities, attending the annual conference of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). This included a trip to Capitol Hill to lobby Congress on all the issues that matter to higher education. It seems clear, she reported, that not much will be achieved by the current Congress. Lamenting the Federal government's disinvestment in higher education, she singled out the importance of the Federal Pell Grant program. She noted that higher education has become a political football and spoke of the need to find persuasive ways to articulate the value and importance of the liberal arts, the humanities, and higher education generally. Noting that New York doesn't face the kind of culture war legislation against colleges and universities found elsewhere in the country, it is nonetheless important to recognize what our colleagues are facing in those places and the need to push back with clear and persuasive arguments.

The President then addressed Fordham's position in relation to the world's changing response to the COVID pandemic, seeking to consult with the Senate on a change in the University's policies on vaccines that needs to be made within the next month or so. The current proposal is for the University not to require vaccines for the Fordham community. She noted that there are three groups to consider: students, employees, and visitors. The strongest argument for maintaining vaccines is for students. It is tougher to argue for sustaining the mandate for employees. And to require vaccines for visitors threatens to close us off in detrimental ways (especially when it comes to pipeline programs to bring prospective students to campus). The argument to lift the mandate is that, first of all, the government itself is relaxing emergency restrictions. We are moving to the endemic stage of the pandemic and we are going to have to live with this, as with the flu. As with the flu, the University will continue to push for and make available vaccines. In considering a shift away from vaccine mandates, we need to be conscious of the more vulnerable in our community. Consideration needs to be given to whether to continue to allow faculty to require masking in classrooms. The President noted that the University cannot think of itself as a bubble insulated from what is going on in the rest of society. She invited the Senate to provide feedback.

One senator expressed strong concerns about relaxing measures to protect those who are vulnerable in the Fordham community. They noted that the disability communities – people with all sorts of risk factors or with life-time autoimmune conditions – are feeling abandoned. How might the University act in ways that are consistent with its mission and in a way that protects those vulnerable communities? How might the University be creative and proactive in things like ensuring higher air quality in classrooms? Acknowledging the force of these points, the President noted that it was tricky to measure the right balance of rights and responsibility. On the vaccine mandate, she noted that while the vaccines seem very effective in preventing serious illness and deaths, it appears less effective in preventing the spread of the virus; so this made her feel less comfortable in continuing the mandate. On masking, she could not imagine a world where we all wore masks, but hoped that the culture was shifting toward more careful habits of reducing the spread of infections (staying home and/or wearing masks when sick or symptomatic). On air quality, she noted there were funds in the budget to maintain high air quality in classrooms.

A number of senators urged the President to consider a staggered phase-in for the relaxation of mandates and other measures (such as supporting faculty mandating masks in certain classroom settings). There was also some discussion about how to make vaccines easily accessible once they are no longer subsidized by the Federal government. One senator warned against allowing the history of the University's response to COVID to be retold as a failure. They said it was important to assert how the University had been right in its response; and to explain that the proposed shift in policy was a result of changing circumstances. The President agreed noting the gravity of the pandemic that has cost over a million American lives.

A number of senators raised questions about the matter of the culture wars. One senator emphasized that this is not an issue to take lightly and asked how the University proposes to address two issues: 1) formulating a public response (which may have ramifications for admitting students) and 2) the impact on the programs we offer. The President responded by noting, first, that political legislation at the local and state level does not pose a direct threat to us since we are in a Democratic State. She then spoke to the kinds of arguments that might be appropriate and called-for, cautioning, however, against a posture of disdain that might fuel a backlash.

The Q&A ended at approximately 12:20 p.m.

### **Provost's Report and Q&A**

The Provost addressed three issues before opening up to Q&A:

1) He presented an update on the core curriculum revision, which is currently in Phase 1, developing a vision of learning outcomes with a report to come at some point after February 22. There will be a feedback phase for the

following couple of weeks, and we hope that college and school councils could vote on the Phase 1 report by the end of March. Soon after, Phase 2 could commence.

2) The Provost addressed a plan to look at the leadership structure of Arts & Sciences. (An email to all Arts & Sciences faculty had been shared in advance with senators: see Appendix I.)

3) The Provost concluded with a report on efforts to improve the sciences at Fordham. The Provost presented this to the Board of Trustees not as a detailed set of plans, but rather as a directional outline intended to highlight the importance of the sciences as a distinctive element of Fordham's academic portfolio. Fordham has significantly underinvested in the sciences for at least half a century. To show where this positions Fordham today, the Provost provided some data. Across the nation, out of approximately 4,000 Higher Ed institutions, 2 million Bachelor's degrees are awarded, 34% of which fall under the grouping of either STEM (natural and applied sciences) or Health Sciences. At Fordham 13% of our Bachelor's degrees are conferred in the sciences. For Master's degrees the corresponding percentages are, nationally 33%, and for Fordham 6%. In the last 5-10 years, the total number of degrees earned is slowing down and in the next 4 to 5 years there will be a further decline (the so-called "enrollment cliff") due to simple demographics. The nation will probably see a 10% drop in the number of traditional age students enrolling in college from 2026 to 2036. The only disciplinary areas in which the growth of majors is increasing faster than the decline are across STEM and the health sciences. Of the large number of students admitted to Fordham intending to major in the natural or applied sciences only 1 out of 14 will actually choose to enroll. Fordham's yield is 7% in STEM, whereas in non-STEM areas the yield is 11% (still not good enough). What we hear repeatedly, from students hoping to pursue a science degree, is that Fordham doesn't offer what they are looking for. Looking to the future it is imperative that Fordham address the deficiencies in its science programs. To be a great university, Fordham needs to engage the intersections of sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the professional schools.

A year and a half ago, a Science Visioning Committee was formed with faculty representatives from all the science departments, to develop a comprehensive way to move forward. The group identified 6 important, interconnected elements:

- 1) to advance signature academic programs
- 2) to promote research and leverage partnership (the tristate area offers an incredibly rich environment for partnerships, with networks from biotech, health systems, the Bronx Zoo, the Botanical Gardens, etc.)
- 3) to develop a stellar team of faculty across the Sciences
- 4) to enhance facilities and infrastructure
- 5) to develop inclusive and integrative STEM communities for students and faculty (given how underrepresented certain groups are in STEM – women and students of color – Fordham has an opportunity to build in these areas)
- 6) to develop a STEM honors program

The Provost offered a quick snapshot of where these initiatives stand today. This year a PhD program was launched in Computer Science (only Fordham's 2<sup>nd</sup> PhD program in the sciences, joining Biology). An MS in applied health informatics was launched a year ago first in London and now online. A BS in biochemistry is moving through the approval process. Fordham is in conversation with Northwell Health to create a BS in laboratory sciences. In faculty hiring, there are 7 searches underway across the sciences: 5 tenure-track searches and 2 Bepler chair searches (in biophysics and data sciences). In research partnerships, 3 areas stand out, notably for their interdisciplinary reach: 1) environmental sustainability; 2) biotech (There is heavy investment from the Federal to the State to the City level in all the areas of biotech startups, and the university has an advisory group that can help make Fordham more actively connected to these initiatives); 3) data sciences (broadly speaking this connects with almost every other discipline, for instance with the opportunities and challenges of AI). There is ongoing conversation about facilities and the need to renovate spaces to support the sciences, including the need

for a new integrated sciences building. There is a lot of work to do in terms of space planning. There are no concrete construction plans set at this point in time, only directional prioritizing. The Provost concluded by talking about the importance of expanding on successful student pipeline programs like CSTEP.

At approximately 12:46 p.m. the Provost opened up for Q&A.

All three points generated discussion.

1) On core curriculum revision, there was extensive discussion, including comments from two of the members of the Core Curriculum Revision committee. They addressed the challenge of transitioning between the three phases of the committee's work. Noting that the February 22 date was not a realistic deadline for the report to come out of phase 1, they spoke in detail about the work of the committee, its effort to formulate a vision of the core that would appeal to multiple audiences (students, their families, and faculty across disciplines), and the need to bridge the gap between the committee working on phase 1 and the committees that will be taking up phases 2 and 3. In further discussion, it was suggested that the phase 1 committee might develop a document to accompany its report, annotating for the members of the phase 2 committee important guiding principles.

2) On the Arts & Sciences Leadership Structure project, one senator asked if there was any overlap between that and the request made at the last Senate meeting for the Provost's Office to review the equity of stipends and course reductions for departmental positions (chair, associate chair, etc) across Arts & Sciences. In answer to an earlier question about whether the Provost's Office would undertake such a review, the Provost said such a review was underway and that the relevant data were being compiled by the Dean of FAS. The Provost said this study was uncoupled from the Arts & Sciences Leadership structure project; and that he saw no reason for that project to delay the review of stipends and course reductions for chairs, associate chairs, etc.

3) On the matter of improving the sciences at Fordham there was extensive discussion. A number of senators found the Provost's vision exciting in its scope and in the potential for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization with other areas. One senator tempered that excitement by noting that a similar vision was articulated in the late 1960s but that it led to the bankrupting of the university. In response to this point the Provost noted that this is where the Trustees' participation is crucial. He indicated that the aim is to work in close concert with donors to ensure that whatever proposals are formulated can be realized; and that any plan that could not be financed would be scaled back or aborted. But he also said that we cannot afford not to think boldly and ambitiously. One senator (from the sciences) outlined some of the current strengths and weaknesses in the sciences, noting that there have been some notable success stories amongst graduating students and faculty, but confirming the need to address deficiencies. This senator laid particular emphasis on the need to hire full-time faculty. One senator said it was important to be precise and careful with the optics of plans to improve the sciences, so as not to feed fears that, in a moment of constrained choices over the budget, STEM funding was going to be prioritized at the expense of non-STEM programs. The Provost said he appreciated and agreed with the senator's perspective, noting that these planning efforts were not meant to rob Peter to pay for Paul, but that the directional plans were intended to identify opportunities for creating new resources, not shifting resources from one area to another. Another senator asked two questions: 1) if the aim to enhance the sciences involves plans to admit new students, where will those students be put? And 2) if we are adding faculty lines in the sciences, how will this not involve reducing faculty lines elsewhere? In response to these questions the Provost emphasized that no decisions have been made; that he is at the moment just articulating visions and possibilities. He said he was working to make a case for a self-sustainable plan that would not siphon off resources from elsewhere. The vision does involve adding students at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels. There is some conversation already about a new residential hall. Such a building might be self-funding. There is also talk about looking at the underutilized space at the Westchester campus, an especially promising place to consider collaborative programs with

healthcare partners. But the current projections are incremental. On the question of faculty, we will need to hire additional faculty in areas of growth.

The Q&A concluded at approximately 1:34 p.m.

### **Discussion of Middle States Priorities**

The Vice Provost introduced the two co-chairs of the Middle States Self-Study, Dr. Melissa Labonte, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Dr. Greer Jason, Associate Dean of Academic Administration, Gabelli.

Dr. Labonte provided an overview of the accreditation process overseen by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which has already begun and which will culminate in the writing of a Self-Study and site visit by peer evaluators in the Spring of 2025 (see Appendix II, Slide 1). The process will involve faculty in all areas and all schools, along with students, staff, and administration. In undertaking the study, Fordham commits to an in-depth, comprehensive review of how well it is fulfilling its mission; and demonstrating through evidence and documentation its compliance with 7 standards for accreditation (Slide 2) as well as requirements of affiliation and federal compliance requirements. Most importantly, she noted that they are seeking feedback on the proposed 4 institutional priorities (Slide 3).

Dr. Jason began by addressing the 7 standards for accreditation set by Middle States (Slide 2), and then noted that the place where Fordham can make its mark is in the institutional priorities (Slide 3). The four institutional priorities outlined in Slide 3 were developed in consultation with various stakeholders and from close review of the goals of CUSP, the current strategic plan, Educating for Justice, and the University's Mission. They were crafted as a set of priorities reflective of who we are as a community. Having read through the four priorities, she then invited feedback.

One senator asked where STEM might come into the priorities. Dr. Labonte indicated that it could show up in all four of the priorities, given their range and scope. In response to another senator's question about the timeline and process of the study, Dr. Jason explained in more detail each of the steps, beginning right now with the assembling of the steering committee, identifying the priorities, and developing a self-study design. On April 25 there will be a visit from the VP liaison from Middle States and an open forum for all faculty to attend. Following the feedback period (including the current meeting), the next step is to set up a series of working groups that will be responsible for gathering data and evidence, and writing reports to feed into the final report. Areas are not going to be asked to produce reports, although they might be asked to comment, to provide data, etc. In academic year 2023-24 a Middle States evaluation team will be formed and in the fall of 2023 there will be a visit from the chair of that team. In the spring of 2025 the entire team will visit Fordham for a few days with many meetings and many open forums/town hall meetings. The culminating process in the spring will produce a team report to which Fordham provides its institutional response. As the final step in the reaccreditation process, Middle States will issue its final decision in the summer of 2025.

Asked whether the final result is to be accredited or not to be accredited, Dr. Labonte indicated that there's a broad spectrum of possibilities for the Middle States team's recommendations and/or suggestions. Dr. Crystal noted that this is a chance to reflect on the extent to which we are fulfilling the mission and that this is an opportunity for honest self-assessment. He compared the process to a peer review of research. Any recommendations Middle States offers we need to respond to; suggestions are collegial advice.

After some further discussion (and a few recommendations for changing the wording of the institutional priorities), the Q&A concluded at 2:10 pm. Dr. Labonte shared the corporate email account the co-chairs have set up, and invited further recommendations, comments, and feedback: [selfstudy2025@fordham.edu](mailto:selfstudy2025@fordham.edu).

### **Salary & Benefits Committee**

Senator Hepp, Chair of Salary & Benefits, and Dr. Elizabeth Matthews, Assistant Professor, GSSS, co-chair of the Faculty Life Committee, presented to the Senate a joint recommendation from the Salary & Benefits Committee and the Faculty Life Committee seeking to streamline the process by which faculty committees have access to university data. (See Appendix III.) There was some discussion of what sort of data the recommendation was meant to cover (confidential data not easily accessible through Institutional Research). There was some discussion of the relatively recent complications in receiving such data, by comparison to past history.

**Following a motion from Senator Dietrich to approve the recommendation, seconded by Senator Saharia, the Senate voted unanimously to approve the recommendation (25 – 0 – 0)**

At approximately 2:26 p.m., the Senate moved to approve the minutes.

### **Approval of minutes**

**At the request of Senate President Drummond, a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 20, 2023 was seconded and adopted by a vote of 21 – 0 – 4.**

### **New Business**

Senate President Drummond made two announcements:

1) He noted that the question has yet to be considered by the Executive Committee as to who has responsibility over deciding the modality of courses. This issue, which had been referred to the Executive Committee at the last Senate meeting, would be discussed and, if need be, brought back to the Senate at its next meeting.  
2) Raising the matter of the working group on governance issues (whose composition was announced at the last Senate meeting), he read out the charge for the committee that had been developed by the Senate President and the Provost:

- to define the principles (qualities) of effective shared governance;
- to articulate the values realized (or to be realized) by means of shared governance;
- to reach consensus around the specific domains of university operations that fall under shared governance;
- to identify, for each of these domains, the key participants (e.g., individuals, officers, committees, Senate), processes and procedures for effecting shared governance;
- to articulate the participants' respective areas of primary and secondary responsibility; and
- to define the notions of 'primary responsibility' and 'secondary responsibility' and identify the entailments of each type of responsibility.

Following this announcement there was a brief discussion about the status of the document that will result from the working group's work and whether it would be advisable to have a lawyer look over that language. Senate President Drummond said that the document would be a policy document rather than a statutory document, so the legal implications may not merit a lawyer's involvement.

**A motion to adjourn (from Senate President Drummond, seconded by acclamation) was unanimously approved.**

The Senate adjourned at 2:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher GoGwilt, Secretary



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## Fwd: Project on Arts & Sciences Leadership Structure

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**Fordham provost** <provost@fordham.edu>  
To: Fordham provost <provost@fordham.edu>

Thu, Feb 9, 2023 at 10:45 AM

Dear Members of the Faculty Senate,

Please see below for a message that was sent to Arts and Sciences faculty and staff this morning announcing a project to examine the leadership structure of Arts and Sciences. I will address this at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

Dennis C. Jacobs, Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Fordham University

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Dennis C. Jacobs** <provost@fordham.edu>  
Date: Thursday, Feb 9 at 10:15 AM  
Subject: Project on Arts & Sciences Leadership Structure  
To: <provost@fordham.edu>

**FORDHAM**

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

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Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing to you today to announce the beginning of a project to explore ways to enhance the leadership structure of Arts and Sciences at Fordham. Within the last decade, there have been numerous attempts to help the organization of Fordham's Arts and Sciences become maximally responsive to the needs of today's students and faculty.

Many of you will remember the most recent effort, a 2018 report titled "Reimagining



the Function and Structure of Arts and Sciences at Fordham.” This report was thoughtfully done, included broad input from stakeholders, and provided recommendations for improving the administrative functioning of the units. Several recommendations from that report have been implemented, yet challenges remain with the present structure that impact administrative elements within Arts and Sciences and the experience of students, faculty, and staff.

With the help of an outside consultant, Nicki Nabasny of Beleza Advisors, we will undertake an examination of the current administrative structure. I am grateful to Laura Auricchio, Eva Badowska, Ann Gaylin and Maura Mast for their leadership and collaboration in this project.

The goal of this project is to identify a refined, coherent model of leadership in Arts and Sciences that will

- Foster a vibrant intellectual environment for students, faculty, and staff supporting excellence in research and teaching;
- Improve accountability, efficiency, collaboration, and transparency;
- Ensure Arts and Sciences has a clear, coordinated, and comprehensive vision and strategy

Each of you will have an opportunity to provide input in this project. I thank you in advance for your participation and your candor. My hope is to announce a set of recommendations by early summer that we will work to implement in the new academic year.

We all share a deep commitment to advancing the Arts and Sciences at Fordham. I am confident this project will enable us to realize the tremendous potential and support the outstanding work of the programs and people that compose Arts and Sciences.

Dennis C. Jacobs



Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs



# FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

441 East Fordham Road | Bronx, NY 10458

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# MSCHE Self Study: Timeline

## Fall 2022

- Appoint Co-Chairs of Self Study Steering Committee
- Attend the MSCHE Self-Study Institute

## Spring 2023

- Assemble and charge Steering Committee
- Identify Institutional Priorities
- Complete Self-Study Design Document
- MSCHE VP Liaison visits campus

## Fall 2023

- Working Groups gather and analyze data, report progress to Steering Committee throughout

## Spring 2024

- Draft Self-Study Report
- Assemble Evidence Inventory and complete Verification of Compliance

## Fall 2024

- Share draft Self-Study Report with the campus community and make revisions
- Self Self-Study Report to Team Chair ahead of Preliminary Visit
- Coordinate Team Chair Preliminary Visit

## Spring 2025

- Revise and finalize Self-Study Report based upon Team Chair input
- Share final Self-Study Report with campus community and Evaluation Team
- Host Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit
- Receive Team Report and provide Institutional Response

## Summer 2025

- MSCHE determines final action

# MSCHE Self Study: Standards for Accreditation

1. Mission and Goals
2. Ethics and Integrity
3. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
4. Support of the Student Experience
5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment
6. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
7. Governance, Leadership, and Administration

<https://www.msche.org/standards/>

# MSCHE Self Study: Institutional Priorities

- Position Fordham as a leader in the creation and advancement of knowledge through distinctive, mission-inspired research, teaching, and programs, including those that address the local, national, and global challenges of our time.
- Enhance the holistic student experience, both inside and outside the classroom, in order to maximize the ability of all students to both succeed and flourish at Fordham and beyond.
- Cultivate a diverse, equitable, inclusive, caring, and connected community that fosters institutional belonging among students, staff, and faculty, and educates for justice.
- Promote institutional vitality and continuous improvement in a rapidly changing landscape, by supporting strategic resource stewardship and agile adaptation.

## APPENDIX III

### **Recommendation To Faculty Senate IMPROVING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY DATA**

Faculty Life and Salary and Benefits Committees

February 6, 2023

Because the Faculty Senate and its committees carry out our work in the name of shared governance, and because shared governance presupposes shared data, including demographic and compensation-related data, the Faculty Life Committee and Salary and Benefits Committee jointly recommend that the Faculty Senate advance the following requests to Fordham University Administration:

1. When the Faculty Senate or a Faculty Senate committee finds that data, including demographic data, is needed to fulfill a specific charge of their work, the relevant Administrative Office(s) should:
  - a. Authorize access to data upon request from the Faculty Senate or a Faculty Senate committee
  - b. Identify a liaison within the Administrative Office(s) that will work with the Senate or Senate committee and coordinate access to this data.
2. Administrative Office(s), in concert with a Senate committee, should work to develop and publish a process that: identifies the format in which requests for data are to be made; ensures that data available to the Senate or Senate committees is in a format that is anonymized in a way that protects confidentiality but allows for linkage to other relevant data sources that will be utilized by the requesting committee; and confirms an appropriate timeframe in which the requesting committee can expect to receive the data requested.