



The University of Vermont
FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

Monday, April 24, 2023

On Microsoft Teams 4:00 – 5:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President, Thomas Borchert at 4:02 PM

Senators in Attendance: 71

Absent: Senators Vacant (Anesthesiology Rep2), Vacant (Chemistry), Conroy (Counseling, Human Development & Family Science), Neumann (Education Rep2), Calkins (Family Medicine Rep2), Terrien (Medicine Rep1), Saia (Pediatrics Rep1), Todd (Pediatrics Rep2), Dickerson (Psychiatry Rep2), Clark (Religion)

1. **Faculty Senate President's Welcome Remarks** – Thomas Borchert

- The final Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year is on Thursday, May 18th, 3:00 – 4:30 PM on Teams
- The consent agenda includes a no contest termination of the Special Education Minor with Endorsement, which is tied to items reported in Agenda item 5: Reports that do not require a Senate vote. The termination is related to the Substantial Revisions to the Early Childhood Special Education Major and approval of reactivation of the Major reflecting the approved changes.
- A call for nominations was distributed to elected senators on April 17th for one open seat for member at large to the Executive Council. An election will be held in May for a one-year term to complete the term currently held by Cathy Paris upon her retirement. No nominations were received from the floor. Nominations will be accepted via webform until 6:00 PM April 24.

2. **Consent Agenda** – The following items were presented as a consent agenda:

- A. Minutes of the March 2023 Faculty Senate meeting
- B. Curricular Affairs
 - i. No-contest Termination Special Education Minor with Endorsement (CESS)
 - ii. New Undergraduate Minor in Global Public Health (CNHS)
 - iii. New Undergraduate Minor in Public Health Equity and Advocacy (CNHS)
 - iv. New Undergraduate Certificate in Gerontology (CESS)

Motion: President Borchert stated that the consent agenda came to the Senate moved and seconded by the Executive Council. No requests were made to pull items from the consent agenda.

Vote: 54 approved, 0 opposed, 2 abstained. **The motion carried**

3. Resolution on Open Access and Open Science – The following resolution was approved by the Faculty Senate Research, Scholarship, and the Creative Arts Committee (RSCA) April 13, 2023, and presented to the Faculty Senate for vote:

Whereas the University of Vermont is a land grant institution whose mission is to “create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge” (<https://www.uvm.edu/mission-and-vision>); and

Whereas “Our Common Ground” calls on members of the University community to abide by the values of Innovation which calls for us to “address important community and society needs,” and Openness which calls for the “open exchange of information and ideas” (<https://www.uvm.edu/president/our-common-ground>); and

Whereas the free exchange of research and scholarly information is also a matter of equity and consistent with the values of Our Common Ground; and

Whereas the University of Vermont is a member of the Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship (HELIOS), “a cohort of colleges and universities committed to collective action to advance open scholarship within and across campuses...to promote a more transparent, inclusive, and trustworthy research ecosystem” (<https://www.heliosopen.org/>); and

Whereas the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has changed guidelines requiring that federally funded research be made publicly available (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/08/25/ostp-issues-guidance-to-make-federally-funded-research-freely-available-without-delay/>)

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate calls on the different colleges and schools of the University to develop policies and procedures promoting open access sharing of scholarly output by:

Educating faculty and students to promote literacy on the importance of open access publishing and open science and facilitating faculty participation in open access and open science practices; and

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate calls on colleges, schools and departments of the University to review their incentive structures in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and tenure to ensure alignment with open scholarship requirements of major research funders and acknowledge the value added in each discipline through open access publishing, open science, and/or other openly available products of scholarship; and

The Faculty Senate calls on the administration of the University of Vermont to encourage open access and open science practices by providing institutional resources to this end and supporting departmental review and development of incentive structures; and

The Faculty Senate calls on individual members of the faculty to incorporate open access principles into regular practice, as for example by depositing preprint or postprint publications, as permitted by author agreements, and other work into open access repositories at no cost such as that of the University of Vermont Libraries or by writing open access funds into grants where appropriate.

Thomas Borchert opened the floor for discussion. Topics included concerns about the financial implications for faculty and potential copyright violation in the Open Access process; clarification that pre-print, and sometimes post-print are free and allowed by publishers; UVM librarians can help faculty find free or low-cost options and determine their rights to share; clarification that the resolution is calling on faculty (not students) to engage in Open Access practices. Thomas Borchert clarified that the “University Community” in the second Whereas is language from the *Our Common Ground* statement. **Vote:** 54 approved, 3 opposed, 3 abstained. **The motion carried.**

4. **Academic Freedom Policy.** The Faculty Senate Research, Scholarship, and the Creative Arts Committee (RSCA) approved the attached revisions to the Academic Freedom Policy at their April 13th meeting. Thomas Borchert provided background on the reason for the proposed changes which were initiated by a request from United Academics to review the policy in relation to concerns about social media. A subcommittee of RSCA reviewed the policy, and after a long process of review by General Counsel, UA leadership, and the President and Provost, the RSCA has presented the attached policy change to the Faculty Senate for discussion. Discussion included the desire to have the UA look at the final version; a desire for clarification of the meaning of the AAUP statement “the very nature of the medium itself might warrant unusual restrictions”; and a desire for no restrictions when speaking or writing as citizens. The Faculty Senate will be asked to vote to approve the changes at the May meeting.
5. **Reports that do not require a Senate vote:**
 - a. The Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) provided a report of actions taken by the CAC that do not require a Senate vote. The CAC approved APR Dept of Mathematical Sciences and Statistics; Substantial Revisions to the Early Childhood Special Education Major and approval of reactivation of the Major reflecting the approved changes.
6. **Update on Learning Management System (LMS) transition** –Wendy Verrei-Berenback, Assistant Director, Center for Teaching and Learning presented an update on the course migration process and the current and upcoming integrations into the Brightspace Learning Management System. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes, and include integration of third-party tools, feedback from faculty participating in the Spring pilot and faculty who teach large enrollment courses, a preview of upcoming work, and a plan for archiving Blackboard courses. The website includes upcoming trainings and course migration help <https://site.uvm.edu/brightspace/>
7. **Update on University Finance** – Richard Cate, Vice President for Finance and Administration responded to questions from Thomas Borchert regarding the funding of the next phase of the athletic facilities, and the factors involved in the tuition decision for AY 24-25. The Board of Trustees has challenged the administration, the Athletics Director and the UVM Foundation to identify non-debt resources to bridge the gap in funding the athletic facilities project. Director Schulman intends to report to the BOT in May regarding the funding

strategies. Options are being explored and it is expected that discussion will continue beyond the May Board of Trustees meeting. Regarding tuition, it is not a simple equation. Many factors are considered, including projections and estimates for admissions and enrollment, funding expected from the F&A from research awards, inflation, opportunities for savings, and the State appropriation. The floor was opened to questions and topics included the impact of holding tuition steady, housing challenges, the role of F&A, and the discount rate.

8. New Business –

- David Feurzeig stated that a resolution is being prepared to address concerns that UVM's response to the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights report on antisemitic incidents is incomplete. Senators interested in discussing and helping to formulate this resolution are invited to attend a virtual meeting Friday 4/28. David Feurzeig hopes to bring the resolution to the Executive Council for consideration for the May Faculty Senate meeting, and that the President be invited to the May meeting to respond.
- Donna Harrington reported that students in the Student Government Association are interested in promoting retention of BIPOC faculty. They would like to have a conversation about incorporating some bias language in student evaluations.

The meeting adjourned at 5:31 PM.

[Academic Freedom Policy](#)

[Changes approved by the Faculty Senate Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts Committee \(RSCA\), April 13, 2023](#)

103 Academic Freedom

The Faculty Senate adopted the following statement on academic freedom on September 23, 1954 and was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 16, 1954 and revised and adopted by the Faculty Senate on November 20, 2008 and approved by the Board of Trustees on February 7, 2009:

Academic Freedom and Responsibility

We, the faculty of The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, in the spirit and tradition of free universities throughout the world, are agreed upon the following statement of principles on academic freedom and responsibility. We believe that incorporation of these principles into the organization of The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College will re-emphasize the importance of academic freedom to the basic health of the University, and also serve as a statement of policy on the rights and responsibilities of faculty members at this institution. It has been our intent to state these principles in terms broad enough so that they may be valid not only in these critical times when academic freedom and personal liberty are in jeopardy both at home and abroad, but also in the future insofar as the future can be foreseen.

The Necessity of Academic Freedom in Higher Education

The main purpose of a university has always been, must always be, to stimulate the thinking and the creative powers of its students and its faculty. As an institution it deals in ideas, not only old and accepted ones but new ones that may be full of explosive power. If they are explosive, they are bound to be disconcerting, even painful, to some on the campus and to many beyond its borders. Inevitably they will be called dangerous by the timid and short-sighted, but to those who really believe in the fruitfulness of human thought, the real danger would appear only if the flow of such ideas should cease. For then indeed sterility would have taken over our campus. Our faculty would no longer deserve the name of intellectuals and our students, regardless of degrees attained, could no longer claim to be educated. They would leave our campus accustomed only to the commonplace, satisfied with the mediocre, ignorant or afraid of ideas which catch fire. Academic freedom is therefore not solely a right or privilege of the faculty but is the fulfillment of the obligation on the part of the university to provide an atmosphere in which intellectual growth may take place.

Academic Freedom and Special Responsibilities of Faculty Members

We subscribe to the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom [and the 1970 Interpretive Comments](#) of the American Association of University Professors which provides:

- a. Faculty are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the university.
- b. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. The intent of this statement is not to discourage what is “controversial.” Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry which the entire statement is designed to foster. Instruction may occur in an atmosphere of controversy so long as what is taught is placed in an appropriate context, is germane to the subject of the class, as determined by the faculty member and consistent with disciplinary standards, and assists students in mastering or appreciating the significance of the subject.
- c. Faculty are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of the university. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the university.

Commented [A1]: Addition from the AAUP 1970 interpretative comment.

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[We also subscribe to the 2014 report of the American Association of University Professors on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communication which provides:](#)

- a. Academic freedom, free inquiry, and freedom of expression within the academic community may be limited to no greater extent in electronic format than they are in print, save for the most unusual situation where the very nature of the medium itself might warrant unusual restrictions.

Commented [A2]: From the 2014 AAUP report on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications.

In addition, there are recognized qualifications which must be attained and maintained before the privilege of being a member of the academic profession can be considered a permanent one: satisfactory performance as a teacher, scholarship, and high moral standards.

Responsibility of the Institution to the Faculty

The University must defend tenaciously the right of its members to think and express their thoughts freely and to make those choices within the law guaranteed to every citizen. This includes the right of dissent since any democratic institution ceases to merit the name democratic when this fundamental right is denied. Never is this duty more imperative than in those times when the public opinion of the community would restrain or curtail the free play of ideas. The universities, whose roots extend back into the centuries, have a tradition and duty to maintain an independence of judgment in the face of public opinion.

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Academic Freedom and Tenure

Tenure is an indispensable pre-condition for academic freedom. It is, in fact, a guarantee that the institution subscribes to the principle of academic freedom, and that its members may not be dismissed without adequate cause. Termination of tenure should occur only in cases of bona fide financial exigency in the University or when it has been demonstrated that the teacher lacks professional or moral fitness or competence as a teacher.

In the interpretation and the application of these principles we shall expect the University authorities to be quick to protect its heritage of academic freedom, in doubtful cases remembering that an excess of freedom is always less dangerous than an excess of constraint.

Faculty Senate - Brightspace Update

April 24, 2023



The University of Vermont

Agenda

- Course Migration Update
- Brightspace Integrations
- Faculty Feedback Spring Pilot & "Listening Sessions"
- Upcoming Work: Blackboard Archive Planning & Summer Pilot
- Ongoing Support & Training
- Questions

Course Migration Update

- Semesters included in bulk conversion of credit courses: Fall 2021 – Summer 2023
 - To date, most of Fall 22, Summer 22 is complete
 - Spring 22 is in progress
 - Spring 23 will begin after the semester is over
- Course conversion vendor selected & work is in progress
 - Resolve for “Calculated Numeric” question
 - Resolve for courses over 10 GB (~80 courses)
- Organization Bb spaces (not-for-credit) need to be manually copied

Third-Party Tools – Brightspace Integrations

Completed

Ally
Blue (course evaluation)
Gradescope
Perusall
Yellowdig
Respondus Lockdown Browser
Publishers Builder Blocks & Cloud
Cengage Learning/Brain
MacMillian
McGraw Hill Connect and Create
Pearson MyLab & Mastering
WileyPlus

In-Progress

Acrobati
Norton
iClicker
MyBusinessCourse
Gateway (Macmillian)
Grader (Mathworks)
Vista Higher Learning



Faculty Feedback – Spring Pilot

Most Used Tools

- Announcements
- Assignments
- Grades
- Quizzes

What's Helpful About Brightspace?

- Esthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate interface; feels intuitive
- Calendar, rubrics, being able to upload files with feedback easily, being able to edit content/assignments easily
- “Quick Eval” option is useful for efficient grading and feedback for students
- Drag and drop features for everything

Faculty Feedback – Spring Pilot

What Was Difficult to Get Used To?

- Many places to find the same thing
- Tools have different options for attaching to grade center
- Grades - not always clear what the students see vs. what the instructor sees
- Module behavior (navigation) and availability settings are different
- Students can access tools in both the Course Navigation Bar & Content & Activities
- The wiki tool is not available

What did your students need help with in Brightspace?

- Setting up notifications
- Understanding how to see their feedback and grades

“Listening Sessions” – Faculty Teaching Large Enrollment Courses

- Strong enthusiasm for grades push back to Banner
- Interest in “Safe Assign” replacement
- Teaching assistant role parity
- Workflow parity for multiple graders
- Simply workflow for associating accommodations to students
- Ability to have multiple sections in one course space
- Continuation of 3rd-party integrations used in Blackboard
- Need for student documentation

Upcoming: Blackboard Archive Planning

- Vendor selected and contract signed
- Course archives will contain student data and content
- Courses will be archived through at least April 2027
- **Depending on final numbers**, we hope to archive Spring 2020 - Summer 2023
- The Implementation Team is developing a process and criteria for faculty requests

Upcoming: Summer Pilot

- Professional and Continuing Education coordinating summer pilot
- Most of the Brightspace pilot courses will run in either June & July
- 48 course sections (includes cross-listed)
- 32 faculty (some taught in spring pilot)

Ongoing Support & Training

Trainings to Date

- Over **162** sessions between September 2022 – April 20, 2023

Upcoming Trainings

- Daily offering of “Migrations” Labs and Brightspace tools workshops (rest of spring & summer)
- **May 15 – 26:** Brightspace Bonaza scheduled (~5 sessions/day)
- Training will continue throughout AY 23 – 24

Video Recordings (on demand)

Individual Consultations – Visit - <http://www.uvm.edu/ctl>

Click on the button for “Book a Consult with us!”

Upcoming Actions

- Create a workflow for courses with multiple sections
- Create a workflow for students who receive or received an Incomplete
- Grades pushback from Brightspace Grades to Banner
- Other tool integrations, such as Microsoft Teams

Questions?

