

**MINUTES
FACULTY SENATE
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate, Mona Hymel, called the Special Faculty Senate meeting to order at 4:04 PM via Zoom. Secretary Tessa Dysart was also present.

Present: Senators Braithwaite, Cochran, Coletta, Cooley, Dial, Domin, Downing, Dysart (Secretary), Eckert, Fellous, Fink, Gerald, Gregory, Guzman, Hammer, Harris, Hudson (Chair), Hymel (Vice Chair), Jones, Leafgren, Little, Neumann, O'Leary, Ottusch, Pace, Pau, Rafelski, Rogers, Sanchez (ASUA President), Schwartz, Senseney, Simmons, J. Smith, M. Smith, Stephan, Su, Waddell, Werchan, Williams, Willis, Zeiders, Ziruus.

Absent: Senators Anderson (GPSC Rep), Barron (ASUA Rep), Bernick (GPSC President), Braitberg, Brochin, Cai, Casey, Dyke-Compton, Gordon, Grijalva (ASUA Rep), Kandel, Knox, Medovoi, Meyer, Nelson, Rankin, Robbins (President), Rocha, Rodrigues, Russell, Schulz, Slepian, Spece, Stegeman (Parliamentarian), M. Witte, R. Witte, Wittman, Yoon (GPSC Rep).

2. ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – VICE CHAIR OF THE FACULTY, MONA HYMEL [00:00:19]

Vice Chair Hymel stated there is one agenda item which is the approval of the Proposal Ph.D. in Software Engineering with an amendment.

- Senator Fink moved **[Motion 2023/24-6]** to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

3. ACTION ITEM: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL Ph.D. IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING WITH AMENDMENT [00:01:37]

Chair Hudson moved **[Motion 2023/24-7]** to approve the Ph.D. in Software Engineering as amended including the amendment memo of September 12, 2023. Motion was seconded.

- Chair Hudson stated she called the Special Faculty Senate meeting to move the item of business as a courtesy to the Arizona Board of Regents as they have the item on their consent agenda for their upcoming meeting. Chair Hudson stated she wanted to get the program properly processed at the University level through the Senate, as a courtesy to colleagues in the College of Engineering.
- Vice Chair Hymel stated the previous vote was to approve the agenda and there is now a motion on the Ph.D. proposal.
- Secretary Dysart stated she sees Ricardo Valerdi present in the meeting who is the substituted Program Director of the program. Secretary Dysart asked if Ricardo Valerdi can share the impact and feelings of the Senate's actions on the Software Engineering Department.
 - Program Director Valerdi asked Secretary Dysart if she was referring to what happened retrospectively.
 - Secretary Dysart stated she is referring to the vote of the Senate from September 11, 2023 and wanted to know what some of the department feelings are regarding the Senate's actions. Secretary Dysart stated she suspects that Program Director Valerdi did not expect getting this new position. Secretary Dysart stated the Faculty Senate represents the Faculty and she is curious to know what Valerdi's faculty feel about the situation.
 - Program Director Valerdi stated there was a somber and allergic reaction, the day after the news was received, Sharon O'Neal resigned from her post as Director. Program Director Valerdi stated the department asked O'Neal if she was willing to stay as a Faculty member until Spring 2024, she agreed to stay but likely not after Spring 2024. Program Director Valerdi stated there was damage caused in the department with respect to treatment of Professors of Practice and the perception that they have, especially regarding women in STEM. Program Director Valerdi stated there is also understating of tabling the motion and the issue was fixed, the department appreciates the opportunity to amend the proposal to have a faculty with a Ph.D. lead the program and advise Ph.D. students.
- Senator Eckert stated there are still individuals who do not hold Ph.Ds. as Faculty listed on the program, she

assumes they have been granted permission by the Graduate College to teach Ph.D. students as the case would have been with the previous Director. Senator Eckert asked Program Director Valerdi to confirm whether there has been permission sought from the Graduate College that those individuals can teach without Ph.Ds.

- Program Director Valerdi stated the department is aware of the policy from the Graduate College that to teach graduate courses, there is approval required from the Dean of the Graduate College. Program Director Valerdi stated most of the people in his department, including Sharon O'Neal, have been granted that permission. Program Director Valerdi stated there is an important distinction for everyone that those individuals will be unable to advise Ph.D. students unless they hold a Ph.D. Program Director Valerdi stated because the program is new and there have been no courses offered in Software Engineering therefore, the issue has not been run into. Program Director Valerdi stated his department is aware of the procedure and it will be followed.
- Senator Fink asked if it would be possible to attach a second memo to point out that the Graduate College has granted permission for teaching. Senator Fink stated this can provide clarity for someone that looks back on the topic.
- Program Director Valerdi stated he is happy to fulfill Senator Fink's request.
- Senator Fink stated the proposal is not modified and asked if the proposal, in addition to the two memos, would be seen as an entire unit.
- Vice Chair Hymel stated there would be a second letter amendment like the first one, which will state that that Graduate College has been consulted and all professors have been granted permission before teaching Ph.D. students.
- Vice Chair Hymel stated the motion will be voted on via OpaVote and all Senators should receive an email. Vice Chair Hymel stated a "Yes" vote means approval of the program and a "No" vote means denial of approval of the program.
 - Chair Hudson stated the motion will be voted on by secret ballot where individuals' votes are unidentifiable.
 - Senator Fink asked if a "Yes" means in favor of the Ph.D. and a "No" means not in favor.
 - Vice Chair Hymel stated that is correct.
- Senator Braithwaite stated he is interested in a learning opportunity as there was still confusion surrounding a claim that was made whether an individual not holding a Ph.D. could not direct the Ph.D. program. Senator Braithwaite stated there are three functions which include teaching, directing a program, and teaching and advising. Senator Braithwaite stated he has clarity on the teaching and advising aspect but not on the directing of a program component. Senator Braithwaite stated as a learning opportunity, he would appreciate knowing if there was ever clarity gained on whether the point raised regarding the individual directing the program in the last senate meeting was relevant.
 - Chair Hudson stated she is unsure of whether there is an explicit statement in the bylaws where that proposition is included. Chair Hudson stated that to her knowledge, the objection that was raised rests in academic tradition and was an improvisational motion of the Senate. Chair Hudson stated she would like to open the topic to Kristen Limesand in the Graduate College.
 - Secretary Dysart stated she understood there was no clarity provided on the teaching component. Secretary Dysart stated twenty years of industry experience can be sufficient for teaching which is her understanding from Vice Provost Greg Heileman.
 - Senator Eckert stated it is approved by the Graduate College.
 - Dean of the Graduate College, Kirsten Limesand stated regarding the teaching aspect, the policy is to have a terminal degree in the field. Dean Limesand stated there are special cases where expertise or experience can be evaluated without the terminal degree, the evaluation is conducted by the Dean of the Graduate College. Dean Limesand stated advising and directing is as stated by Chair Hudson, it is not implicitly written in the policy on the degree of the individual which is likely due to having directors of graduate programs that give out Masters or Ph.Ds. Dean Limesand stated there has been further research conducted since the last Senate meeting where there was assumption of what the policy said and that is not what was found.
 - Senator Downing stated there are also directors with bachelor's degrees, and it would be useful for the Faculty Senate and the Graduate College to clarify that there should be a higher degree level required as a granting institution. Senator Downing stated the institution is deflating their status, and national rankings are dropping nationally. Senator Downing asked if this is a race to the bottom.
- Vice Chair Hymel asked if everyone has received their OpaVote link and asked for those having issues to identify themselves.
- Senator Ziurys asked Senator Downing for clarification on the drop in rankings that he referred to.
 - Senator Downing stated it may not be on the point of the discussion, but he referenced the U.S. News and World Report, state headlines, and the Arizona Republic which noted that none of the Universities in Arizona were in the top one hundred.
 - Senator Ziurys stated this is disturbing news and she hopes that the quality and integrity of programs is maintained.
 - Senator Rafelski stated the UA was in the top thirty in rankings in the third previous presidencies. Senator Rafelski stated something extraordinary has occurred as the number of Vice Presidents has increased, and the number of Senior Faculty has decreased. Senator Rafelski stated he believes these components contribute to the poor ranking as individuals evaluate the institution based on the people. Senator Rafelski

- stated even though he sees many distinguished colleagues in his group, he is worried about the possible future if the institution continues the same track.
- Senator Braithwaite stated he is keen to communicate to Program Director Valerdi and colleagues that he is sorry they have had to undergo the process in the last couple of weeks, and he hopes that the conversation does not have any implication on this proposal. Senator Braithwaite stated he believes the proposal is solid and believes it would have been solid with the original Program Director. Senator Braithwaite stated he believes rankings are nonsense most of the time, and there should be consistency on thoughts toward university rankings and whether they provide useful information.
 - Program Director Valerdi stated anytime there is a faculty member lost, it is painful, especially because O'Neal is a female Faculty Member in STEM. Program Director Valerdi stated this is a reputational issue for the college and the University, where there can be the perception of mistreating of women in STEM regardless of what actually happened. Program Director Valerdi stated the perception can be seen as more important in this case, and there will be hard work done to hire more women in STEM but situations like these can be preventative of that hiring.
 - Senator Ziurys stated she agrees that not only do the national rankings matter which can be viewed as “murky,” but the number of high-quality faculty that have left the University unhappy should be considered.
 - Vice Chair Hymel stated she has had the same thing happen in her college.
- Chair Hudson stated she would like to echo what Senator Braithwaite stated. Chair Hudson asked that Program Director Valerdi convey to the faculty member in question, how sorrowful she is about the way the situation unfolded and that she had to be the agent of unpleasantness. Chair Hudson stated institutionally however, the Senate is a critical point and a public place, and it does grieve everyone to see the loss of a valued faculty member, everyone can work together to avoid the unpleasantness that resulted in the letter of resignation. Chair Hudson stated in the same week, there were three different resignations that occurred in different colleges from women Professors of Practice. The three resignations occurred in ten days and indicate a certain level of institutional dysfunction including budgeting, academic freedom, and standing up for norms regarding advancing new programs. Chair Hudson stated only ten percent of Faculty will have the protections of tenure and a property in interest in tenure. Chair Hudson stated due to the resignation of women who are career track faculty, everyone must do a better job. Chair Hudson stated as she has in the past, she proposes more resources in Shared Governance to catch potentially sensitive issues to the President and Provost. Chair Hudson stated this is a question of resources and intentionality and asked that this is conveyed to colleagues in the College of Engineering.
 - **[Motion 2023/24-7]** carried with thirty-eight in favor, four opposed, and no abstentions.
 - Secretary Dysart stated there is a Senate Executive Committee that meets and reviews agenda items in advance. Secretary Dysart stated her suggestion to circulate the Senate Executive Committee agenda so that issues such as this one can be raised in a private meeting before it goes to a public setting. Secretary Dysart stated the way this was done, to publicly humiliate a female engineer was uncalled for and could have been discussed in a private meeting, the matter could have then, been conveyed to the department if identified as a concern to the Senate. Secretary Dysart stated she urges senators to review agenda items in advance so that there is no public humiliation of peers as she believes it is very sad and shameful.
 - Vice Chair Hymel stated she agrees and she is absolutely certain that was not the intention of what took place in the meeting.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Hudson moved **[Motion 2023/24-8]** to adjourn. Motion was seconded. Motion passed by unanimous consent. Vice Chair Hymel stated this is a topic that will need more discussion and she appreciates the Senate as she is sure the College of Engineering does. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:31 PM.

Tessa Dysart, Secretary of the Faculty
Jasmin Espino, Recording Secretary

Motions of September 26, 2023 Faculty Senate Meeting

[Motion 2023/24-6] to approve the agenda. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

[Motion 2023/4-7] to table the approval of the program until there is a director with a PhD, once that contingency is satisfied, the item will return to the Senate for a vote. Motion carried with thirty-one in favor, seventeen opposed, and no abstentions. Motion carried with thirty-eight in favor, four opposed, and no abstentions.

[Motion 2023/24-8] to adjourn. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Attachments Within the Minutes

1. Page 1, Item 3: Action Item Approval of the [Agenda](#)
2. Page 1, Item 3: Action Item: Approval of [Proposal Ph.D. in Software Engineering](#) with [Amendment](#)

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