

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE FACULTY SENATE MEETING - NOTES

9 November 2020

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

This meeting was held remotely, via Web Ex Events

There were 18 Senators in attendance.

Dean Wilcots chaired the session, beginning with two observations. First, he acknowledged the unusual circumstances presented by the global pandemic, and thanked everyone present for the remarkable, and effortful work they have done to teach students, continue research and scholarly work where possible, to connect with colleagues to continue the business of programs, departments, and university. Second, he noted that the University of Wisconsin–Madison occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land (Teejop), and that the work of the university today is conducted in consciousness of the history of conflict, and with respect for the inherent sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation and the eleven other First Nations of Wisconsin. Both observations were offered in acknowledgement that the work of governance is informed by shared challenges and responsibility.

1. Notes of the L&S Faculty Senate meeting held 11 November 2019 were approved.
2. The Report of the Faculty Honors Committee (Academic Year 2019-20) was shared with the Senate as L&S faculty document #312. Professor Sabine Gross, Director of the L&S Honors Program, presented the report. She provided an overview, noting that the report conveys a lot of data about the program and its engagement with students, concluding with the summary that the honors program is continuing to do well, that although program applications were down (likely due to the pandemic), the applicants were exceptional and there was a very high acceptance rate. There were no questions about or comments on the report. Dean Wilcots thanked her for the report, and for her service in leading the program for the past six years.
3. The Report of the L&S Academic Planning Council (Academic Year 2019-20) was shared as L&S Faculty Document 313. Associate Dean Elaine Klein presented the report. She summarized the role of the council in governance decisions for the College, noted that the council had completed program reviews, approved requests to create new programs, discontinue, relocate, or resume suspended programs, and had offered counsel to the dean on college and campus policy. There were no questions or comments concerning the report.
4. The Report of the L&S Curriculum Committee (Academic Year 2019-20) was shared with the Senate as L&S faculty document #314. Professor Susan Ridgely, chair of the Curriculum Committee, presented the report. Professor Ridgely provided an overview of the committee's structure and responsibilities. In Fall 2019 many requests to create new

courses and update existing programs were approved, and in Spring 2020, most of the business of the committee continued as usual despite the disruption of the pandemic, with only a few larger scale issues postponed to the Fall term. There were no questions or comments concerning the report.

5. Announcements, Updates, State of the College, and Discussion. Dean Wilcots' presentation included information about:

- The composition of the newly admitted first-year class of students (the most diverse group in the history of the university). He also recognized that they were attending under extraordinary conditions, and expressed hope that we will be back to in-person instruction by Fall 2021.
- The new Academic Staff title series (Teaching and Research Professor, and Professor of Practice) is under study and dean's advisory committees have been convened to recommend appropriate processes and guidelines for appointment and promotion. In a related observation, he noted that the Title and Total Compensation process was still underway, and many staff would be engaged in the process of having new titles and positions descriptions assigned to them.
- The extent of the impact of the pandemic on the university budget is still unknown.
- The University Senate tabled discussion of procedures for faculty promotion from Associate to Full Professor until Spring. He noted that L&S considers it important to have a good understanding of the proposal and input from department chairs as they think about the workload associated with some aspects of the proposal.
- A new position has been created in L&S administration, to lead college-level diversity efforts. Dean Wilcots announced that the college is searching for an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- L&S is undertaking an effort to create a new online, undergraduate degree program. This program will be designed to serve students who are returning to higher education with some college credits, but no degree, who are unable to engage in full-time residential in-person study, for whom completion of a degree may lead to better prospects in terms of employment or other life goals. The Notice of Intent to Offer a new Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree was shared with the Senate, and had been endorsed by the L&S Curriculum Committee and was slated for discussion by the L&S Academic Planning Council.

The dean then provided an overview of the college, celebrating faculty, staff, and students who had won awards and honors, highlighting research successes and innovations, summarizing capital building planning and timeline. In discussion following the presentation, one Senator asked if there is a way to accelerate the capital budget process, noting that even with a new building under way, their department still has space needs. Dean Wilcots noted that L&S had conducted an extensive survey of building needs and created a comprehensive, prioritized list of needs, and that some requests could be accelerated if there are donors who can help fund new buildings. Another question focused on the relationship between articulating student

learning outcomes and later employment; Dean Wilcots endorsed the principle that students learn better if the instructor knows what we want them to learn, and that framing instructional materials around outcomes helps. It also helps to teach students to understand what they have learned, and how what they have learned helps them go about their lives (including in the workplace).

Dean Wilcots thanked participants and urged them to take care.

The meeting ended at 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

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Secretary, L&S Faculty

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