

**Penn State Berks Senate**  
**Monday 26 March 2018**  
**12:15-1:15 PM**  
**Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), Perkins Building**  
**Agenda**

- **Call to Order**
- **Additions, Corrections, and Approval of the Minutes of the Meetings of 29 January 2018 and 26 February 2018**
- **Announcements and Reports by the Chair**
- **Motions from Committees**
  - Executive Committee, motion to amend the Constitution (**Appendix A**)
  - Executive Committee, motion on Ad-Hoc Committees (**Appendix B**)
  - Academic Affairs Committee, Legislative Report (**Appendix C**)
  - Physical Facilities Report, Charges 4 and 7 (**Appendix D**)
- **Informational Reports**
- **Unfinished Business**
- **Reports of Officers and University Senators**
  - Vice Chair Infantolino
  - Secretary and University Senator Zambanini
  - Senator Ansari
  - Senator Bartolacci
  - Senator Maurer
  - Senator Snyder
  - SGA President Ryan Morris
  - Student Senator
- **Comments/Announcements by Administrators**
  - Chancellor Hillkirk
  - Associate Dean Esqueda
- **New Legislative Business**
- **Forensic Business**
- **Comments for the Good of the Order**
- **Adjournment**

**Penn State Berks Senate**  
**January 29, 2018**  
**12:15-1:15 PM, Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), Perkins Building**

Attendees: Mohamad Ansari, Amir Barakati, Tara Beecham, David Bender, Mike Briggs, Catherine Catanach, Collen English, Azar Eslam Panah, Maria Fellie, Walt Fullam, Hassan Gourama, Nathan Greenauer, Ryan Hassler, Ben Infantolino, Abdullah Konak, Jim Laurie, Ada Lueng, Joseph Mahoney, Lauren Jade Martin, Cesar Martinez-Garza, Clifford Maurer, Jennifer McDougal, Catherine Mello, Pauline Milwood, Tami Mysliwiec, Mahdi Nasereddin, Randall Newnham, Shannon Nowotarski, Lolita Paff, Dawn Pfeifer Reitz, JoAnne B. Pumariaga, Michele Ramsey, Matthew Rhudy, Malika Richards, Marissa Ruggiero, Brenda Russell, John Shank, Allison Singles, Stephen Snyder, Terry Speicher, Hartono Tjoe, Bob Zambanini (Faculty); Pradip Bandyopadhyay, Kim Berry, Paul Esqueda, Keith Hillkirk, Janelle Larson, Michelle Mart, Belén Rodríguez-Moureló, Teri Sabatelli (Administration); Charles Miller, Ryan Morris (Students).

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Additions, Corrections, and Approval of Minutes of the November 13, 2017** – After noting minor typos, Chair Mart called for corrections, additions to the minutes; hearing none, a motion was called to approve the minutes (Laurie), and was seconded (Gourama); *the minutes were approved.*

**3. Announcements and Reports by the Chair** – The Chair addressed two points. First, in Appendix A, it was the report that she sent out in December, she wants to get into the habit of summarizing what the Senate does each semester. Wanted to make sure that we all have another copy. 2 action items for office of AA.both passed at November meeting. Conversations with Paul. Motion from AA about integrity policy, paul was supportive of most part of motion, but he did note part of the motion about sanction guidelines would have to be brought back to AI committee, raised a question about implementation of what the PC are supposed to do for AI policies and >, from FA motion best practices for DRTEs, 4 motions, last 3 recommendations AA, #2 paul felt was a good idea (to have Angela Lindsey to visit and discuss best practices Pauley) first recommendation paul felt it was not a good idea to have any FAC at charge meeting for a P&T Committee because it confuses the role of faculty vs. administration, discussion of spirit of implementing the recommendation, discussed having FAC rep communicate to all faculty about the best practices and FAC rep to speak to DHs and Paul in one of their meetings as a reminder. Also, academic structure and administrative positions, and should there be any changes in them due to the growth in recent years of the campus. But wanted to get more faculty input. So you're reports coming out of the Executive Committee this month. Discussions are underway with regard to a couple of the broader charges, which we will present more formally in the near future.

**4. Motions from Committees**

- **Legislative Report on Academic Integrity Policies, October 2017; Academic Affairs Committee (Appendix A)** – No major changes from last time. Today's vote reflects on the recommendations brought forth by the committee to strength/improve our academic integrity policy. Chair Mart called for any additional comments; hearing none, the motion was called to a vote; *the motion was approved.*
- **Legislative Report on SRTE Use Best Practices, November, 2017; Faculty Affairs Committee (Appendix B)** – An overview was presented. There are no substantial changes since presented last month. Chair Mart referenced four specific recommendations as related to thinking ahead to charges for next year's Faculty Affairs Committee. This also speaks to previous discussions when questions were raised with regard to SRTE's as an instrument, and how they used and other ways in which we may evaluate teaching. Chair Mart called for any additional comments; hearing none, the motion was called to a vote; *the motion was approved.*
- **Advisory Report "Engaged Scholarship Report," November, 2017; Faculty Affairs Committee (Appendix C)** – An overview was presented. Any changes to this report will be suggested with the Chancellor. The Chancellor will then make the final determination and share his recommendations to the Advisory Board for implementation. It was reminded that final recommendations will be at the discretion of the Chancellor. A question was raised as to how this process came about. Vice-Chair Infantolino commented that, over the summer, Chair Mart put forth an email to faculty asking what they wished to have reviewed. A

concern was shared with regard to having the guidelines for the award being established by the group that is to receive the award. Clarification was put forth by Senator Snyder that the committee is not making recommendations to the Board but bringing forth suggestions to the Chancellor where he will have discretion on what is brought forth to the Board as recommendations. Discussion followed. Chair Mart called for additional questions/concerns with regard to the changes on the report highlighted in red. Additional discussion followed. Conversation took place with the Executive Committee about this issue. The Chancellor commented that he is responsible for the Advisory Board. It is appropriate that these suggestions come to the Chancellor and it is ultimately the Chancellor who will then decide if and how as to the appropriateness to communicate them to the Advisory Board. Another concern was raised concerning the process. With other faculty awards, letters of support are not typically included. The level of the award needs to be looked at as well as the significance and how much is required from the candidate. In order to keep it consistent with the other faculty awards, there should be no letter. Finally, Chair Mart inquired about the procedure to measure this outcome. Examples were provided, including additional explanation provided by Chair Mart as to the intent. Additional discussion/concerns brought forth. Senator Ansari recommended we move to send this report back to committee for further consultation with the faculty. This motion was seconded. After a vote, it was decided to return the report to the committee for further deliberation.

## 5. Informational Reports

- **Progress Report on Hybrid Classes Issue, November 6, 2017; Academic Affairs Committee (Appendix D)** – An overview was presented. Any questions and/or suggestions for the committee should be passed on to any committee member. Chair Gourama asked if anyone is aware of any specific guidelines currently being followed at any of the other campuses to please let him know.
- **Charge 1 Report, Fall, 2017; Physical Facilities Committee (Appendix E)** - An overview was presented; concerns reviewed as outlined on the report.
- **Minutes, October 31, 2017; Physical Facilities Committee (Appendix F)** – An overview was presented.
- **Minutes, October, 2017; Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (Appendix G)** – An overview of committee charges/concerns presented.

## 6. Reports of Officers and University Senators

- **Vice Chair Infantolino** – No report.
- **Secretary and University Senator Zambanini** – The Senate web page has been updated.
- **Senator Ansari** – Last month, the Senate approved the policy on a smoke-free/tobacco-free environment. There are seven recommendations that were made. Secretary Zambanini will forward the recommendations later today for your review. This report is advisory/consultative and its implementation is upon approval by the President. Tomorrow, the Senate Council will review the provision with regard to multi-year contracts. GURU has been replaced by Penn State policy, which may be found at: [www.pennstate.policy.psu.edu](http://www.pennstate.policy.psu.edu). There are now twenty-four HR policies which will be under the jurisdiction of the Office of Academic Affairs.
- **Senator Bartolacci** – Not present.
- **Senator Mauer** – Not present.
- **Senator Snyder** – With regard to information shared publicly today, there is some concern. Communication is key. Everyone is encouraged to contact their division representatives to influence report that are being prepared by Committees. Charges come through the Executive Committee. One may not like or agree with a charge or in fact may have an objection to a charge, but a committee has an obligation to fulfill the charge.
- **SGA President Ryan Morris** – Not present.
- **Student Senator** – Conversation took place at last week's Council of Commonwealth Student Governments meeting at University Park with regard to the Smoking Task Force. Several other campuses are expanding the LaunchBox Program, which is on par with what Berks is currently doing. The SGA and the Intercultural Office will sponsor the Diversity Dinner, which will be held on November 16 at 6PM in the Lion's Den.

## 7. Comments/Announcements by Administrators

- **Chancellor Hillkirk**

- The library is open. [Applause] I want to publicly thank the library staff. The response to an emergency such as that was very impressive. A lot of people pulled together quickly. I had contact from parents during the closure and one parent requested a tuition reimbursement. My response was I spoke to the Head Librarian who provided all the details with regard to every step that was taken, and I never heard back from that parent, which surprised me. I also want to acknowledge our maintenance and operations staff who were an integral part of the process and still are as well as everyone else who were involved. The entire process was really very impressive and a wonderful example of how people here at Penn State Berks come together.
- There have been some challenges with regard to our enrollment. As a reminder, our budget at Penn State Berks is defined by our enrollment. When comments are made with regard to wanting money for different things that is where that money comes from. We all play a role in this endeavor. As mentioned previously, Penn States Brandywine and Abington both now have housing, which has posed a new challenge for us. Another challenge has been due to LionPATH particularly because of transfer issues. We are working on both of those. The Chancellor explained that much time is being spent in determining the best way to address these concerns. The division heads will be talking with program coordinators and faculty about our different degree programs; our admission's staff is very busy; and the Chancellor is continually meeting with Teri Sabatelli as well as Dr. Esqueda and others. This issue is very important. It will be addressed; however, budget issues are usually due to enrollment issues.
- The Chancellor expressed concerns about the increasing tendency towards centralization at the University, with authority being taken away from Chancellors. The various Chancellors are raising objections to this tendency. The Chancellor encouraged the Berks Senate and the University Senate to assist in these endeavors. He mentioned some cases where centralization would be a good (such as IT). On the other hand, he mentioned a topic from the University's Ethics & Compliance Committee regarding a proposal to centralize all academic integrity cases so that decisions about academic integrity cases here at Berks would be done centrally as having been viewed as a negative.
- Our scholar athletes tend to do very well academically. Our women's volleyball team won the regular season's South Division of our NEAC Conference; our cross-country team won their conference this year; and our women's soccer team won their conference for the fifth year in a row. Our athletics teams continue to do well here at Penn State Berks.
- **Senior Associate Dean Esqueda** – The Academic Affairs Retreat will be held on Friday, December 15. The topic will be: *Classroom Management Tools for a Disruptive Classroom*.

8. **Unfinished Business – None**

9. **New Legislative Business – None**

10. **Forensic Business – None**

11. **Comments for the Good of the Order - None**

12. **Adjournment**

**Penn State Berks Senate**  
**February 26, 2018**  
**12:15-1:15 PM, Multi-Purpose Room, Perkins Student Center**

Attendees: Jennifer Arnold, Amir Barakati, Mike Bartolacci, Catherine Catanach, Donna Chambers, Valerie Cholet, Justin DiAngelo, Deb Dreisbach, Collen English, Azar Eslam Panah, Maria Fellie, Hassan Gourama, Nathan Greenauer, Ryan Hassler, Jinyoung Im, Ben Infantolino, Abdullah Konak, Sadan Kulturel, Ada Lueng, Joseph Mahoney, Jennifer McDougal, Catherine Mello, Pauline Milwood, Jennifer Murphy, Tami Mysliwicz, Mahdi Nasereddin, Shannon Nowotarski, Meghan Owenz, Lolita Paff, Dawn Pfeifer Reitz, Alexey Prokudin, JoAnne Pumariega, Matthew Rhudy, Marissa Ruggiero, Marietta Scanlon, Allison Singles, Stephen Snyder, Terry Speicher, Hartono Tjoe, Praveen Veerabhadrapa, Bob Zambanini (Faculty); James McCarty, Marie Smith (Staff); Pradip Bandyopadhyay, David Bender, Kim Berry, Paul Esqueda, Keith Hillkirk, Janelle Larson, Michelle Mart, Belén Rodríguez Mourelo, Teri Sabatelli, John Shank (Administration).

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Additions, Corrections, and Approval of Minutes of the January 29, 2018** – As previously mentioned, Marie was unable to be here at the last meeting so Bob Zambanini prepared the minutes himself and they did not get finished in time for the 96-hour deadline to be able to vote on them. Thus, we will vote on them at the next meeting. Bob will never underestimate the work that Marie puts into preparing the minutes and he is most grateful for the careful and complete minutes that she does each meeting.

**3. Announcements and Reports by the Chair** – There are three different announcements in my oral report and two additional items. The first item not mentioned in the agenda. Last meeting I brought up the idea that we were going to have a questionnaire to elicit feedback from people in-regard to academic structure and whether or not they thought there were any changes that might be considered. The Executive Committee put together a questionnaire and in addition, a website implemented. This link will be sent out sometime this afternoon with the hopes if you have thoughts, ideas or feedback that you will complete the questionnaire. The results will be shared at the next Senate meeting.

- **Explanation of re-vote on Faculty Affairs Committee January motion and Executive Committee motion to amend the Constitution** – There will be re-vote today on this motion from the January meeting. Rationale was provided. According to Roberts Rules, abstentions do not affect the outcome of a vote because abstentions are not votes but are the decision not to vote. Votes are based on majority or two-thirds of votes cast, unless otherwise specified. Due to previous confusion and at the recommendation of the Parliamentarian, it was decided to have a re-vote.
- **Explanation of two brief queries from University Park about the Standing Rules** – The rationale for this announcement is that there were two very brief queries from University Park reading over our standing rules, which felt needed clarification. In addition, there was one other typo that was left in, which will be stricken as well.
- **Note on language amendment of Fixed Term Promotion Statement** – University Park reacted to our fixed term statement that we cast and there were two minor changes that we agreed to make. The first change is that our document contained many references to HR21, which has been replaced by AC21. We also struck the choice between instructor and lecturer because the university has indicated that these delineations are confusing, on top of which one only term can be used (and not both interchangeably). Therefore, the lecturer title remains.

After last meeting, there were a few diffident requests from faculty to bring back the clickers for voting purposes. It is doable but software and additional training needed. In the meantime, we will be using paper ballot for this meeting. It is my hope that by the next meeting clickers will be implemented.

**4. Motions from Committees** – The intention is to vote on the motion in-regard to the standing rules changes today, which are minor, and to discuss the constitutional changes today but not vote on them until the next meeting so to give more time to digest and reflect upon proposed changes.

- **Executive Committee, Motion to Amend the Constitution (Appendix A)** – Rationale for the motion reviewed. This is to affirm our Senate function in that we follow Roberts Rules unless there is some specific

circumstance that is identified. This reaffirms that abstentions do not affect the outcome of a vote. The Chair called for any additional comments. A question was raised commenting it seems just as confusing, is it a majority or two-thirds. The Chair clarified, stating some votes are majority votes and others are two-thirds votes, according to Roberts Rules. For example, when we amend the Constitution, the amendments are by two-thirds. The suggestion was made if this is meant to clarify then perhaps details should be included as part of the motion, provide an example. The Chair asked if a motion was being made to add additional language to the motion in order to convey the meaning more direct. A motion was made to add the line: *abstentions are not a vote cast*, second. The Chair called for additional comments in-regard to the amendment to the amendment. ***The Chair called for a vote to approve the amendment to the amendment; results were 24 in favor, 18 opposed; the motion carried.*** The Chair called for additional comments on the original motion; hearing none, the Chair reminded all, the vote on this motion will take place at the next Senate meeting.

- **Executive Committee, Motion to Amend the Standing Rules (Appendix B)** – The proposed changes reviewed. Chair Mart called for any additional comments. Hearing none, the motion was called to a vote; ***the motion was approved.***

**5. Informational Reports – Physical Facilities Report on Impact of Hybrid Class Scheduling (Appendix C)**

- 6. Unfinished Business – Faculty Affairs Advisory Report on Engaged Scholarship Award (Appendix D)** – The Chair commented there was a very lengthy discussion in-regard to this at the last meeting. The Chair called for a vote; paper ballots distributed and calculated by the Secretary. ***The results were 21 in favor and 22 opposed; the motion does not carry.***

**7. Reports of Officers and University Senators**

- **Vice Chair Infantolino** – No report.
- **Secretary and University Senator Zambanini** – No report.
- **Senator Ansari** – Not present.
- **Senator Bartolacci** – Curricular Affairs at University Park are approving many new Gen Ed courses and proceeding with them. The observation is that some of the proposals have little, if any, consultation, while other proposals are omitting parts of the actual format or justification. Proposals should be prepared with as much consultation as is possible. Otherwise, the proposals may be flagged.
- **Senator Mauer** – Not present.
- **Senator Snyder** – No report.
- **SGA President Ryan Morris** – Not present.
- **Student Senator** – Not present.

**8. Comments/Announcements by Administrators**

- **Chancellor Hillkirk** – You are all invited to join us for a reception/announcement on Wednesday, February 28, over the common hour, in the Gaige lobby related to two gifts from two couples. These two gifts are the two largest gifts we ever received at Penn State Berks, each of them a \$1.5 million gift totaling \$3 million. Beyond that, we have also received a portion of the gift as a match from the President Barron. Ultimately, these gifts will create over a \$4 million endowment at Penn State Berks. This endowment will be called the Cohen/Hammel Fellows Program. Irv and Lois Cohen are Penn State alumni who met at Penn State and have both served on our Advisory Board. Not only are they wonderful supporters of Penn State University, but they are also great supporters of Penn State Berks. Vic and Dena Hammel are also Penn State alumni who met at Penn State. They are creating a Fellows Program that will enable us to recruit students to come to Penn State Berks that we would typically not recruit. The intent is to increase the pool of exceptional students to come to Penn State Berks. One of the requirements is they must stay here for their entire four years. They may also be part of the Honors Program, but this factor would not be a requirement. This Program will be for any one of our four-year degrees. Our hope is that there will be Fellows across many disciplines at Penn State Berks. There will be a significant scholarship that will be part of this gift and will be used strategically to recruit high school students (followed by a significant program endowment once they are here). The program endowment will be used to support the Fellows Program. The students will work with faculty mentors. We will do everything we can to really enrich their experience through undergraduate research. Some additional

details are still being worked out. A question in regard to the selection criteria was posed. The Chancellor has asked the Division Heads to continue working on this in addition with both couples. Some of the qualities in particular that both couples are interested in include academics, demonstrated leadership and leadership potential, and community engagement. These couples are making this donation not only out of their love of Penn State but also because they are so impressed by what happens at Penn State Berks.

- **Senior Associate Dean Esqueda** – No report.

**9. New Legislative Business – None**

**10. Forensic Business – None**

**11. Comments for the Good of the Order** – The Chair asked if the room set-up for the meeting was suitable with everyone. With regard to meeting location, the Chair reminded all that at the beginning of the year she asked for everyone's opinions/feedback in-regard to where we meet. Fall semester meetings were held in Luerssen, room 5 and Spring semester meetings in the Multipurpose Room of Perkins. The Chair called for additional comments with regard to preference. The only comment had to do with maintaining consistency with regard to meeting location. The Chair agreed this was important; however, she noted the change in locations for this year's meetings had to do with room space at the time the reservations were set. The consensus was to continue meeting in the Perkins Student Center, multipurpose room. Another comment raised concerned the possibility of having meetings held on days other than Mondays on occasion, and perhaps having some held on Fridays. The Chair indicated in the past there was pushback on having meetings held on Fridays. She referenced the importance of having a quorum at the meetings, but agreed to look at this topic again when setting the calendar for next year's Senate meetings.

**12. Adjournment**

APPENDIX A  
**Penn State Berks Executive Committee**  
**Motion to Amend the Penn State Berks Constitution**

**Background:**

The Penn State Berks Constitution and Standing Rules follow *Roberts Rules of Order* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.) unless otherwise specified in particular sections. There is some confusion about how votes are counted and, in particular, how the decision not to vote is counted (“abstention”). This confusion has affected the outcome of a motion.

**Motion:**

The Executive Committee moves that Article VIII Voting of the Penn State Berks Constitution be amended as follows (addition of italicized passage):

**Article VIII**  
**VOTING**

Proxy voting is disallowed, but the Executive Committee shall establish policies for secure absentee balloting consistent with the Standing Rules. Otherwise all voting shall be in person at an appropriately scheduled meeting unless a member chooses to vote on committee business, in an election, or in a referendum by electronic means.

The presiding officer at a meeting may decide to call for a secure secret ballot on a particular issue unless overruled by a majority of the members present.

*Voting procedures shall follow Roberts Rules of Order (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), including that the outcome of a vote is determined by either majority or two thirds of votes cast, unless otherwise specified. Abstentions are not votes cast.*

**Rationale:**

As explained in *Roberts Rules of Order* “abstention” is the refusal to vote, not a vote. Thus, the default situation is that abstentions have no effect on the outcome of a vote. *Roberts Rules* does allow for the specification that an outcome may be determined by a majority or two thirds of members present (or of the entire membership) in particular circumstances.

Since the Berks Constitution and Standing Rules have always followed *Roberts Rules* except as specified, this motion is designed to affirm accepted procedure and eliminate confusion.

[Information on this provision can be found here: [RONR](#) (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 400, ll. 7-12; p. 401, ll. 8-11; p. 403, ll. 13-24; see also p. 66 of [RONRIB](#).]



**APPENDIX B**  
**Penn State Berks Executive Committee**

**Motion on the Role of Administrative Ad-hoc Committees  
In Relation to Senate Committees**

**Background:**

The Executive Committee was asked to look into the role of ad-hoc committees formed by an administrator for a specific purpose as they relate to standing committees of the Senate, and whether or not there was any duplication of effort or Senate committees were not carrying out the duties with which they are charged.

**Motion:**

The Executive Committee proposes the following motion:

Before a new ad-hoc administrative committee be formed, the project goal should be brought to the Executive Committee to discuss whether it falls under the responsibility of an existing Senate committee, and if so be assigned to such committee before (or simultaneously with) the formation of an ad-hoc administrative committee.

**Rationale:**

The motion is designed to lessen duplication of effort between committees, and to make sure that Senate committees are given an opportunity to carry out their charges, and fulfill their advisory and consultative functions. The motion is calling for administrators to consult with the Senate before a new committee is formed which might overlap with the charges of an existing committee. Administrators are not compelled to go through a Senate committee, and may choose not to do so if, for example, there is a time sensitive task or they need to oversee a task for which they are directly responsible.

## APPENDIX C

### **Penn State Berks Senate** **Academic Affairs Committee**

#### **Legislative Report**

Meeting, January 30, 2018

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Room: 113 Luerssen

**Committee Members:** Michael Bartolacci, Dave Bender, William Bowers, Alexandria Chisholm, Katherine Cinesi, Ruth Daly, Paul Esqueda, Lisa Glass, Hassan Gourama, Matthew Rhudy, Kirk Shaffer, Christian Weisser

**Guests:** Tara Beecham, Tami Mysliwicz

#### **1. Call to order**

#### **2. Charge**

*Investigate the purpose, goals, and implementation of the Common Reading and the First Year Seminar. Gather information, including forensic discussion at the Senate level, prepare legislative report(s) addressing the purpose, goals, and implementation of the Common Reading and First Year Seminar, and whether these programs should be modified, continued as is, or discontinued.*

#### **3. Background**

##### **3.1. First-Year Seminar**

The University Senate Special Committee on General Education (SCGE) created the First-Year Seminar (FYS) in 1997. The main objective was to engage incoming students into the educational enterprise. The two main goals of the recommendation were to:

- Engage incoming students in the learning process from the outset of their undergraduate studies.
- Help incoming students transition into college life by facilitating their adjustments to the high expectations, demanding workload and increased liberties.

To facilitate the implementation of the proposed FYS program, the SCGE proposed the following five objectives:

- “To introduce students to university study,
- To introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students,
- To acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available at Penn State,

- To provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them, and
- To introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community.”

In September 1998, the General Education Implementation Committee (GEIC) presented a plan of implementation, indicating that all FYS courses must:

- “Have academic content
- Be offered for academic credit (1-3 credits)
- Be taught by tenure-line faculty, full-time instructors or fixed-term faculty
- Be taught in sections of no more than 20 students each
- Be taken by students during their first academic year.”

Since its implementation, the FYS has been a contentious General Education requirement within the University. The Senate, Colleges and Campuses within the University have discussed the issue on many occasions. In January 2007, the University Senate charged an Ad Hoc FYS Committee to review the FYS requirements. The Ad Hoc committee identified the following weaknesses in the FYS requirement:

- “Lack of specificity, measurable objectives;
- Variability in content, rigor, and format;
- Low interest in teaching the FYS template in some units;
- Uneven perceived need between University Park and other campuses; and
- Difficulty in scheduling FYS for DUS students at University Park.”

The Ad Hoc committee believed that it is critical for all the incoming students to have an opportunity to be engaged from the outset, in the learning process. The committee saw that the most important impact that influenced learning is a powerful impact of engagement, defined as *“the level at which students invest physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual energy in educationally related activities.”*

The committee also acknowledged that the research on this topic during the last two decades has clearly shown that participation in first-year seminars has a positive influence on retention and academic achievement. The committee concluded that although the implementation of the FYS program was controversial throughout the University, the initial goals and objective of the FYS recommendation are not disputed and definitely worth pursuing.

The Ad Hoc committee presented the following recommendation:

“The existing FYS requirement will be replaced as follows: Each University Park academic college, each of the 19 Commonwealth campuses, and the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), all of which are called “units” for the purposes of this report, shall submit a **First-Year Engagement Plan** for achieving the goals and objectives of first-year engagement, as stated in the 1997 report of SCGE, for baccalaureate, associate degree and provisional first-year students enrolled within the unit.”

The committee also restated the same two goals and five objectives proposed in 1997. The committee also asked that each unit submit a First-Year Engagement Plan (FYEP) for approval. The FYEP must be prepared following specific principles. (For more information on these principles and relevant information on this issue, check the legislative report of the University Senate Ad Hoc First-Year seminar committee, 4/29/08).

In May 2008, the Berks Senate appointed an Ad Hoc committee to draft a FYEP, and in September 2008, the following model of the Penn State Berks FYEP was adopted:

- The FYEP will be a partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
- The FYEP will include an orientation program that introduces students to the campus community.
- The FYEP includes a one-credit first year seminar that ideally would be linked to a 3-credit course. (3+1 model).
- Flexibility: Faculty will choose to emphasize any one or combination of the following themes for their FYS:
  - Social and Personal Adjustment to College
  - Topics based FYS (faculty choice of topic)
  - Discipline based professional type seminar
  - Skills based seminar
  - Faculty can choose which course the FYS would be linked to
- Consistency:
  - Engage the students for the equivalent of one credit
  - Limited to 25 students
  - All seminars must meet the goals and objectives specifically stated in the University Senate legislation regarding the First Year Engagement Plan.

### **3.2. Common Reading Program**

Penn State Berks implemented the Common Reading Program to provide incoming students with a positive reading experience and to foster a sense of community with other first year students. The content of the common reading is part of the academic expectation of the First-Year Seminar.

The Common Reading Goals:

- “To provide a common experience for first-year learners to ease the transition into the academic community of the College
- To build an intellectual community among first-year learners, returning students, faculty and staff
- To help students make connections between classroom and out of classroom experiences
- To engage students in discussions surrounding current societal issues”

The Common Reading program provide many benefits to the first-year students. It is an opportunity to capture and work with students during their first year, to develop a sense of

community and to build cross-curricular skill activities. The Common Reading program also allows students to develop a sense of commitment to their studies, peers and community by participating in all the activities related to the program (study guide, guest speakers, community service and social activities).

In September 2017, the Berks Senate Executive Committee charged the Academic Affairs Committee to investigate the First Year Seminar and the Common Reading and to prepare a legislative report. To restate, this is the charge:

*Investigate the purpose, goals, and implementation of the Common Reading and the First Year Seminar. Gather information, including forensic discussion at the Senate level, prepare legislative report(s) addressing the purpose, goals, and implementation of the Common Reading and First Year Seminar, and whether these programs should be modified, continued as is, or discontinued.*

#### **4. Deliberation and Comments by the Academic Affairs Committee**

The Academic Affairs Committee invited Tami Mysliwicz and Tara Beecham to give a background introduction to the committee on the purpose, goals and implementation of the CR and the FYS. Tami is the Interim Director Academic Student Support Services and Special Project and Coordinator of the FYS. Tara is the current coordinator of the Common Reading Program, replacing Lisa Zackowski.

Tami provided extensive background on the FYS program and the importance of the associated Common Reading Program (similar to the background information provided at the beginning of the report). Tami added that if the Common Reading Program is removed, a new academic component would have to be added to the FYS program, which would essentially cost a significant investment of time and money for staffing and replacement.

Tara shared information about the process and practices of the CRP on campus.

Some committee members were concerned that students do not read the book and that the students are not well engaged in the Common Reading program and the FYS.

Tara acknowledged the concerns of committee members. She added that getting students to read is a challenge in various disciplines on campus that is not exclusive to a program that promotes reading during the summer before college. Tara mentioned that the revamped committee that selects books with an emphasis on transparency was discussed, and research supporting the community-building element of the common reading program when paired with other first year seminar programs/activities on a national level was presented.

Next, committee members Matt Rhudy and Alex Chisholm presented the following summary of the survey that was sent to faculty and staff in the fall 2017, to assess the effectiveness of the common reading and the FYS:

The results were filtered to include only faculty and staff that have taught FYS within the last 3 years. This resulted in seven faculty responses (1 EBC, 3 HASS, and 3 Science) and eight staff

members. Overall, the staff are more supportive of the common reading program than the faculty. Seventy-five percent of staff and 43% of the faculty responses indicate that the program should continue in its current form. With only a few exceptions, the staff somewhat strongly agree that the common reading program is meeting various goals. Faculty do not share this sentiment, with the most skepticism towards building an intellectual community. Despite some concerns with the program, the majority of faculty (71%) and staff (88%) do not think that the program should be eliminated.

Common recommendations for improving the program from both faculty and staff are offering the CR in other first year courses or making it program specific. Other suggestions include integrating the CR into a larger college-wide theme for all students (not just first year), giving the book to all faculty and students to discuss, and improving book selection.

Some suggestions from the survey for improving the book selection process are:

- Be more transparent and increase awareness about the process
- Offer incentives for making recommendations
- Take only recommendations for FYS faculty
- Have more student involvement
- Select books relevant to transitions, goal setting and overcoming obstacles
- Use a collection of essays from Berks's faculty staff and students (Twenty-nine percent of faculty and 38% of staff were somewhat to be very interested in contributing.)

While the results presented here only indicate responses from faculty and staff that have taught FYS within the last 3 years, the responses from the remaining faculty and staff had similar percentages and conclusions.

One committee member commented that the percentage of the faculty who participated in the survey is very small and is not representative of all faculty. In addition, there is no evidence that the goals that were initially set for the CR (building community and engagement) are being achieved, and consequently the CRP should be discontinued. However, the rest of the committee agreed that the CRP should remain as part of the FYS, with the implementation of changes in the selection of the book and the implementation of the goals set for the program.

After the AAC meeting, Tara informed the chair of the AAC about the steps taken since, to seek out a new CR committee and create ways to improve the selection process and make the selection as transparent as possible. Tara submitted the following steps:

“a) I have reached out to each division head to send out a message to their faculty seeking volunteer representatives from their respective divisions. All division heads agreed to this and thus far, we have at least one representative confirmed from each division. We are hoping for two representatives from each, and so far, HASS has already fulfilled that quota.”

“b) I have sought recommendations from Tami and Saundra and I have invited staff connected with the program directly to take part in the new committee. I have extended three invitations to students (recommended by Autumn) to include student representation on the committee. I have

also extended an invite through you to the entire Academic Affairs committee if any member or all members would like to join the Committee for the Common Reading.”

“c) In each of these invitations I have included the detailed responsibilities of the committee itself; this clearly outlines for everyone the process of how books are nominated and who votes on the texts.”

“d) A 2015 study by the University of Minnesota (*J. of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, Vol. 27, No.1, pp. 29-47*) on the benefits of common book programs, suggests "that participation in such a [Common Reading] program is significantly and positively associated with first-year students' self-reported development in academic skills and multicultural appreciation and competence, controlling for their participation in first-year seminar and learning communities, demographic characteristics, academic engagement, sense of belonging, faculty interactions, grade point average, and students' self-reported skills and competencies when they first arrived on campus.

Separately, here is the hyperlink to the second article I mentioned in the meeting, "[Summer Reading Books: The Ties that Bind Colleges](#)" that appeared in July 2017 in the New York Times, which researched dozens of college common reading programs and used data from Random House publishing's survey of hundreds of universities. Here you will find examples of text selection processes, conversations surrounding common reading programs on a national level, and trends among common reading programs in the U.S.”

“e) Tami and I met with Dave Delozier to discuss the potential funding of the common reading text to be placed in the hand of every freshman going through NSO1 this summer. He was supportive of the idea and is in the process of exploring the possibility of a \$10,000 endowment. Books have been distributed at NSO1 in the past at least twice at Penn State Berks and Dr. Judith Rile from Financial Aid has graciously provided me with background information as to why and how this directly benefits our students and is good investment.”

Kailah Ortiz, BMB major, Orientation Leader and First Year Mentor, sent a letter to the Academic Affairs Committee on behalf of the 2017 First Year Mentors. The letter gave a strong support for the First-Year Seminar Program from the 2017 FY Mentors. The Academic Affairs Committee appreciate all the work that is being done by mentors to help first-year students adjust to college life and be successful in their academic experience.

## **5. Recommendations**

The Academic Affairs Committee believes that the First Year Seminar has a significant and positive influence on first-year students. Research on the topic over the last twenty years has clearly shown that well planned and delivered First Year Seminar programs help students develop academic and cognitive skills and critical thinking and give them a sense of belonging to their new academic institution. FYS programs also help first-year students connect with faculty, staff and their student peers, and have opportunities to engage in out-of-class activities. Consequently, the Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the FYS program continue.

Concerning the Common Reading Program, the majority of committee members believe that the purpose and goals set for the program are commendable. However, the committee does not see any strong evidence that these goals are being achieved. The committee recommends that the CRP should have well-articulated learning and engagement outcomes that can be evaluated and assessed on yearly basis. The committee also recommends that the book selection process be driven by these learning outcomes and be as transparent as possible. The committee also considers that the new initiatives taken by the current coordinator of the CRP in the creation of common reading committee of broad representation is a step in the right direction.

## **6. Motions**

- 6.1. The Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the First-Year Seminar Program continue.
- 6.2. The Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the Common Reading Program continue, and that the selection of the common reading book process be transparent and with a broad representation.
- 6.3. The Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the goals set for the common reading program be assessed on yearly basis.



Respectively submitted

**Academic Affairs Committee 2017-18**

Michael Bartolacci

Dave Bender

William Bowers

Alexandria Chisholm

Katherine Cinesi

Ruth Daly

Paul Esqueda

Lisa Glass

Hassan Gourama, Chair

Matthew Rhudy

Kirk Shaffer

Christian Weisser

## APPENDIX D

### Physical Facilities and Safety

#### Charge 4 & 7 Report – Feb 24, 2018

**Charge 4: Assess and make recommendations regarding parking policies.**

**Charge 7: Investigate and prepare report on (2) underused service vehicle parking spots in front of Franco, and whether they should be continued. Investigate same question for any other service vehicle spots around campus, as well as number and placement of spots for faculty and staff.**

In a meeting with Police Services, the status of parking and current vehicle regulations on our campus was discussed. This discussion revolved around both the facilities (number and type of parking spaces) and the safety/regulation of our parking lots. The following report is an overview of these two components.

#### **Facilities:**

The consensus from police services and M&O is that there are more than enough parking spaces on campus for all student, faculty and staff vehicles. Overall, there are 1,827 parking spaces on campus, which include 1,500 general spots for commuters/resident hall students and 233 spots designated for faculty and staff (See Table 1 for parking spot types broken down by lots). During the first few weeks of each semester, the most accessible student parking lots are usually at or close to capacity. When this happens, police services can be visibly seen directing cars to other lots in order to reduce major traffic congestion. Most notably, when the main lots in front of campus are filled, incoming traffic is directed to the resident halls parking lot off of Tulpehocken road. This typically happens on Tuesday's and Thursday's and is not needed once commuter students realize that they do not want to stay on campus for large gaps of time in between classes. Police services suggested that communication to students about how class scheduling affects parking on campus could help minimize this concern.

Overall, there are 94 parking spaces campus wide that are designated for special situations. These spaces include 33 handicapped and 10 medical permit spaces. Police services shared that in order to park in a handicapped space a vehicle must display the proper Pennsylvania handicapped parking placard, however the medical spaces are reserved for individuals who request special access through campus police services. Typical, these requests come from individuals who have temporary physical restrictions (e.g., a broken leg) and from pregnant women. It was agreed that no changes in these spaces or procedures are needed. The remaining 51 specially designated spots include visitors (29) as well as spots for M&O, resident life, police, mail and service vehicles. Of these 29 spots, the 2 service vehicle spots in front of Franco (Green 3) and Beaver (Blue 2) often

appear to be underused. In discussion, it was noted that these spots are reserved mainly for outside contractors who come to campus and are not usually used by our own M&O staff. Because these are the only 4 spots designated for this purpose, it is not recommended to remove or reduce the number of service vehicle parking spots.

**Table 1:**

Lot	General Parking	Handicapped	Medical	Faculty/Staff	Visitor	Other	Total
Green 1	179	4	0	0	0	0	183
Green 2	157	5	0	0	0	3	165
Green 3	141	0	2	0	5	2	150
Green 4	152	0	0	0	0	0	152
Green 5	259	0	0	0	0	0	259
Blue 1	0	6	1	99	16	0	122
Blue 2	0	5	2	73	8	2	90
Franco	0	0	0	34	0	0	34
Resident Halls	549	8	5	0	0	1	563
Clary Circle	0	3	0	2	0	5	10
Side BCC	0	0	0	10	0	0	10
Side Luerssen	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
JCC	53	2	0	0	0	0	55
Janssen	0	0	0	15	0	1	16
Cont. Ed	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1827</b>

**Safety & Regulation:**

Several concerns involving the safety & regulation of our parking lots was discussed. First, the speed of cars traveling on Harper road is concerning. Police services noted that this issue is minimized with their physical presence, however it is not feasible to always have one of our officers directing traffic. The two most common ways to reduce speed are perhaps speed bumps and “your speed” signs. M&O shared concerns however that speed bumps may be destroyed by snowplows over the winter and thus the installation and maintenance of speed bumps may be too costly. Thus, police services and this committee suggest looking into the purchase of a “your speed” sign to be installed on Harper road at the entrance to our campus. This hopefully will make

drivers more cognizant of their speeds as they enter the parking lots and may reduce the number of accidents that do occur in our lots. It was noted that speed and inattentiveness were the main factor in an incident that occurred during the Fall 2017 semester in which one of our G0-60 students was hit by a car.

Secondly, the number of students who are parking in visitor spots in the Luerssen lot has skyrocketed. The first row of spaces in this lot are not behind the gate, and many students are removing their parking placard and parking in visitor or other specially designated spots. This is particularly true on days in which there is bad weather. It was noted that on several occasions over the past few semesters, police services was notified that handicapped students were unable to find parking in this lot and thus were forced to miss their classes. The solution to this problem seems to be better regulation of this lot instead of making more spots handicapped. With better regulation, even if the current handicapped spots are filled, those needing handicapped parking would still be able to park in empty visitor parking spaces. Further, faculty and staff who use the Luerssen parking lot have recently noticed many near-collision episodes involving student drivers as they maneuver their way through the non-gated portion of this lot. Police services did explain that they have tried to combat inappropriate parking through the hiring of interns from our criminal justice degree program. It should be noted that vehicles parked inappropriately are fined \$20 and that all money collected from parking tickets is given to the student activities fee. In addition, students are allowed 3 parking tickets per semester before being referred to the office of campus life for further consequences. It was noted that this progression happens “a lot” and can also be followed by state citations. Although found in the student handbook, police services also suggest including parking procedures and regulations in our First Year Seminar curriculum.

Lastly, the county of Berks has notified our police services that many individuals from our campus are inappropriately parking in the Grings Mill parking lot. Perhaps this was of most concern during the Luerssen lot renovation (Summer 2017), however this could become an even bigger issue with better regulation of the Luerssen lot. The tickets issued at Gring’s Mill are issued by Berks County and not Penn State Berks. Police services also suggests that better communication to the campus community about this regulation may be necessary.

It should also be noted that Penn State Berks is one of the only campuses that does not charge students or staff for parking. This committee suggests that this practice continues. Finally, over the past several years better and more lighting has been installed in campus lot. At this time, no further action on lightening is deemed necessary.

To summarize, the committee recommends the following:

- No need to increase the number or change the designation of any parking spots on campus
- The use of a “your speed” sign to be installed on Harper road at the entrance to our campus
- Increased regulation of inappropriate parking in the non-gated portion of the Luerssen parking lot
- Including parking procedures and regulations in our First Year Seminar curriculum



**CAMPUS BUILDINGS**

- 1. **Alumni Pavilion**
- 2. **Athletic Storage**
- 3. **Beaver Community Center**  
Athletics  
Kinesiology
- 4. **France Building**  
Academic Advising  
Bursar/Finance  
Disability Services  
INFORMATION  
Registrar
- 5. **Geige Technology and Business Innovation Building**  
Academic Affairs  
Cyber Café
- 6. **Hintz Athletic Fields**
- 7. **Janssen Conference Center**  
Institutional Planning, Research and Assessment Meeting Rooms
- 8. **Janssen Office Building**  
Alumni Relations  
Chancellor's Office  
Office of Development  
University Relations
- 9. **Kevelson Memorial Pavilion**
- 10. **Labyrinth Garden**
- 11. **Laarson Building**  
Information Technology Services  
PEPP  
Police Services
- 12. **Peiffer Farm**  
Greenhouses  
Maintenance Building
- 13. **Peiffer House**  
Business Office  
Human Resources  
Maintenance and Operations  
SE Regional Cooperative Extension

- 14. **Perkins Student Center**  
Admissions  
Auditorium  
Career Services  
Counseling Services  
Financial Aid  
Freyberger Gallery  
Health Services  
Housing and Food Services  
Student Affairs  
Tully's
- 15. **Thun Library**  
Boacov-Lakin Information Commons  
IT Help Desk  
W.P.L. Gallery
- 16. **Williams Cottage**  
Continuing Education
- 17. **William G. Hintz Building**  
Bookstore

**RESIDENCE HALLS**

- 18. **The Woods Residence Halls**
  - a. Amber House
  - b. Poplar House
  - c. Willow House
  - d. Ivy House
  - e. Juniper House
  - f. Evergreen House
  - g. Peppercorn House
- 19. **The Village Residence Halls**
  - h. Cedar Hall
  - i. Greenbrier Hall
  - j. Sage Hall
  - k. Bowman Hall
  - l. Laurel Hall
  - m. Oakmoor Hall
  - n. Sweetbriar Hall