



Emory University Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Zoom Meeting

September 21, 2021

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Attendees: Octavian Ioachimescu, Alicia DeNicola, Allison Burdette, Aryeh Stein, Ashima Lal, Carlos Moreno, Caroline Driebe, Christa Acampora, Dawn Comeau, Donna Maney, Doug Bowman, Elena Pesavento, Erin Wells Bonning, Felicia Smith, Florian Pohl, George Shepherd, Giacomo Negro, Gregory Fenves, Gustavo Pradilla, Hashem Dezhbakhsh, Holly York, Joy McDougall, Kamina Pinder, Kate Yeager, Kimber Williams, Lynne Nygaard, Melissa Daly, Michael Elliott, Modele Ogunniyi, Munish Luthra, Nick Everage, Patrick Sullivan, Rachelle Spell, Ravi Bellamkonda, Richard Castillo, Sidney Stein, Susan Ray, Theresa Milazzo, Tim Holbrook, Ulemu Luhanga, Vaidy Sunderam Victoria Pak, Grace Goh

Excused Absences: Michael Epstein

Unexcused Absences: Tom Clark, David Howard, John Petros, Dilek Huseynzadegan, Erin Tarver, Salmon Shomade, Jodie Guest, Rkia Cornell, Curtis Henry, Nitika Gupta

I. Welcome and Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes, Octavian Ioachimescu, Faculty Council Chair

Dr. Donna Maney moved to approve the consent agenda; Dr. Carlos Moreno seconded the motion. The motion carried.

II. Introduction, Octavian Ioachimescu, Faculty Council Chair

The Chair of the Faculty Council, Octavian Ioachimescu, welcomed new and returning University Faculty Council members and gave an overview of the structure and function of the Council. The 2021-2022 agenda topics will focus on the academic, economic, and financial impacts of COVID-19; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Toward Faculty Eminence and Engagement; Master Planning; Dependent Care; the Faculty Club; Wellness, Wellbeing and Resilience (the latter being the major theme of the academic year's Council Agenda).

Dr. Ioachimescu then shared some personal reflections of relevance to the moment. This month, he reflected on the 20th anniversary of the 9/11/2001 attacks, and the importance of being adaptive and flexible, building resilience, working on wellbeing and wellness, avoiding personal and professional burnout.

III. President's Update, Gregory Fenves, President

President Gregory Fenves updated the Faculty Council on a few changes in University leadership, notably that Dr. Ravi Bellamkonda has been appointed as the new Provost, and Dr. Kimberly Jacob Arriola was appointed as the new Dean of Laney Graduate School. Senior Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs David Sandor has stepped down, and the Office of Communications and Public Affairs has been split into the Office of Public Affairs (headed by Vice President of Government and Community Affairs, Cameron Taylor), and the Office of Communications and Marketing (with VP Taylor being the Interim). Also, Cheryl Elliot has come out of retirement to take over the reins as new Chief of Police at Emory Police Department.



University COVID-19 response: In-person teaching resumed with full compliments from students, despite the Delta variant surge. Emory is a nearly fully-vaccinated community — 97% students, 92% faculty and staff; those who are not vaccinated must test weekly. Emory’s priority has moved from reducing transmission to reducing illness; vaccines and specific mitigating policies in place have proven to be effective in this regard, since a majority of faculty, staff, and students who were infected were either asymptomatic or exhibited mild symptoms. There is very little evidence of transmission on campus and in the classrooms; contact-tracing procedures show that most transmission is happening off-campus. President Fenves expressed his appreciation for everyone who contributed to a safe and successful return to campus.

2036 Capital campaign: President Fenves is planning to announce the 2036 Capital Campaign to the public next month. This campaign began in 2018 with a \$4 billion goal; successfully raised \$2.5 billions so far. It was named for the Bicentennial Anniversary of Emory University and is slated to conclude in 2025. The three foci of this campaign are Student Success, Faculty Eminence and Research Excellence. The goal is to raise half a billion dollars for student scholarships (across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs) to promote diverse recruitment and enrollment. The goal for Faculty Excellence is to double the number of endowed positions to catch up with peer institutions. Five signature themes for Research Excellence: Student Success, Social and Racial Justice, Health Sciences, Cancer, and Computing & Data (e.g., Artificial Intelligence).

IV. Introduction of University Provost, Ravi Bellamkonda, Provost

Dr. Ioachimescu formally introduced the new Provost, Dr. Ravi Bellamkonda. Provost Ravi emphasized his full support for faculty and student success, broadly defined. Fundraising efforts and policy development are all aimed at supporting “moments of magic” for students and faculty in their research. Provost Bellamkonda also lauded the efforts of faculty to ensure academic continuity for students during the pandemic, moving education online swiftly, as well as going above and beyond to support students in quarantine.

V. Vice Provost for Libraries and Carlos Museum – Search Update, Michael Elliott, Dean of Emory College of Arts and Sciences, Selection Committee Chair

This is an inaugural position in the University, bringing together multiple reporting streams from the libraries and Carlos Museum under a single Vice Provost. The goal is to leverage common strengths of both the libraries and museum to increase their impact on the community, as well as to better support the teaching and research missions of Emory. The search committee held multiple listening sessions with library and museum staff, as well as external bodies to listen to concerns and aspirations of staff from both institutions.

Leadership profile developed for recruitment and vetting of candidates is available [here](#). The delineated priorities are advancing teaching and research, creating a culture of respect and collaboration, advancing the work of DEI, managing resources well and engage in fundraising. The search committee reviewed about 45 profiles in August, and recently conducted semi-finalist interviews, culminating in a set of recommended candidates to bring to campus for interviews and meetings with key stakeholders. Dean



Elliott remarked that our prominence as a collecting institution has increased over the past few years, and he is very pleased about quality of candidates that we attracted.

VI. University Research Committee (URC) Report, Carlos Moreno, Co-Chair

Dr. Moreno reported that URC recently developed a new submission portal to help with submissions and review process, to generate automated email surveys for awardees, as well as to track projects over the award period and how these awards helped faculty obtain more funding. Continued partnership with Halle Institute for Global Research Partnership to supplement funds for projects with a global focus.

Last year, the largest number of proposals came from Humanities and Biological Sciences, with a total of 53 applicants. Approximately 37.5% of the applicants were in Assistant Professor rank; 56.6% of applicants were women, and 20.8% were from Historically Under-Represented Groups. Awards given were proportional to applications received, with a total amount of \$840,000 (10% was from Halle, the remainder from the Office of the Provost). Recipient of the 2021 Senior Levy Award was Dr. Raul Nogueira for developing a new paradigm for the treatment of stroke, and the recipient for the 2021 Junior Levy Award was Dr. Dorian Lamis for key insights into suicidal behavior and identification of specific genetic and epigenetic factors.

The number of applications has been decreasing, possibly due to insufficient awareness. Current efforts by the URC include planning to increase outreach by utilizing the all-faculty listserv; deploying a faculty feedback form to identify barriers to applying for URC funding; refine newly implemented “Impact of URC funding” surveys and processes; as well as looking into increasing the current maximum funding amount per award (the current maximum is \$30k per award, \$40k for interdisciplinary projects).

Applications for URC funding open on October 1, with a deadline of January 14; reviews take place in February and March; funding decisions announced in April; award period begins in June. Nominations for the Levy Award are accepted from Jan 11 through Feb 22.

Suggestions from the audience included: presentations (live or recorded) from the URC to academic units and professional schools to increase awareness; additional analyses of specific hurdles by various schools and faculty ranks in order to provide targeted support; symposia for award recipients to present their project findings; publishing a list of reviewers from different schools might reassure applicants that their projects are being appraised from peer reviewers in their respective field or discipline.

VII. Update on University Fringe Benefits, Sidney Stein, Chair of University Senate Fringe Benefits Committee (guest); Theresa Milazzo, Vice President of Human Resources; and Felicia Smith, Assistant Vice President of Benefits and Work Life

Auto-enrollment for university employees was approved and will begin in Fall 2022; Extension of parental leave from 3 weeks to 6 weeks still under consideration; Creation of leave for elder care was approved.

Changes to retirement plan fund lineup had been planned for implementation in May 2020. However, these changes were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting uncertainty of the financial environment. Class action lawsuit settlement in March 2021 required Emory to retain an independent consultant to review investment structure and make recommendations. The Emory Pension Board has



engaged CAPTRUST to assist with plan structure, fund selection, and investment oversight. CAPTRUST is an independent consultant specializing in higher ed and healthcare organizations, and their fees are paid by Emory, not investment companies.

Current University 403(b) plan has 3 vendors: Fidelity, TIAA, and Vanguard, providing 72 vendor-specific investment options organized into 4 tiers: Lifecycle, Core, Expanded, and Brokerage Window. The default vendor is Vanguard, and the default fund selection is the Vanguard Target Retirement Fund with the maturity date closest to the year the participant turns 65. Last major changes occurred in 2007.

Primary goal of changing the 403(b) plan is better retirement preparation for employees through a fund menu that is streamlined and easier to understand and navigate. New “open architecture” vendor platforms allow for recordkeeping for funds outside their vendor fund families (meaning that with a few exceptions, employees are no longer restricted to investment funds that match their selected vendor). The fund lineup was selected and monitored by CAPTRUST and is now organized by type of fund: target retirement/lifecycle (Allocation tier; least involved), index funds (Passive tier), actively managed funds (Active tier), and Brokerage Window (most involved).

Employees can select where to invest in the new investment menu or use the brokerage window to keep current funds that are not supported in the new menu. If no action taken by November 1, funds will be mapped to similar funds in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Next steps for faculty are to review detailed information on website, and call vendor if appropriate. Beginning October 1, the new fee structure will have flat recordkeeping fees, meaning the cost for administration does not increase as your balance in investment funds increases. Since this is charged by vendor, it would benefit employees to move all assets to a single vendor, so you are only paying one fee per quarter.

There are several planned webinars and a Senate townhall interactive session next month to answer questions and assist faculty in their retirement fund allocations.

VIII. Executive session

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16pm.