



**Emory University Faculty Council minutes**

**February 18, 2025**

**3:00 – 5:00 pm**

**Convocation Hall, rm 208**

**Attendees:**

George Shepherd, Gregory President Fenves, Lanny Liebeskind, Pearl Dowe, Noelle McAfee, Lisa Parker, Kurt Warncke, Michelle Lampl, Roberto Franzosi, Jehu Hanciles, Jodie Guest, Florian Pohl, Harold Simon, Jennifer Stapel-Wax, Kajal Patel, Jeffery Lichtman, Benn Konsynski, Lars Ruthotto, Anne Marie McKenzie-Brown, Tom Rogers, Erin Tarver, Emmanuel Lartey Aryeh Stein, Usha Rackliffe, Ashima Lal, Kylie Smith, Dabney Evans

**Excused Absents:** Sean Meighoo, Sasha Volokh, Eric Lonsdorf, Andrew Sherrill, Babak Mahmoudi, Karen Sedatole, Edjah Nduom, Hashem Dezhbakhsh, Salom Shomade, Phillip Wolff, Roger Deal, Nichole Powell,

**Summary**

The meeting covered several key topics, including the approval of minutes, updates from standing committees, and a presentation on graduate education. The Faculty Life Committee discussed the need for a Faculty Enrichment Center, highlighting a survey with 86% of faculty lacking dedicated collaboration spaces. President Fenves addressed the impact of federal funding cuts, including a potential \$140 million reduction in NIH funding and the endowment tax, which could increase to \$90 million. He emphasized the importance of maintaining Emory's research and education mission, particularly in undergraduate education. The discussion also touched on the challenges posed by recent Office for Civil Rights directives on racial distinctions and affirmative action. The meeting discussed the development of a slide set on FNA for faculty, emphasizing the need to change language from "direct research costs" to "support research costs." Concerns were raised about upcoming cuts, a potential tax increase, and a new directive contradicting Supreme Court rulings on race. The faculty council was urged to engage in decision-making processes and suggested regular updates from the administration to alleviate anxiety. The importance of transparent communication and the impact on pre-tenure colleagues and funding were highlighted. The need for a comprehensive conversation about funding issues and the provost search process was emphasized, with a call for more faculty involvement in decision-making.



## Potential Action Items

- [ ] Pause the implementation of the reduction in PhD student funding to 12 months until the new Provost can evaluate the landscape and engage with faculty.
- [ ] Reach out to the Faculty Life Committee chair to help fill in the historical context and previous efforts around a faculty space/club.
- [ ] Consider putting names forward to serve as President of the Senate and Chair of the Faculty Council in upcoming years.
- [ ] Coordinate with the administration on how faculty can help communicate the importance of indirect cost recovery (F&A) to Congress.

## Outline

### Consent Items and Meeting Agenda

- Speaker 1 outlines the meeting agenda, including approval of minutes, standing committee updates, and a presentation on graduate education changes.
- President Fenves is expected to arrive at 4 PM to discuss developments in higher education and federal government directives affecting universities.
- Speaker 1 mentions a guidance letter from the Office for Civil Rights regarding affirmative action and racial distinctions, which could impact university policies.
- The meeting will include an Executive Session to discuss appropriate responses to these developments.

### Approval of Minutes and Standing Committee Updates

- The minutes from the January 21 faculty council meeting are approved without opposition.
- George Shepherd (Speaker 1) introduces the next agenda item, standing committee updates, and invites committee heads to present.
- Ashima Lal (Speaker 11), representing the School of Medicine, introduces herself and discusses the Faculty Life Committee's efforts to advocate for a Faculty Enrichment Center.
- The survey results indicate that 86% of faculty do not have a dedicated space for collaboration, and most faculty are on campus daily.

### Faculty Enrichment Center Survey Results

- Speaker 11 presents the survey results, highlighting the need for a centralized space for faculty collaboration, meetings, and food.
- The survey showed that most faculty would use the space during lunch hours, with some interest in after-hours use.



- Subsidized dining and a variety of amenities, such as coffee, tea, and computing stations, were identified as important factors for faculty use.
- Speaker 1 questions the practicality of the survey results and suggests looking at experiences from other institutions with similar centers.

### **Discussion on Faculty Enrichment Center and Next Steps**

- Speaker 11 mentions that Brandeis and Chicago have documented success with similar centers, focusing on food and collaboration.
- Noelle McAfee inquiries about the university's commitment to the center and the potential competition with students for space.
- Speaker 11 acknowledges no formal commitment but mentions interest and exploration of potential spaces.
- Jehu Hanciles, Noelle McAfee and George Shepherd discuss with Ashima Lal the historical context and previous efforts to establish a faculty club, emphasizing the need for a new provost to support the initiative.

**Call for Faculty Council Leadership** George Shepherd encourages faculty to consider running for President of the Senate and Chair of the Faculty Council.

- Noelle McAfee talks about the role of Secretary to the Senate, and Jodie Guest explains the responsibilities, including committee placement.
- Speaker 1 introduces the next presentation on changes in graduate education, emphasizing Emory's strong graduate education programs.

### **Presentation on Graduate Education- PhD Funding Crisis and Faculty Engagement**

- Tamara Caspary (Speaker 21) and colleagues discuss the challenges of reducing institutional support for PhD students and the impact on faculty engagement and training capacity.
- Speaker 21 outlines the PhD funding crisis, including the reduction of institutional support to 12 months and the potential increase in costs.
- The survey results show that faculty will disengage from PhD training if support is not maintained, leading to a decrease in training capacity and prestige.
- Speaker 21 emphasizes the need for a university-wide policy to support graduate students and faculty.



## President Fenves' Address on Higher Education Challenges

- President Fenves addresses the challenges facing higher education, including the reduction in NIH funding and the recent guidance letter from the Office for Civil Rights.
- President Fenves emphasizes the importance of Emory's research and education mission and the need to navigate the changing landscape.
- The reduction in NIH funding could result in a \$140 million revenue loss for Emory, and the endowment tax could increase significantly.
- President Fenves outlines the university's efforts to advocate for research funding and support faculty and students through these changes.

## FNA Slide Set and Language Changes

- Jodie Guest, talks about the development of a slide set on FNA for the general population, aimed at helping faculty communicate effectively with representatives and senators.
- President Fenves suggests changing the language from "direct research costs" to "support research costs" to make it more understandable and emphasize the importance of these costs.

## Q&A and Faculty Concerns

- Speaker 8 asks if the challenges are part of a political cycle or a longer-term structural shift, and President Fenves responds that it is a longer-term issue.
- Harold Simon inquires about the impact on large academic healthcare centers, and President Fenves acknowledges the potential Medicaid cutbacks.
- Jehu Hanciles raises concerns about balancing the university's mission with compliance with new directives, and President Fenves acknowledges the challenge.
- Dabney Evans asks about supporting non-tenured faculty and diversifying funding sources, and President Fenves emphasizes the importance of maintaining undergraduate education and exploring new funding opportunities.
- Concerns Over Upcoming Challenges
  - Need for Better Communication
  - Maintaining Principles Amidst Challenges
  - Impact on Pre-Tenure Colleagues
  - Concerns About Funding and Provost Search
  - Weekly Updates and Communication Strategy
  - Faculty Council Communication and Accountability
  - Final Thoughts and Next Steps



## Final Remarks

- President Fenves reiterates the importance of maintaining Emory's mission and supporting faculty and students through these changes.
- Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 emphasize the need for clear communication and strategic thinking to address these challenges.
- President Fenves calls for faculty to help communicate the importance of FNA and support the university's advocacy efforts.
- The meeting concludes with a call to action for faculty to engage and support the university through these challenging times.
- Speaker 1 thanks everyone for their participation and reminds them of the next Senate Meeting.

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