



Emory University Faculty Council minutes

March 18, 2025

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Convocation Hall, rm 208 (in person)

Attendees:

George Shepherd, Gregory President Fennes, Lanny Liebeskind, Pearl Dowe, Noelle McAfee, Lisa Parker, Roberto Franzosi, Jodie Guest, Harold Simon, Jennifer Stapel-Wax, Kajal Patel, Jeffery Lichtman, Benn Konsynski, Lars Ruthotto, Anne Marie McKenzie-Brown, Tom Rogers, Erin Tarver, Emmanuel Lartey Edjah Nduom, Ashima Lal, Kylie Smith, Dabney Evans, , Sean Meighoo, Sasha Volokh, Eric Lonsdorf, Andrew Sherrill, Babak Mahmoudi, Kurt Warncke,

Excused Absents: Michelle Lampl, Karen Sedatole, Aryeh Stein, Salom Shomade, Phillip Wolff, Roger Deal, Nichole Powell, Hashem Dezhbakhsh, Florian Pohl, Jehu Hanciles, Usha Rackliffe

Outline

Opening Remarks and Historical Parallels

- George Shepherd begins the meeting by noting it is the penultimate meeting of the faculty council, with one more meeting in April.
- Giving remarks, drawing a parallel between the current political climate and the McCarthyism era of the 1950s.
- The speaker discusses how institutions in the 1950s complied with government demands to fire and punish people for their speech, which led to a permanent stain on their reputations.
- The speaker warns that similar actions are being taken now, with the government threatening universities like Columbia University with financial penalties if they do not expel certain students and prohibit certain speech.

University Reputation and Free Expression

- The speaker emphasizes the importance of universities maintaining their reputation for promoting free debate and expression.



- Universities are urged to act now to ensure they do not lose their essence as places of ideas and debate.
- The speaker highlights the need for universities to be flexible in cooperating with legitimate concerns of the administration but not to the point of breaking their fundamental values.
- The speaker expresses satisfaction with Emory's current approach, which balances flexibility and strength.

Approval of Consent Items and Standing Committee Updates

- The minutes from the February 18 meeting are approved without opposition.
- Standing committee updates are provided, beginning with the printing of Ruby Lal's Distinguished Faculty Lecture
- Lanny Liebeskind, Interim Provost, is invited to present an update on the Office of the Provost.

Provost's Update on Institutional Risks and Priorities

- Interim Provost Liebeskind discusses the guiding principles of the Office of the Provost, emphasizing a complimentary approach of dispassion and compassion.
- The speaker outlines four major institutional risks: legal, financial, reputational, and operational.
 - Funding Challenges and Strategic Priorities
 - Public Messaging and Congressional Advocacy
 - Graduate Student Funding Model and Faculty Concerns
 - Open Expression Policy and Faculty Concerns
- Emory's steps to mitigate these risks include critical and thoughtful analysis, alignment with current law, and prudent financial management.
- The speaker highlights the importance of strategic problem-solving through partnerships across units.



Overview

The Faculty Council meeting discussed the impact of government threats on academic freedom, drawing parallels to the McCarthy era. The administration faces a \$400 million funding cut unless Columbia University expels certain students and restricts speech. The council emphasized the importance of maintaining free debate and expression. The provost outlined institutional risks, including legal, financial, reputational, and operational risks, and proposed mitigation strategies. A resolution was tabled to reconsider a new 12-month funding model for graduate students, citing concerns about its impact on education and funding. The meeting concluded with a commitment to further discussion in April.

Action Items

- [] Invite the Dean of the Graduate School and the authors of the resolution to the April meeting to provide more information and context.
- [] Obtain and distribute the PowerPoint presentation from the previous meeting on the graduate funding model change.
- [] Encourage the provision of written information from relevant parties ahead of the April meeting to allow for advance consideration.

Executive Session and Closing Remarks

- The meeting transitions to an executive session for further discussion and decision-making.