

**Austin Peay State University Faculty Senate  
Meeting of Thursday, August 26, 2021  
Morgan University Center, Rm # 307 | 3:00 pm  
Minutes**

**Call to order** – Senate President Jane Semler

**Recognition of Guests:** President Michael Licari, Provost Maria Cronley, Vice Provost Lynne Crosby, Soma Banerjee, Carol Baskauf, Adriane Sanders, James Thompson, and Tim Winters

**Roll call of Senators** – Senate Secretary Gina Garber

**Absent Senators:** Michael Dickins, Sue Evans, Alex King, Sergei Markov, Marcia Schilling, and Antonio Thompson

**Approval of today’s agenda** – motion made, seconded, and passed to approve a friendly amendment to the agenda to add President Semler’s name as the presenter of the University Strategic Plan under New Business, number 4 – Approved by acclamation – **Agenda is approved**

**Approval of minutes from May 6, 2021 meeting** – motion made, seconded, and passed to approve meeting minutes

**Remarks**

1. **Senate President Jane Semler (5 minutes)** President Semler led the Faculty Senate and guests in a moment of silence in memory of Kristi Wenzler who recently passed away.

President Semler welcomed everyone back on campus and to the first Faculty Senate meeting. She has been contacted by many senators with pleasant words of encouragement. She reminded us that we are all dedicated to what we do best, and that is teaching. We are changing lives one day at a time. Additionally, she reminded us that our mission is the University’s mission. She will be actively working with the University Steering Committee and the Academic Affairs Steering Committee this year to assist in developing new mission and vision statements. President Semler encourages us to remain hopeful and vigilant. She recognizes that we may have some rocky days ahead. Remember that our students and colleagues need us.

**Campus Events** President Semler encouraged everyone to attend a few upcoming events.

- Flood Relief Effort for Middle Tennessee lead by the Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement are going to the Dickson YMCA
- The New Gallery at Austin Peay opens “recent Acquisitions” exhibit
- Women’s Soccer Team will play on Friday and Sunday
- Annual Constitution Day September 17 with guest speaker
- Women’s Tennis
- APSU Football Game

- Regional Marching Band Contest
- CoSTEM Scholars

President Semler invites you to submit your events or news in your area to her and she will mention them at the Faculty Senate meetings.

2. **University President Dr. Michael Licari (10 minutes)** President Licari welcomed the senators and guests to a new year at Austin Peay. He let us know how exciting it has been on campus to see students participating in activities. He reminded us that we are here for our students and to educate them. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is meeting regularly discussing COVID. He let us know that he and President Semler are communicating about COVID and that he reactivated the COVID Command Team to be able to provide communication and transparency to everyone. He recognizes that the language on the website has been inconsistent and he wants that to improve. President Licari used the UC Plaza as an example where students can spread out. However, the tent is there temporarily and is costing \$10,000 for our use. The University is trying to have an outdoor structure there until mid-October. He wants our students to be able to spread out and have a good experience as well.

University Strategic Plan: President Licari reiterated President Semler’s comments about the University’s Strategic Plan efforts. He is excited to see what the environmental scan results will bring and he encourages everyone to complete the survey. He mentioned that he is committed to the strategic planning work being engaging and transparent. He said that he wants the plan to be built from the bottom up, not from the top down with the SLT dictating how it will look. Our input is very important.

Flood Relief: President Licari encouraged anyone who can participate in the flood relief effort on Saturday, to do so or donate items like personal hygiene items.

Unsolicited Student Email: Dr. Licari ended his remarks by reading an unsolicited email from a student who was thankful for their experience at Austin Peay. “I wanted to ensure that all my professors knew that I was willing to put in as much hard work into their classes as they put their own hard work in developing me as a student.” This student will graduate in December. This student thanked the APSU Community.

3. **University Provost Dr. Maria Cronley (10 minutes)** Provost Cronley greeted the Faculty Senate and let everyone know how exciting the first day of class was for her. Although she has been at APSU for a while, she let the senators and guests know that this feels like her first year at APSU. She acknowledged that we have challenges and obstacles ahead of us, but she feels confident that we can meet them. Provost Cronley read an inspiring message that Dean Mickey Hepner sent to the College of Business faculty. The gist of the message is that we are facing this storm together.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan: Provost Cronley addressed the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan efforts and noted that we are working in parallel with the University Strategic Planning efforts. Academic Affairs hosted faculty focus groups and then sent a call for membership out to either self-nominate or nominate a colleague to assist in

developing a strategic master plan. She thanked the faculty who participated. They are in the process of creating this committee. Also, she said that President Semler will be serving on both committees. Provost Cronley said it is important to have a diverse set of voices that represents all of Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs Policies: Academic Affairs is also working on a comprehensive review of our policies because of the review dates. These policies will be coming to Faculty Senate for review and approval.

Governance: Provost Cronley was happy that Faculty Senate will be looking at other governance items this year and thanked President Semler for speaking about these at the Faculty Meeting and taking on these issues. She recapped President Semler's plan to look at the following four areas:

- Study course evaluation tool and weight in the RTP process
- Study course continuity policy to include requirements for LMS (ex. Gradebook, syllabus, etc. Ties to the faculty handbook and what is enforceable)
- Develop a progressive faculty performance improvement plan
- Study the faculty annual evaluation tool

SACSCOC: Provost Cronley said we will continue to work on the SACSCOC reaffirmation process. We are making sure we are filling in any gaps that we have. Additionally, she will be reporting on our process throughout the year during her remarks to the Faculty Senate.

CAFÉ: Austin Peay has officially launched the Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) to support the professional development, enrichment, and growth of our faculty. Students benefit from it, but the CAFÉ is aimed at us, the faculty. Dr. Cronley thanked Melissa Kates for her work.

Faculty Hiring Plans: Provost Cronley is working to finalize the department hiring plans for faculty. This would allow us to begin searches to hire faculty for fall 2022. Currently she anticipates 33 fall faculty searches, 29 tenure track positions and 4 instructor positions. Academic Affairs will also be hiring staff replacements for those who have retired or moved on to other positions outside of the university.

Enrollment: Provost Cronley reported that enrollment continues to be under stress at Austin Peay. She mentioned a few bright spots of new students are slightly up from last year, including new freshman who are up 2%, and new graduate students are up 29%. However, continuing students are down from last year and almost 10% down from the year before. Provost Cronley explained some of the reasoning behind the numbers. For example, the number of high school graduates are down in recent years. Freshman retention is not great, but ok. This year, Austin Peay did not drop students for nonpayment and non-confirmation the day before classes started. Provost Cronley says this causes stress for everyone. She wanted us to know that if students are not showing up on your rosters, we need to report it to the Registrar. Faculty can do this in OneStop. A drop for non-confirmation will happen on September 5 because it is a federal

requirement that we have to follow. Austin Peay is trying to identify these students to help keep them in school. We have ways we can help our students.

**Motion made to extend time by 5 minutes moved, seconded, and passed**

Questions and Answers:

**Q:** What is the current enrollment?

**A:** 9,571

**Q:** COVID FAQs - If a student who tested positive is in a class, faculty are not required to notify the other students. What if faculty decided to notify students?

**A:** We recommend that you do not notify your students because we do not want to take a risk in violating FERPA laws. Students would figure it out in a smaller class setting. We would be taking a risk to provide that information about a student. Students should notify others if they were exposed.<sup>1</sup>

**Q:** Can the university be sued if a student gets ill and the faculty doesn't notify the students about a potential exposure?

**A:** President Licari will look into this. However, he doesn't think this example sets the university up for a law suit.

**Motion made to extend time by 5 minutes moved, seconded, and passed**

**Q:** It's not responsible for Austin Peay not to have some type of contact tracing program. They don't know if they have been exposed, they have extended family they could potentially expose; is it wise for us not to have some type of contact tracing program?

**A:** President Licari said these were good questions. He was going to consult with others and bring these issues back up with the Faculty Senate.

**Comment:** The COVID Team was thanked by a senator for their work.

**Q:** What happens if adjunct faculty test positive, how should this be handled?

**A:** It is handled in the same manner as when any faculty member becomes ill. Many of these issues are unique and need to be worked out with your department chair. You could be teaching in person, remotely, or a combination of both.

**Q:** What is the difference between a Normal Mode of Operation vs. a Moderate Mode of Operation? How do we decide on this level?

**A:** President Licari said there is no magic number, but a variety of factors that Austin Peay takes into consideration. This is challenging to modulate when you are boxed in. It's important to take a more flexible approach at this time.

Thank You: President Semler thanked our guests. She let the senators know that our colleagues are going to be looking at us for leadership and guidance. She said it might

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Cronley, email message to faculty and staff, August 27, 2021. "One particular question arose this week and was subsequently discussed in Faculty Senate: Are faculty members required to tell the class if a fellow classmate tested positive? Senior Leadership Team had discussed a similar topic earlier yesterday as well. The short answer here is no. And, an important qualifier is that faculty should never share the specific identity of a student who has tested positive. Faculty, feel free to share with your class in such a scenario, if you wish, that students may have been in contact with someone who has been exposed or tested positive, alerting them to self-monitor for symptoms. Remember that if a student reaches out to you with news of a positive test, please remind them to complete the COVID-19 Self-Reporting form, which should be linked in your syllabus (within the supplement I shared with you a few weeks ago). For more information, see the recently revised frequently asked questions page on the APSU COVID-19 web page."

be rocky at times, but we need to pull together to make the best decisions for our faculty. Additionally, she said there is a lot of work ahead for us and we will strive in making the best decisions we can.

### **New Business:**

1. Academic Regulations for Degree Completion (information item) – Senate President Jane Semler (2 minutes): President Semler approved over the summer. It needed to get into the bulletin because of inconsistencies regarding second degrees.

#### Questions and Answers:

**Q:** Is this about concentrations or degrees?

**A:** It's about both.

**Q:** How does this work if a student who is working on a BA in music composition, but wants to get a second BA degree in music education, but it is the same degree?

**A:** President Semler said she will look into this for the senator.

President Semler said the change in this policy will stand.

2. Inactivation of Ombuds Position (information item) – Senate President Jane Semler (2 minutes)

President Semler reported that the ombuds position has been an ongoing issue for Faculty Senate. Last year the Faculty Senate Executive Committee agreed we would not fill the position at this time. This position is problematic for many reasons. The position should not be serving in other roles. Additionally, we have questions like this one: Will this person serve the staff and students as well?

#### **Motion made to extend time by 2 minutes moved, seconded, and passed**

President Semler let the Faculty Senate know that since this position was created, the university has put in place services and offices (Office of Equity, Access & Inclusion and Human Resources) that can assist personnel. Faculty Senate can always revisit bringing the ombuds back.

3. APSU 7:012 Social Media Policy (information item) – Senate President Jane Semler (10 minutes) The Public Relations & Marketing office is responsible for this policy. President Semler has received many comments regarding the proposed language. We are inviting Bill Persinger, Executive Director of Public Relations & Marketing, Corey Harkey, University Attorney, and Blayne Clements, Chief Audit Officer, to the Faculty Senate meeting scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss this policy. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee encourages you to provide feedback at on the Austin Peay State University Policy webpage. Go to <https://www.apsu.edu/policy/index.php> and select Pending Policies. Scroll down to read 7:012 Social Media Policy. Scroll down further to leave your feedback.

**Austin Peay State University Policy**

Austin Peay State University supports the development and periodic review of University policies as stated in policy 0:001 Policy Administration. APSU policies enhance the University's mission, promote operational efficiencies, reduce institutional risk, and provide an understanding of the University's expectations for operation. APSU policies must be in accordance with local, state, federal regulations.

Policy Overview | Policy Procedures | Pending Policies | Recent Policy Approvals | Policy FAQ | Dress Code

The following policy changes are submitted for University review and comment. For policy revisions, a clean version and a marked version of the policy are available for your review. A comment form can be found at the bottom of the page for comments and questions to be submitted.

**Select Pending Policies**

**Scroll down the page to find University Policy Feedback**

**New Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY NAME	COMMENT DEADLINE
7:012	Social Media Policy <span style="color: red;">New Policy</span>	September 7, 2021

**Deleted Policies**

POLICY NUMBER	POLICY NAME	COMMENT DEADLINE
1:014	Classifying Students In-State & Out-of-State for Purposes of Paying Fees & Tuition & for Admissions Purposes <span style="color: red;">Policy</span> (The official rule that the policy mirrors will be placed on the Policy website.)	September 7, 2021

**University Policy Feedback**

Name\*

Email Address\*

Policy being referenced\*

Please Select

Questions or Comments about Policy(ies)

Submit Clear

Questions and Answers:

**Q:** Who is policing this?

**A:** President Semler did not have the answer at this time.

**Comment:** Based off of Provost's Cronley's current number of enrolled students, if each student posted just one post on the five big social media networks, there would be 47,855 posts. We have more important issues to address than policing up social media. This number is just the students.

**Comment:** President Semler said she contacted the Staff Senate President Jerica Swiger and the student Government Association President Kito Aruh regarding this policy.

**Q:** Many faculty have expressed concern about policy. Can we invite faculty to our next Faculty Senate meeting in September?

**A:** Yes, invite them. Faculty are always invited to our meetings.

**Comment:** I appreciate President Semler's comments as well as President Licari's and Provost Cronley's about banding together. This senator said the impression they got from their College is that we need to be careful about what we say about the university leadership and that it seemed insulting and condescending. We should be able to provide comments and suggestions without it being construed as negative or threatening to the leadership. If you don't have the opportunity to bring up a problem it can't be resolved.

**Motion made to extend time by 2 minutes moved, seconded, and passed**

**Q:** Was there an event that happened?

**A:** It's been mulling around for a while.

**Comment:** A guest at Faculty Senate commented that the policy was chilling and that we should have the right to speak our minds. Faculty Senate must encourage them to take this down.

4. Update on Strategic plan and Academic Affairs Strategic Plan – Senate President Jane Semler (5 minutes)

President Semler discussed the previous circular strategic plan and said that it didn't provide much meaning to many of us. She also said we have an opportunity to make changes. Some will be selected to serve on a subcommittee. She urged us to provide our thoughts to those serving on these committees. President Licari wants us to have a real mission with real values so we can say what and who we are. There are 14 members on the committee.

5. Faculty Senate Committee Assignments – (Action item) - Senate President Jane Semler (15 minutes) President Semler presented the Faculty Senate Committee assignments and recommended that we Suspend the Bylaws for the Faculty White Committee so we can add two more members, for a total of seven members. President Semler wants every college and the Library to be represented. However, the Bylaws state that there can be no more than five members. She said it is an important change because we wanted representation from everyone.

**Motion to suspend the Bylaws for the Faculty White Committee moved, seconded, and passed**

**Q:** What is their charge?

**A:** Develop a progressive faculty performance improvement plan for a less than desirable faculty performance. We want to have more control over this with our input and not leave it up to the leadership to make these decisions. For example, make small corrections for smaller issues.

**Q:** Would the Faculty Senate benefit by changing the Bylaws to increase the number of members to seven from five?

**A:** We should refer this to the Rules Committee for discussion. Additionally, President Semler pointed out that there are two dates for the committees to provide an interim report and a final report.

**Motion to refer changing the Bylaws to the Rules Committee moved, seconded, and passed**

## **Old Business**

1. Peer review process proposed revision (from 2020-21 faculty red committee) – Senate President Jane Semler (15 minutes)

President Semler said she would like to take a vote at the September Faculty Senate meeting on approving the general framework of the peer review process. Once we agree on the framework, it will be passed to the RTP Policy Committee so they can develop the language for it. The RTP Policy Committee would then present it back to us in January for us to vote on it.

**Motion to discuss voting on the framework at the September meeting moved, seconded, and passed**

**Comment:** Please look at the document. It's a major over-haul.

**Q:** Should we meet with our chairs to discuss this?

**A:** If you want to get their feedback, it is a great idea.

**Comments:** Logistically it can be a problem to get feedback from someone outside of my discipline. Making it happen in my College and the repercussions of not being able to have a colleague from my area is a potential problem.

**Comments:** There are two options. You can get two from your discipline or one in your discipline and one outside.

**Q:** Can we record a class instead of having it live?

**A:** That may be a good suggestion to bring forward. Talk it over with other people in your area. You might have enough flexibility.

**Q:** Is there a requirement for the rank of the observer?

**A:** It is not specified.

**Q:** We are not consistent across this campus so this could be a problem.

**A:** We are trying to move towards best practice with more uniformity on campus.

**Q:** Is this going to happen one way or another?

**A:** This is a sure thing. President Semler has assurance that as a package, this is the best thing we have to replace the weight of the student evaluations. However, they will still be there. Please bring your comments to the September meeting and give them to Gina Garber, Faculty Senate Secretary.

**Motion made, seconded, and passed to adjourn at 4:35 p.m.**

**Adjourn**