
**METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY of DENVER
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 16, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Marissa Molina, Chairwoman of the Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) Committee, called the ASA Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Board of Trustees Present: Trustee Marissa Molina, Trustee Kristin Hultquist, Trustee Jim Qualteri, Trustee Emily Garnett, Trustee & Chair Russell Noles, Trustee Albus Brooks, Trustee Mike Kopp, Trustee Jerry Glick, Trustee Olivia Mendoza, Faculty Senate Trustee Meredith Jeffers, and Student Trustee Gabriel Trujillo.

Absent: Mike Johnston.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the January 26, 2023, Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes. It was **moved by** Trustee Glick and **seconded by** Trustee Renwick Garnett to recommend approval of the January 26, 2023 ASA Committee meeting minutes. The motion was **approved unanimously**.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of New Program – Associate of General Studies Degree – Shaun Schafer, Interim Deputy Provost; AVP Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness, and Policy Development

The Colorado Reengagement House Bill (CORE), HB 21-1330, enables four-year institutions to offer associate degrees to students who have stopped out from a baccalaureate program after earning at least 70 credit hours, during the period of May 2012-Dec 2021. MSU Denver has identified 4,000 - 5,000 such students who are eligible for an associate degree. Associate degrees allow students to obtain higher paying jobs and help students return for bachelor's degrees.

Under certain circumstances, students who have stopped out of Metropolitan State University of Denver for at least one year in the past decade and not completed a bachelor's degree, may be eligible to receive an Associate of General Studies Degree from the university. Students are informed that they are eligible, and they can decide whether to apply for the degree; this allows students to have a fresh start.

It was **moved by** Board Chair Noles and **seconded by** Trustee Glick to recommend approval of the new program – Associate of General Studies Degree – to the Board of Trustees. The motion was **approved unanimously**.

Approval of Emeritus Status award to Dr. Renee Ruderman – Marie Mora, Provost Ad Interim

It was **moved by** Trustee Mendoza and **seconded by** Board Chair Noles to recommend approval of Emeritus Status for Dr. Ruderman to the Board of Trustees. The motion was **approved unanimously**.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Faculty Workload Update – Janine Davidson, President; Marie Mora, Provost Ad Interim, Academic Affairs; Meredith Jeffers, Faculty Trustee

In partnership with President Davidson, Dr. Mora and Dr. Jeffers presented an information session for the Board about the history and current landscape of the University's Faculty Workload issue. The landscape includes: Institutional Changes; Effective Teaching and Student Engagement; and Economic and External Factors.

Dr. Jeffers noted that institution's policies, procedures, and practices have not kept pace with how MSU Denver has grown.

President Davidson provided an overview of the history of the issue, emphasizing this is at least the fifth time that the issue has been brought forth by the Faculty, through one avenue or another (via Faculty Senate), for 15 years. None of these prior efforts (requests, committees, proposals, resolutions, etc.) have resulted in systemic change nor actionable practices for improvement. Thus, the issue has persisted and became exasperated during/by the pandemic.

President Davidson emphasized that what has come to light, particularly since the January 2023 Board of Trustees meeting, is that the Faculty 'side of the house' is out-of-sync with the Budget 'side of the house'.

She also stated that the Faculty's informal and formal expectations of the role of faculty, individually and collectively, are inconsistent (i.e. how such expectations are understood, put in practice).

Dr. Jeffers stated there has been a repeated call by Faculty since 2008 to reassess and reevaluate their teaching loads.

With the formation of the new cross-functional taskforce on faculty workload, in late February, President Davidson brought in consultant Mike Dumont of Pallas Advisors. Mr. Dumont, who was present at today's meeting, noted that based upon his conversations with stakeholders thus far, his biggest takeaway is the disconnect between Practice vs. Policy and Procedures – at the Chair level, Dean level, and President level.

Dr. Mora stressed that faculty workload is differentiated across the institution. This includes the recognition that workload has evolved in such a way (and as a result of the pandemic) that any one faculty member may teach an array of modalities in a given semester for a variety of courses.

Dr. Mora explained that this new taskforce, formally established February 27th, is taking a cross-functional and holistic approach to the workload issue. The taskforce's structure includes a Steering Committee and six Working Teams. The Steering Committee comprises representatives from eight stakeholder groups: Administration Division; Council of Chairs & Directors; Deans Council; DEI; Faculty Affairs; Faculty Senate; MSFF; Student Affairs. The Working Teams are organized by six areas of focus: Budget; Data; DEI & Faculty Lifecycle; Processes & Governance; Strategic Communications; and Student Success.

Dr. Mora provided the taskforce's anticipated timeline, leading up to the next Board of Trustees meeting in June. She stated that the university does not have the budgetary infrastructure in place this semester for long-term budgetary planning and forecasting, but she anticipates that infrastructure will be in place this Summer, which will then enable the taskforce to conceptualize budget models.

From the current work of the taskforce, as well as from prior efforts on the workload issue, the following Common Themes have been identified: Defining "Workload"; the Need for Differentiation; Policy and Practice (and, at times, Policy vs. Practice); Compensation Concerns; and Opacity of Budget.

The Trustees praised Drs. Mora and Jeffers for their work, and that of the taskforce, thus far, in such a short span of time. Points of discussion included: The critical aspect of "process"; Momentum (a path forward); How faculty, individually and collectively, contribute to student success; The utility of incorporating results from the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSEE) into the taskforce's efforts; How faculty are prepared – and what tools they are provided – to advise and mentor students; Communication (feedback loop) essential throughout; The need to have resources and infrastructure in order to 'mine' the data the taskforce needs and wants, and in connection to the new statewide strategic plan, released in February, by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education in partnership with the Colorado Department of Higher Education; and Compensation of faculty.

As the discussion wound down, Dr. Jeffers emphasized that the taskforce wants to ensure it will have the infrastructure and processes in place to make informed decisions and establish the path forward. The taskforce isn't starting the efforts on this issue over; rather, it is seeking to carry forward all the work that has been done up to this point, so that clear, actionable, and sustainable outcomes come from this work.

ADJOURNMENT – 2:59pm