



Faculty Senate Newsletter September 1, 2009

Welcome to the start of a new academic year at Penn State. This newsletter is designed to inform you of the upcoming activities of the University Faculty Senate and will be available about a week before each of the six Senate meetings this year. The 2009-2010 Senate meetings are scheduled for September 1, October 20, December 8, January 26, March 16, and April 27.

The University Faculty Senate is the representative body of the faculty with legislative authority on all educational matters, including curriculum, academic policies, admissions, and graduation requirements. In addition, it serves as an advisory and consultative body to the President for all matters that may affect the attainment of our educational objectives. It also provides a forum for the exchange of ideas among the members of the University faculty. Senators are elected by their peers at each academic unit at a ratio of one senator to 25 faculty. Information on who your unit's Senators are, meeting agendas and minutes, committee reports, and much more can be found on the Senate Web site at <http://senate.psu.edu>.

This fall the Senate officers will be visiting the following campuses: Abington (9/15), Brandywine and Great Valley (9/16), New Kensington (9/21), Greater Allegheny (9/22), Harrisburg (10/9), and DuBois (10/14). The officers spend time with students, faculty, and campus administrators discussing campus issues. This is a valuable time in which issues are identified that can be referred to the appropriate Senate committee for action. Several University Park colleges will be visited in the spring semester.

Senate Council met on August 18 and developed an agenda for the September 1 Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in 112 Kern and will begin at 1:30 p.m. Here is a summary of the items on the agenda.

The Senate will receive an update on the University's response to the H1N1 virus. Margaret Spear, Director of University Health Services, Jeremy Cohen, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and Billie Willits, Associate Vice President for Human Resources will review academic and health policies/procedures and respond to questions.

R. Scott Kretchmar, the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative, will present his annual report on student athlete academic performance, graduation rates with comparisons to other Big Ten universities, graduation success rates stratified by sport, gender, and ethnicity, and selection of major data. Brian Streeter, Athletic Director at Penn State Erie, will present on the intercollegiate athletics programs at Behrend College.

The Senate will receive a special informational report on the results of the 2008 Faculty/Staff Climate Survey from Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Blannie Bowen and Associate Vice President for Human Resources Billie Willits.

The manager of the Campus Sustainability office, Erik Foley, will present a report on the University's new energy conservation policy (AD 64) with an emphasis on things faculty can do to conserve energy in their offices, classrooms, and laboratories.

The Senate will vote on revisions to the duties and membership of the External Matters Subcommittee and discuss legislation allowing student senators to send an alternate student to substitute for them at a Senate meeting.

The Joint Committee on Insurance and Benefits will sponsor a report updating the Senate on health care benefits for faculty, staff, and retirees. Other updates will include information on the vision plan, wellness initiatives, long-term care insurance, and retirement plans.

An informational report on high school students enrolled nondegree in credit courses will be on the agenda and committee chair Marieta Staneva will respond to questions.

Members of the University community are invited to attend this meeting. Normally only Senators may speak at Senate meetings; however, any member of the University community may request the privilege of the floor on any item of business on the Senate agenda. Such a request must be made to the Chair, through the Executive Secretary of the Senate, at least four calendar days before the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak.

The *Senate Agenda* will be posted on the Senate Web site one week prior to each Senate meeting. The Senate Agenda is available at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/agenda/index.html>. Senate meeting minutes (*The Senate Record*) are also available at <http://www.senate.psu.edu/record/index.html> approximately three weeks following the Senate meeting.

For information on submitting major, minor, option, or course proposals, the *Guide to Curricular Procedures* is available at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/guide/contents.html. The Senate Curriculum Report is available at http://www.senate.psu.edu/curriculum_resources/bluesheet/bluex.html.

I encourage you to participate in Penn State's shared governance system through the University Faculty Senate. Please work with your unit's Senator(s) to bring forward issues and viewpoints. Also feel free to contact any of the officers or the Senate office if you have questions or concerns.

I look forward to serving you this year.

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