

Penn State Berks Senate
Monday, January 28, 2019
12:15-1:15 PM
Multi-Purpose Room (MPR), Perkins Building
Agenda

- **Call to Order**
- **Additions, Corrections, and Approval of the Minutes of the November 12, 2018 meeting**
- **Announcements and Reports by the Chair**
- **Reports of Officers and University Senators**
 - Vice Chair and University Senator Maurer
 - Secretary and University Senator Zambanini
 - University Senator Ansari
 - University Senator Bartolacci
 - University Senator Snyder
 - SGA President Ryan Morris
 - Student Senator
- **Comments/Announcements by Administrators**
 - Chancellor Hillkirk
 - Associate Dean Larson
- **Unfinished Business**
 - Faculty Affairs Committee (Charge #12: Clarification of College P&T Committee Membership) (**APPENDIX A**)
- **Forensic Business**
- **Motions from Committees**
 - Executive Committee – Amend Standing Rules Senate and Committee Meeting Times (**APPENDIX B**)
 - Strategic Planning and Budget – Charge #9: Travel and RDG Funding (**APPENDIX C**)
 - Student Life Committee – Charge #5: Classroom Conduct Regarding Electronics and Food (**APPENDIX D**)
- **Informational Reports from Committees**
 - Physical Facilities Committee (Charge #2: Assess Plans on Space User) (**APPENDIX E**)
 - Academic Affairs Committee (Charge #11: Guidelines for Extracurricular Scheduling) (**APPENDIX F**)
 - Executive Committee (Charge #11: Administrative Academic Structure) (**APPENDIX G**)
- **Other New Legislative Business**
- **Comments for the Good of the Order**
- **Adjournment**

Penn State Berks Senate
November 12, 2018
12:15-1:15 PM, Room 5, Luerssen Building

Attendees: Katie Amaral, Mohamad Ansari, Mike Bartolacci, Mike Briggs, Jill Burk, Alex Chisholm, Valerie Cholet, Tricia Clark, Justin DiAngelo, Colleen English, Andrew Friesen, Sarah Hartman-Caverly, Ben Infantolino, Samantha Kavky, Mahsa Kazempour, Manpreet Kooner, Ada Leung, Joseph Mahoney, Clifford Maurer, Catherine Mello, Mahdi Nasereddin, Cheryl Nicholas, Shannon Nowotarski, Meghan Owenz, Dawn Pfeifer Reitz, Zianbing Qi, Matthew Rhudy, Marissa Ruggiero, Holly Ryan, David Sanford, Allison Singles, Stephen Snyder, Ebonie Stringer, Hartono Tjoe, Rosario Torres, Bob Zambanini (Faculty); Marie Smith (Staff); Pradip Bandyopadhyay, Kim Berry, Dave Delozier, Keith Hillkirk, Janelle Larson, Michelle Mart, Belén Rodríguez Mourelo (Administration); Ryan Morris (Student).

1. Call to Order

2. Additions, Corrections, and Approval of Minutes of October 8, 2018 –The Chair called for additions and corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, a motion was called to approve the minutes and was seconded. *The minutes were approved.*

3. Announcements and Reports by the Chair – All of our subsequent meetings will be held in the MPR. As a follow-up, a brief discussion was held in-regard to common meeting times as part of the forensic discussion. The Executive Committee is following up on this issue and has gauged the opinion of committee chairs as part of the process. A report will be officially made at the next Senate meeting. The Chair would like to thank everyone for the constructive comments that took place at the last meeting. Having a robust debate is very important and appreciated. Vice-chairs for all the committees have been named and are as follows: Academic Affairs, Jen Arnold; Faculty Affairs, Michele Ramsey; Physical Facilities, Shannon Nowotarski; Strategic Planning & Budget, Catherine Mello; and Student Life, Tom Lynn.

4. Reports of Officers and University Senators

- **Vice Chair and University Senator Maurer** – The Faculty Affairs Committee decided to look at our sister schools in terms of how they deal with promotion and tenure. Research has been done. The next step is to meet in order to come up with a new plan. The Intra-University Relations Committee has heard from the head of research for the commonwealth campuses who investigated that report, which caused the fury about tenured faculty’s receiving full professorships at University Park more expeditiously. It was found that much of the data was flawed and that it does appear that the process takes a little longer at the commonwealth campuses. Another meeting will take place early in December where this topic will be again be investigated and a course of action decided.
- **Secretary and University Senator Zambanini** – There are currently two links on the Senate Web page that are not functioning properly and have been reported for repair. An interesting discussion took place at the last University Senate meeting where plans to renovate several buildings were discussed and debated. In particular, a robust debate took place concerning what type of office space is best for faculty. Several suggestions were provided. How this will affect the campuses remains unknown at this time.
- **University Senator Ansari** – At last month’s University Senate meeting, Provost Jones addressed a few topics. He spoke about phishing, noting that the university gets on average fifty attacks per week. A safe link which is designed in Office365 is available, but does not always work. The University engaged in self-phishing exercises in September and the results showed 11% of the recipients clicked on the link. This exercise will be implemented each semester. In October, Penn State initiated a

university-wide student climate survey. This survey was e-mailed to 10,000 undergraduates from University Park and 1,500 from the larger size colleges such as Berks as well as the smaller campuses. This survey posed a variety of questions such as their personal experiences and perceptions.

- **University Senator Bartolacci** – No report.
- **University Senator Snyder** – In response to work being done within the Intra-University Relations Committee concerning tenured faculty and in consultation with my colleagues, it was my recommendation that we invite Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Research (Rick Brazier) and have his data spread as wide as we can. Revisions remain ongoing pertaining to AC21.
- **SGA President Ryan Morris** – Students remain very concerned in regard to the budget crisis this semester but feel there is a silver lining. In collaboration with Joe Webb, it appears full funding will be approved by the Board at their Wednesday meeting for student facility fees. This is very encouraging. TEDxPSUBerks took place this past weekend and was a great success.
- **Student Senator** – Not present.

5. Comments/Announcements by Administrators

- **Chancellor Hillkirk**
 - I would also like to commend our students for all their hard work with the recent TEDx event this past weekend. I was unable to attend due to previous commitments but recognized all the work that took place prior to in order to transform the auditorium.
 - The recent pop-up dinner hosted by our hospitality students was a very impressive event. If you were unable to attend, I encourage you to watch for the next one. This event was well attended by both the campus and the outside community.
 - Work in the community in relationship with Penn State Health St. Joseph is being recognized in several ways. I recently attended an event hosted by the College of Medicine which centered around one of the strategic plan initiatives (Enhancing Health). The work ongoing with Penn State Health St. Joseph was highlighted. This work is going to provide opportunities for faculty research and service as well as internship opportunities for our students. We are now going to be visibly located at the downtown campus of St. Joseph's as well as at Google Works. This work also brought the attention of the other colleges in Berks County who are asking to learn more about this initiative. Although we compete with these other local colleges, this activity may also provide future opportunities for collaboration.
 - I would like to wish all of you a relaxing and rewarding Thanksgiving holiday break and I also welcome Dr. Belén Rodríguez-Mourelo back to campus.
- **Interim Associate Dean Larson**
 - The Faculty Retreat that is typically held on the Friday morning of finals week in the fall will take place beginning at noon and will be held in collaboration with Student Affairs. The focus will be on retention and recruitment of students into our programs. It was decided to have the retreat begin in the afternoon for convenience purposes (since commencement is scheduled for that evening).
 - An e-mail was sent a few weeks ago in-regard to campus collaborations. The current model, which has been based on collaboration between two faculty members, has now been changed so that the focus will be on equipment, specifically focusing on research. This new model will primarily focus on faculty within the science department and IST.

6. Informational Reports

- **Physical Facilities Reports Addressing Charges #3, #5, and #7 (Appendices A1, A2 and A3)** – A summary of Charge 5, which pertains to other energy savings/efficiency initiatives, was reviewed.
- **Academic Affairs, Reports of September and October Meetings (Appendices B1 and B2)** – The Committee Chair reported these minutes are a summary of his notes on the two meetings that took

place. A more formal report will be forthcoming. Also, the committee is undertaking a report pertaining to cyber security.

- **Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, October Meeting (Appendix C)** – This summary provides an outline of the charges underway in-regard to the committee’s work. The intent is for some of the charges to be completed by November; other charges may take longer to complete due to data that is need for completion.

7. Unfinished Business – None.

8. New Legislative Business

- **Physical Facilities Motions on Charges #3 and #7 (Appendices A1 and A3)** – An overview of Charge #3 was provided. Three motions are a result of this charge; they include: (1) The Administration should consider converting a general purpose space for students experiencing mental health crises; (2) The administration should work with Health and Counseling services to investigate the number of student visits and workload to assess the need for adding additional counseling staff in mental health services; and (3) The campus community develop more specific policies and procedures regarding faculty/staff response to mental health crises that are comparable to similar types of institutions. Chancellor Hillkirk commented that additional counseling services for drug and alcohol abuse is currently being reviewed. If there is a student encountering a crisis where it is felt that the student may be posing a threat to himself or herself or to others, then the police should be contacted immediately. Beyond that, we do have a Behavior Threat Management Team on campus. This group works in complete confidentiality. If you have a concern, feel free to contact either Dr. Larson, your Division Head, Kim Berry, Joe Webb or myself and this will be brought to the Behavior Management Team for review. The University has changed it protocol in-regard to school violence. The new protocol is run, hide, fight. Discussions will be underway with Kim Berry and our police services in-regard to training for faculty/staff. A question was raised concerning the University’s Red Folder Program and if that will be implemented at Berks. The Chancellor indicated that it would. The Chair proposed to vote on all three motions together. The Chair called for a vote. *The motions were approved.*

An overview of Charge #7 was provided. Three motions are a result of this charge; they include: (1) The committee recommends that M&O provide annual reports of heating and cooling equipment failures and work order from each building in order to increase accountability and transparency from year to year; (2) The committee recommends that M&O provide digital thermometers to each classroom so that faculty and staff can monitor the temperature conditions in a room to increase awareness and efficacy in the reporting systems; and (3) The committee recommends that the campus community increase visibility of new sustainability or green related projects to increase awareness and promote sustainability. The Chair called for a vote. *The motions were approved.*

9. Forensic Business – Discussion of Common Meeting Time for Committees – None.

10. Comments for the Good of the Order – The Chair commented there is an extended break between now and the next Senate meeting on January 28 and anticipates there will be lots of material for review prior to that meeting. The Chair wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

11. Adjournment

(APPENDIX A)

Faculty Affairs Committee

Motion to Clarify Berks Promotion and Tenure Policy

Background and rationale:

There was some ambiguity regarding the length of time of the term of the fifth member of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee; the previous iteration of the policy could be read as the fifth appointed member having either a two year or a one year term. In addition, the committee recommends that this fifth appointed seat be used to strive for greater equity and balanced representation on the committee.

Motion:

B-2a. Promotion and Tenure Committee

Committee Composition. The College Committee will be comprised of five (5) tenured faculty members holding the rank of associate professor, professor and/or equivalent rank. Four will be elected by faculty. The Associate Dean will nominate the fifth member after the election takes place. This appointment shall be for one year and it shall be used to create equity (e. g., division, rank, sex, etc.) on the P&T committee. This nominee must be approved by the Berks Faculty Affairs Committee prior to his/her appointment to the College P&T Committee. Each of the three divisions must be represented by at least one member of the committee, although this requirement may be waived on an exceptional basis when there are too few faculty members at the appropriate ranks eligible for election. No member may serve on more than one level of review of any given candidate. The term of service shall be two years for elected members or the time served in fulfillment of a committee vacancy. Terms shall be staggered to ensure continuity of membership.

(APPENDIX B)

Berks Senate Executive Committee
Motion to Amend Standing Rules
Concerning Senate and Committee Meetings
January 2019

Background:

Periodically, the Constitution and Standing Rules need to be amended to improve the functioning of the Senate and to improve how business is conducted. One impediment to Senate meetings has been a conflict over room reservations and calendar conflicts. An impediment to committee meetings has been finding a free time that all committee members can attend.

Motion:

To amend Article I Section 7 and Article II Section 3 as follows:

SECTION 7 MEETINGS

- a) Regular meetings of the Penn State Berks Senate shall be determined for the year ~~semester~~ by a majority vote of the members present at the *last first* Senate meeting of the *previous year semester*.
- b) The Executive Committee shall be empowered to determine the date and time of the first meeting of the semester.

SECTION 3 STANDING COMMITTEES' MEETINGS

- a) The Standing Committees of the Penn State Berks Senate shall hold *at least three (3) six (6)* meetings *per semester annually* that shall be scheduled one (1) week prior to the Berks Senate Executive meetings. This meeting schedule should be set at the *end of the previous beginning of the* academic year.
- b) *The Executive Committee shall establish a common meeting time for all committees; individual committees may opt to meet at another time if mutually agreeable to all committee members. c)*
- c) Committee Chairs will submit the reports or minutes of their meetings to the Senate Officers within two (2) weeks of the meetings.

Rationale:

These amendments will a) minimize room and schedule conflicts by establishing a meeting calendar at the end of a year in preparation for the next, b) facilitate meeting among faculty who all have busy and diverse schedules. This recommendation is in reaction to difficulty in both areas. Five out of six of the current committee chairs are in favor of establishing an common meeting time.

(APPENDIX C)
Strategic Planning and Budget Committee

Meeting Date: 11/09/2018, 12:15 – 1:15 PM

In Attendance: Ada Leung (chair), Catherine Mello, Colleen English, Ryan Hassler, Hartono Tjoe

Absent: Lisa Mikula, Pauline Milwood, Holly Ryan, Jayne Park-Martinez

Regarding to Charge #1:

Ada Leung obtained the most updated 2018 Faculty Benefits Table (2016-17 salary data) from PIR Office at UP. Committee members will update charts and document of the Informational Report on Faculty Salaries at Berks.

We also received a document from Marga Row's about adjunct rates of peer PSU campuses (Altoona, Abington, Behrend, Berks, Harrisburg). The adjunct rates range from \$850 to \$1250 per credit, with Berks at the lowest end with starting rate at \$850. Adjuncts often act as ambassadors of the programs/college and teach many introductory classes. A less than competitive rate may impede Berks's ability to hire adjunct faculty with high quality of teaching experiences.

Committee members also voiced their concerns about the sliding scale of summer compensation. Data on summer enrollment will be obtained to understand the issue of wage equity due to the unique summer pay rates.

We currently do not have corresponding information for peer colleges in the area. Ryan Hassler is going to investigate the adjunct rates in nearby colleges, such as RACC and Kutztown University.

Apart from discussing the importance of benchmarking salary of adjunct faculty against colleges in the local area and peer colleges in PSU, the committee also deliberated the need of regular teaching assessment and pedagogical support for adjunct faculty. Jayne suggested that the Office of Research, Planning and Assessment can help with the teaching assessment of adjunct faculty. We recommend the Faculty Affairs Committee to follow up on the matter about assessment and pedagogical support for adjunct faculty.

Regarding to Charge #2:

Michelle Mart has been following up with PIR Office at UP about provision of data to conduct multivariate analyses of faculty salaries (e.g. gender, rank, years in position, discipline, campus, number of credit hours generated in Berks vs. peer campuses). We will check with Jayne Park-Martinez about other possible variables that should be included in the analysis.

There are two alternatives to address Charge #2: 1) requesting data from PIR Office and conducting analysis at Berks; 2) providing an analysis plan to PIR Office and let PIR Office conduct the analysis to test the arguments with empirical data. The committee will work on the analysis plan to specify the variables and the statistical models to be tested.

Regarding to Charge #3:

Motions:

1. Based on the recommendations based on the 2017/18 report, we recommend the RDG funds to return to 2016-17 level, at least \$109,425.
2. We recommend the RDG funds to increase to the level that will be commensurate with the number of tenure track/tenured faculty.
3. Based on the recommendations based on the 2017/18 report, we recommend travel funds per faculty to increase based on inflation rate (7% from 2013 to 2018): tenure track from \$2,250 to \$2,410 and tenured from \$1,750 to \$1,873.

Regarding to Charge #4:

The committee will invite Lisa Mikula to present the operating budget of the campus to the committee to understand the income and expense flow. The committee will discuss the potential areas for cost savings after gaining a better understanding of the budget.

Next meeting - TBD

(APPENDIX D)

**Student Life Committee Legislative Report and Recommendations
Penn State Berks
January 2019**

The Penn State Berks Student Life Committee was charged in Fall 2018 to:

Consider issues of personal electronics, food, and rules of conduct in classrooms, and whether there are ways to improve campus culture in this regard. Prepare legislative report with recommendations.

Overview

The codes of conduct on the Penn State University and Penn State Berks websites do not appear to indicate that there is a uniform policy concerning electronics, food, and, to some extent, conduct in the classroom. Instructors apparently have a fair degree of individual discretion as to what they will permit in these areas. It would seem, then, that faculty have flexibility concerning how much chatter, “lively behavior,” tardiness, etc. may be allowed. Clearly, however, these codes mandate respectful behavior by students toward all other students at the University, and any behavior that hurts or intimidates others is recognized as a violation. The Penn State University Code of Conduct, which “describes behaviors that are inconsistent with the essential values of the University community,” specifies (Item 9) that one such behavior is “Disruption of Operations,” which is partly defined as: “Obstruction or disruption of classes, research projects. . . . An action or combination of actions by one or more individuals that unreasonably interferes with, hinders, obstructs, or prevents the operation of the University or infringes on the rights of others to freely participate in its programs and services.”

The Student Life Committee believes that the classroom conduct of students should be based on the values of the University community and that mutual respect is extremely important for maintaining the campus culture. The committee proposes to educate students about these principles not only before the semester begins, but also during the first-year seminar.

Instructors should explain to students, moreover, in course syllabi and class discussion, the guidelines concerning restrictions on food, personal electronics, and behavior. These guidelines should be as uniform as possible, such that students are not exposed to extremely different expectations and actions from instructors. At the same time, the rules should allow for enough flexibility to accommodate the needs of particular courses, for instance those courses in which the use of personal electronic devices is needed for taking notes and for participating in in class activities. Several committee members thought that students should be given incentives for good behavior, for instance by using apps such as Pocket Points to help deter the misuse of personal electronic devices in class room. See: <http://sites.psu.edu/passiondrich/2016/09/15/pocket-points/>.

Food in the Classroom

- A) The committee discussed the issue of food in the classroom. It does not intend to recommend prohibition of student eating in the classroom—unless explicitly prohibited due to safety issues in, such as those that may arise in a laboratory environment. The committee believes that students have little time in between classes to have lunch. This is the reason that the committee recommends treating food in the classroom on a case by case basis. The committee does recommend explicitly mentioning in faculty syllabi that food in the classroom is not considered acceptable if it unreasonably disrupts class proceedings or student learning and participation.

Electronics in the Classroom

- B) The committee unanimously believes that unauthorized use of personal electronic devices may lead to problems in the classroom. Such usage may distract others and distract the student using the device, reducing student engagement and civility. Because different instructors apparently have different levels of tolerance for such use, confusion arises among students and faculty as to the norms for electronic usage. The committee does not recommend, however, that Penn State Berks adopt a blanket prohibition on the usage of the electronic devices, but rather should take a more flexible approach because some courses integrate student use of personal electronic devices, for taking notes and participating in class activities. Therefore, the rules for usage of personal electronics should be spelled out in the syllabus of each specific course and discussed during class time. Whenever possible, moreover, these rules should be consistent with what other instructors expect so as to reduce the amount of confusion and misuse of electronics. Generally speaking, though, the committee believes that taking or making text messages, phone calls, or other kinds of electronic communications during class time, whether in or out of the classroom, is unacceptable unless an emergency situation is involved. Students are encouraged to turn off and place in their bags prior to the beginning of class any electronic devices that will not have specified classroom purposes during that session.

General Recommendations

- C) The committee proposes to educate students about the principles of student classroom conduct, including those involving food and electronics in the classroom, not only before the semester begins, but also during the first-year seminar. All instructors should explain to students, moreover, in course syllabi and class discussion, their expectations and restrictions concerning food, personal electronics, and behavior. These guidelines should be as uniform as possible so that students are not exposed to extremely different expectations and actions from instructors.

(APPENDIX E)

Physical Facilities and Safety 2018-2019 Report

Charge 2: Assess and make plans regarding space use and assignments.

UPDATES ON SPACE USE AND ASSIGNMENTS

This informational report will provide the Physical Facilities and Safety updates since the last report and address the ongoing issue of space use and assignments.

Since the last report progress has been made regarding plans for space use and assignments. The Beaver renovations are currently in their planning phase. Architects have been employed via a competitive selection process, and the same process is currently being utilized to finalize a general contractor. A steering committee, made up of campus administrators, site stakeholders, and funding groups, has been formed and has met once with plans to meet throughout the coming semester. Stakeholder groups have been identified as members of the Athletics Department, Kinesiology, Housing and Food Services, Students, and Special Events. Thus far, it seems that space in the renovated Beaver Community Center will comprise new athletic training suite, locker rooms, fitness center, auxiliary gym, fitness studio, athletics offices, kinesiology offices, kinesiology laboratory space, one classroom, and a corner store.

The committee discussed the possibility of using the Jansen Conference Center (JCC) space for offices and classrooms. The JCC does contain office spaces that are being used by a few members of the Penn State Berks faculty. However, since the JCC was donated to Penn State Berks as a gift for its use as a conference center, there are restrictions pertaining to its use. Moreover, the JCC is often used for long meetings because of the challenge of reserving classrooms for extended periods of time. Thus, using the JCC for classrooms and offices is limited.

The committee discussed the possibility of expanding the library into an improved space. After a conversation with John Shank we learned that plans were underway to expand the library and create the Information Commons. The rationale was that the Thun Library was expanded and renovated in 2000. Since then the campus has grown significantly. A Knowledge Commons Creation Task Force was created and recommendations for the space were as follows:

1. Resources which must be in the Knowledge Commons

- a. Existing Library, IT, and CLT services aligned with the Knowledge Commons vision (e.g. a renovated service desk with integrated Library, IT, and Media Commons support)
- b. Expanded and centralized Berks Media Commons

2. Resources which should be in the Knowledge Commons

- a. A Maker Commons with a Makerspace Lab
- b. An EdTech entrepreneur and innovation playground

3. Resources which could be in the Knowledge Commons

- a. One-stop shop for complete student academic support, including:
 - i. Learning Center
 - ii. Testing Center
 - iii. Student Disabilities
 - iv. Writing Center
 - v. Advising Services
 - vi. Career Services Center
 - vii. Art Gallery
 - viii. Community Space for existing and future Berks Campus Centers of excellence (i.e. Center for Academic Community Engagement - CACE)

(APPENDIX F)
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Informational Report

Academic Affairs Committee Charge #11 (Annual)

Review guidelines/policies for scheduling extracurricular and curricular activities during regularly scheduled class times. Prepare legislative report with policy recommendations.

Executive Summary

The general consensus of the committee was that new policy is not required and therefore this report is informational rather than legislative as the committee was originally charged. This report serves to inform faculty about current policy regarding attendance. The committee encourages faculty to use an attendance policy in their syllabus, which serves as a contract with the students. An example of a syllabus statement derived from existing policy and handbook recommendations is provided in this report.

Introduction

To approach this charge, the Academic Affairs Committee gathered information from a thorough search of existing policies related to attendance and field trips, as well as soliciting faculty feedback through an anonymous survey.

Summary of Existing Policy

Committee members searched through existing Penn State policies and identified the following relevant sources:

- Senate Policy 42-27 Class Attendance
- Student Handbook “Class Attendance”
- Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual E-11 Class Attendance
- Penn State Faculty Handbook (from SN 42-27 and AAPP E-11)
- Berks Faculty Handbook
- Financial Policy FN20 Student Group Travel Policy

Many of these resources offer different wording, but offer the same general theme. Students are responsible for notifying their instructors prior to an absence. Some of these documents specify “at least one week prior to an absence.” Additionally, through this search, the handbooks mention a class absence form (<http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/classabs.pdf>). The committee members were not aware of this form or its use, but it is an existing Penn State tool for reporting absences. There is also a specific policy in Berks Faculty Handbook regarding field trips, which contained two important statements relevant to this charge:

1. Students should be informed of field trips at the beginning of the semester through the course syllabus and an in-class announcement so that they can plan their off-campus schedules.
2. Fields trips should be arranged so as to avoid students having to miss other classes. In the event that scheduling of a field trip will affect students’ attendance in other classes, please request that students be excused from other classes at least two weeks* prior to the field trip.

* In committee discussion, one week was deemed adequate to match requirements in other policy statements

Summary and Discussion of Faculty Survey

A survey was designed to gather feedback from the Penn State Berks faculty through an anonymous survey. This survey was designed to assess how concerned faculty are about particular types of absences, and how often these absences are occurring. Additionally, this survey assessed the quantity and type of these absences from the other perspective of faculty hosting events which may cause absences in other classes. A total of 60 faculty responses were recorded.

The survey results indicated that faculty were divided on whether there is a problem with students missing classes due to extracurricular and curricular activities. Generally, there was not much concern from the faculty regarding field trips (64% not at all, 31% somewhat, 5% very concerned), extracurricular activities which were academic in nature (53% not at all, 33% somewhat, 13% very concerned), and student affairs trips (53% not at all, 30% somewhat, 17% very concerned). There was, however, more significant concern regarding other absences such as working on a research project or theater set (31% not at all, 39% somewhat, 31% very concerned) as well as for students not notifying about absences far enough in advance (23% not at all, 35% somewhat, 42% very concerned). Faculty comments identified some unusual circumstances such as advising meetings that should not be considered an excused absence, but this does not seem to be the norm. A common theme in the comments was that students are not telling faculty why they are missing class, which seems to be a larger area of concern.

Survey results indicated that the majority of absences due to these activities are occurring primarily never/rarely or once per semester for field trips (85%), extracurricular activities (85%), student affairs trips (84%), or other activities (76%). Faculty reported that they host these types of activities never/rarely (82%) or once per semester (15%). The indicated sources of these absences are academic in nature. Faculty commented that these types of activities are important for the “out-of-classroom experience” and “total college experience”. Generally, these absences do not seem to be a common occurrence that should be considered problematic.

When considering policy, the majority of faculty are not aware of policy regarding class absences. 49% of faculty would like a policy, 38% would not (others not sure).

Discussion and Recommendations

Overall, this issue seems to be a problem for few faculty members. Having a one-size-fits-all policy was determined to not be necessary as there is existing policy regarding absences. The general consensus of the committee was that new policy is not required. The existing policy is sufficient, but awareness of policy could be improved. The committee believes that this report should serve to raise awareness of the current policy. As an alternative to policy, the committee recommends that syllabus statements are the best practice for communicating the specific attendance policy for each individual instructor. Within this statement, faculty can specify the appropriate procedure for reporting absences, which can require the class absence form (cite student handbook), and can specify the “at least one week prior” requirement (cite student handbook and/or policy E-11). The syllabus serves as a contract with the students, and students can be referred to the student handbook or the division head for disputes. An example of a syllabus statement is provided for instructors to modify and use for their courses if desired.

Example Syllabus Statement (modify and use if desired)

Regular and on-time class attendance is required. Class participation is expected and is an important aspect of learning in the class. You are responsible for all material covered in class, even if absent for authorized activities. If you need to miss a class for any reason, please notify me at

least one week prior to your absence using the class absence form found at <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/classabs.pdf> (see the student handbook for more information: <https://handbook.psu.edu/>). Absences due to sickness or emergency situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs Committee 2018-2019

Jennifer Arnold (vice-chair)

Michael Bartolacci

David Bender

William Bowers

Alexandria Chisholm

Ruth Daly

Lisa Glass

Janelle Larson

Matthew Rhudy (chair)

Kirk Shaffer

Christian Weisser

(APPENDIX G)

Berks Senate Executive Committee Report on Charge #11

Unfinished charge from 2017-2018: Investigate whether there should be any budget neutral changes in administrative or academic structure of the Berks campus considering changes in campus size and number of majors over the past 20 years. Prepare legislative report with specific recommendations or assessments.

The Executive Committee has discussed this issue in several meetings, during 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. In an effort to gather more information about this issue, the Executive Committee conducted a survey of faculty perceptions during spring 2018. Chair Mart also met with all three division heads and the associate dean to assess their views on the charge, and discussed the issue with the chancellor at separate meetings.

Based on these discussion and information gathered, the Executive Committee does not recommend any changes to the administrative or academic structure at this time for the following reasons:

- 1) Information from the faculty survey seemed to many on the Executive to be inconclusive.
- 2) The Berks academic structures closely parallel those at Penn State campuses most similar in size, demographics, and mission.
- 3) There is little support for or interest in changes among administrators and the majority of the Executive Committee, and division heads were unanimously against any changes.
- 4) Concern about tight budgets has tamped down possible interest in broad changes.
- 5) The Faculty Affairs Committee is currently reviewing the role of PCs and CRRs which might yield targeted, specific recommendations for changes to improve the academic administrative structure.