

# Communications Report of the Faculty Senate meeting on 2021-September-16

Written by Communications Officer Dr. Dirk Grupe

1. **Meeting start:** 15:45/3:45 PM
2. President Long started by introducing himself to the new senators and again explaining the situation, of how he became president at the August 19 meeting. He also asked everybody to bear with him. He expected this year to learn “on the job” and to learn the process of being president-elect. President Long also asked our Parliamentarian Doug Chatham if he could keep an eye on Roberts Rules while he is running the meeting.
3. **Approval of the Minutes** of the September 02, 2021 meeting: Motion to approve the minutes by Senator Taylor, Second by Senator Hare, motion passed (contingent of correcting some typos)
4. **Announcements:**
  - President Long thanks everybody who helped him through the first weeks of being president and said that he will continue to draw on the expertise of people. President Long said that during his presidency he wants to establish a climate where we work collegiately. Although there will be disagreements, we all work to improve the University.
  - Faculty Senate ADS search: President Long may has found one, but the Provost has a suggestion that the he will present during his report.
  - Faculty Senator photos: Communications Officer Grupe gave an update on how many photos of senators he has received, which he said was like in some of his classes, only half of the senators did their homework. For the returning senators this is not too much of a problem, because the older photos can be reused. However this is a problem with new senators, because we do not have photos. Senator Grupe said that he would use pictures of Star Wars characters instead. (Update 2021-September-22: Unfortunately Star Wars characters can not be used due to copyright issues, but COMA will use a picture of the MSU mascot Beaker instead. All photos and Beaker are posted now).
  - Faculty Senate meeting on September 30 instead of the October 07 meeting. The Executive Council decided to meet on September 30 because October 07 is during Fall Break.
5. **Presidents Report:** President Morgan was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.
6. **Provost Report:** (Dr. Norman, 06:53): Provost Norman met with the Executive Council on Monday, September 12, which was a very productive meeting and that we are off to a good start having good discussions. Regarding the minutes, Provost Norman suggested that given that the meetings are recorded and therefore the minutes only need to cover a skeleton and do not have to be a transcript of the meeting, which would make it less work.

Provost Norman met with President Long this morning to discuss the resolution put forward by the Executive Council on a vaccine mandate (see below). Provost Norman said he understands the passion in this discussion, but also wanted to give the Provost's/the administration's view of this matter: The University is taking a lot of measures to make the campus safe. The numbers right now are manageable. Provost Norman wanted to express some concerns that he has regarding the resolution. He knows that there are Universities, like UK and UofL that require students to be vaccinated or go through strict testing protocols. But Provost Norman was questioning this and said that it is more window-dressing than practical, because there is not enough capacity to track everybody and make sure the testing procedures are followed. It looks good on paper but it is hard to do. Just look at St. Claire which is already overwhelmed. The system would collapse and could be harmful to the community and would result in the opposite of what we want to archive. St Claire has already reached out to us to ask for help, for example from nursing students. The other reason Provost Norman mentioned was that our enrollment has not been very robust this year, not as bad as at other places, but still a concern. We however are still financially stable. Provost Norman is worried that if this resolution passes it could send a signal to a lot of students who would then decide not to come back which will have a negative effect on our enrollment numbers. The numbers could be several hundreds of students who decide not to come back for the Spring semester which financially will have a very negative effect. Provost Norman thanks President Long for the opportunity to explain his thinking about this matter.

President Long suggested that the hold any discussion regarding the resolution until later when we will discuss the resolution. Senator Lennex pointed out that we have several guests today and she put forward a motion to allow these guest to speak in senate, which was seconded by Senator Grupe, and the motion passed. There were no question for Provost Norman this time.

7. **Regent Report** (Dr. Adams, 16:50): The next Board of Regents meeting will be on October 15 during homecoming. The BOR handbook has been released and Regent Adams wanted to thank Jacqueline Graves, who is the BOR secretary. The reason why she brings this up in Senate that there is a description in the handbook on the leadership and positions in academic affairs, like descriptions what an Associate Dean is. Regent Adams pointed out that the descriptions that are in the handbook are not what the actual job is on the ground in the College of Humanities or in the College of Education. Regent Adams mentioned that she will be happy to pass this information along to President Long.
8. **Staff Congress Report** (David Flora, 19:15): Staff Congress met on September 07 with vice-chair Halisha Tuerk presiding the meeting. Chair Flora thanked President Long for attending that meeting. The Benefits and Comp subcommittee is working still on UAR 324 what regulates staff compensation when they move within the University. Staff Congress had further discussions with Dr. Atkins and Mary Fister-Tucker. The Credentials and Election subcommittee still has two vacancies which are a concern. There has been a lengthy report on Staff Complaints due to some technical glitches. One concern was that the definition between trash and recycling is very broad, also that office trash cans are currently not emptied because of health safety protocol. Staff Newsletter and the meeting minutes are now separated which frustrated some staff and needed to be clarified. The

worse complaint, however, was that a staff member complained about a supervisor who was making jokes about sex, drugs, and alcohol at work. The staff member was unaware of any reporting process and was afraid that if reported that there would be repercussions. Staff Congress reached out to Dr. Caroline Atkins who responded that such behavior is not acceptable and she provided several links where incidents like this can be confidentially reported. David Flora also mentioned that the COVID-19 dashboard is active again on the *Healthy at MSU* webpage. Staff Regent Pace reported that the compensation plan is moving forward in October. May Fister Tucker reminded everybody to report their vaccination status. The goal is to reach 75-80% by the end of September. There will be drawing among those who participate in uploading copied of their vaccination cards.

Senator Finch commented on the issue of reporting there is the "Bias" reporting on the MSU webpage (<https://www.moreheadstate.edu/Leadership/Diversity-Inclusion-Initiative/Bias-Incident-Reporting-Form>), as well as a "Red Flag" reporting which goes out to an external agency first, but then comes back (<https://www.moreheadstate.edu/Administration/Procurement/A-Z-Index/Red-Flag-Reporting>).

9. **SGA Report** (Ethan Wells, 23:25): These have been two eventful weeks. SGA had their Senate election and they had the first two meetings. SGA approved its budget for this year as well as appointed two different housing and athletics representatives. Ethan oversees two committees, the Constitution and Bylaws committee as well as the Special Projects committee. Also they tackle a better reporting system for students, faculty, and staff. Last night SGA passed a resolution regarding double-dipping which they have sent to Dr. Couch this morning

Ethan also commented on the NKU/AAUP/EC resolution on vaccine mandate. He said he did not want to convince anybody either way. He just wanted to mention that we are in a University drive for getting vaccinated and we are doing our best to give students the option to take the vaccine. From the SGA's standpoint giving incentives and doing this is a positive way and is the right way to do. Senator Brigham asked about the update on the SGA website, because some of the information is two years old. Ethan hopes that this will be updated asap. Senator Brigham was also curious if somebody is actually responding to emails, or if they just go into a black box. Ethan was sure the SGA president Emily Wiley has access to the email, but he was not sure if she recently has checked them. Ethan also mentioned that students keep more in contact through social media.

Senator Lennex was interested what the current status on the upload of vaccination cards of students was. Ethan wasn't entirely sure what the exact number was, but he said it was encouraging, larger than what they had expected. After Senator Lennex asked a few more questions, Ethan said he would come back later to find out what the number is (he did, see below). Senator Lennex was concerned about the advertisement. There is nothing for example on Twitter. Ethan agreed, it is not as well advertised as it should be. SGA is advertising the incentives, but it is the responsibility of the University to advertise this to the students. Senator Lennex mentioned that for example dual-credit students are totally unaware because they do not receive these emails. One problem is also, as Ethan mentioned, that students often ignore emails. This information needs to go out in social media like Twitter and Instagram.

David Long was interested what the attitude among the students is towards vaccination

and vaccination mandates. Ethan said that as part of his Special Topics committee they do students surveys and this is a most pressing issue right now. Ethan also mentioned that SGA is pushing for vaccinations of students but they also think that the current way with incentive is the right way to go. We should keep an eye on the data and if this is not satisfactory that we need to revisit the vaccine mandate.

Senator Grupe mentioned the double dipping issue which Academic Issues is working on right now and it might be good to exchange some emails on that topic and hear the students' perspective on that.

10. **Executive Council Report:** (President Long, 31:40):

- **Resolution of Vaccine Mandate:** President Long introduced the resolution from the Executive Council demanding a vaccine mandate on Campus. This resolution is based on a resolution just passed by the Senate of NKU. AAUP Chapter President Lesia Lennex explained the motivation behind this resolution, which is backed by the AAUP Chapter of Morehead State. Several other Universities are doing the same thing and follow that NKU resolution adopted to their campuses. Senator Lennex was leading the discussion of this issue due to her familiarity of the matter. Senator Lennex said the the UofL Senate will bring this up at their meeting next week. Senator Lennex attended a AAUP meeting last night lead by the University of Northern Georgia at which 16 institutions were present. UK Senate brought a resolution on vaccine mandates forward this morning and this has been supported by more than 1000 signatures requiring a vaccine mandate. It was also Senator Lennex's understanding that also WKU's Senate will bring this forward at their next senate meeting. Senator Brigham mentioned that the number of institutions demanding a vaccine mandate according to the Chronicle has increased significantly from 896 to 1032 this week within a week, of which 464 are public institutions. Several institution in Kentucky require vaccinations already, like Berea and Transylvania who all require all faculty, staff, and students to be vaccinated. Senator Lennex also mentioned that she is aware of at least one instructor in a freshmen class who takes of the mask anytime the instructor has to sneeze or cough and encourages students to do the same. Often this instructor forgets the mask or wears it below the nose. The question is what kind of example do we want to set for our students?

Senator Grupe thanked and appreciated Provost Norman's explanation of the administrations point of view on this matter as well as Ethan's report on the SGA's opinion. However, he respectfully disagreed. These arguments are very similar to those of politicians who are against taking any action against climate change because it might hurt the economy and cost jobs. We know by now that all these claims are false and have been debunked. Senator Grupe said that it is in the vital interest of the University to have a vaccine mandate if for anything then for economic reasons. Yes, we may loose some students, but we have the danger of closing the University again if the numbers rise and loose a lot of money that way as we have seen last year. Senator Grupe expressed that he had it with un-vaccinated people and that a minority can dictate a majority what they think and by doing so keeping the community unsafe. The other problem with un-vaccinated people is that they will drive the health care costs up that we all together have to pay for. If we do not get a vaccine mandate,

then what we need is an increase of the health insurance premium for those you are un-vaccinated, like Delta Airlines does, who charges \$200 extra per month for those you chose to remain un-vaccinated. The other loss for the University is that when people will get infected they will be out of work, which is another way the University will lose money. All in all there are good economic reasons for a vaccine mandate. Also St. Claire is really overburdened right now because we do not have a vaccine mandate. St. Claire most likely will not become more overburdened if a vaccine mandate is instituted, because vaccines are available at any pharmacy. Senator Grupe encouraged the Senate to support and adopt the resolution.

Senator Taylor said that she finds the expressions like "numbers going in the right direction" rather bloodless. She has to teach face to face classes with 30 students each in a room for 90 minutes without knowing their vaccination status 4 times a day which is very frightening. She is really fed up with hearing about "losing our jobs or the University may lose money" when we are the ones who are in the trenches. She is frightened every day doing her job and is terrified going into the classroom every day. She had 4 students who actively had COVID and she was sitting in the classroom with them.

Regent Adams mentioned that she had 5 COVID students in 3 of her classes. Regent Adams said that she does not understand why this is even controversy and why we even need a resolution given the executive order from President Biden that demands that organizations with more than 100 employees need a vaccine mandate. She also mentioned that she did not understand why Universities were scrambling with Trump's executive order that foreign students could not return, but now this executive order is being ignored. Senator Lennex added that actually some University presidents do think about this, like at Berea, Bellarmine, or Transylvania. We can do the same thing and do not need to wait for some law happening or not happening. We do not have to wait until our faculty die of COVID.

Senator Finch said that besides the economic discussion and aside from the political situation we need to support this resolution because it will send a message to the students how deeply invested we are as faculty to provide a safe campus for them.

SGA representative Ethan Wells reported that the number of students who uploaded their vaccination cards to the MSU webpage as of right now is 1000 students. Ethan was very pleased with this number given the lack of advertisement of this drive. He also mentioned that this is a difficult situation for him, because personally he is in support of a vaccine mandate, but he also has to represent the entire student body. He also said that SGA does not have the data to know where the entire student body stands on this subject. But once these data have been collected he will have a better idea of if students support this as well or not. Senator Lennex was wondering what percentage the 1000 students who uploaded their card is based on. Senator Lennex also agreed with Ethan that the University is falling short advertising this among the students. She also mentioned that there might be a quick solution for a student survey on this matter.

Senator Sharp mentioned what might also work is peer pressure. She has students now getting back to the schools and now finally getting vaccinated. She also said that she is less frightened this semester teaching her ITV class in three modalities,

teaching face to face, ITV, as well as via Webex in order to meet the needs of the students.

Senator Morrison strongly supported the resolution. He mentioned that when he was Faculty Regent years ago that they had a consultant, Dr. John Moore, who has been president at several institutions, that for every decision a university does it ought to have an academic function. The best model we can provide the students with, regardless what they want, is to model to our students what the institution needs by adopting this policy and requiring vaccinations.

Senator Brigham pointed out that when judges decide cases they are not only looking at the case by itself, but also what message this verdict is going to send, of what the future implications are. This may not be the last pandemic we are going to have. Things could get worse in the future. This requires that we send a strong voice now. We should not always give students what they want, but what is good for them. What is good for them is to send a strong message that we need a vaccine mandate. Senator Grupe made a motion to accept and support the resolution which was seconded by Senator Blackledge. President Long performed a pull anonymously on Webex. The result was that out of 28 senators who voted 26 were in favor of the resolution, 2 Senators were against it. With this the motion to accept the resolution was passed.

## 11. Executive Council Committee Reports:

- **Academic Issues:** (A. Hassan, 01:01:00): Vice-chair Ahmad Hassan reported on the last meeting on behalf of chair Kouroush Jenab. He said the first item on the agenda was the double-dipping of classes between different majors, minors, and certificates. The committee was not sure what the issue/problematic really is and therefore wants to invite Associate Provost Dr. Couch to the next meeting (Dr. Couch was at the AI meeting on September 23). The second issue discussed was course fees. It appears that course fees are handled and managed differently in the colleges. While in the College of Science, course fees are accounted for, in other colleges they are not and not used for the courses for which they are collected for from students. In these colleges the money is kept by the administration and is not used in the classes in which the fees are collected. The committee asked the Provost about some clarifications about this money and why some departments do not receive the funds from course fees. Another issue the committee discussed were teaching modalities. While in some units teaching can be done fully online, in others faculty is forced to only teach face to face. The committee wants to remind the Provost of last year's resolution on teaching modalities as well as the newly passed resolution from the August 12 meeting. The last issue discussed was the 50% rule for programs which demands that at least 50% of the courses in a program have to be core courses in order to make the program unique. However there is not external mandate for such a rule, which has caused several program to have problems and prevented the development of new programs. Another problem with this rule is that it forces students to take un-necessary classes.
- **Evaluations:** (L. Lennex, 01:05:10): Chair Lennex put up a poll to ask senators about their view on FEPs. The big item discussed during the Evaluation Committee's

meeting were FEPs. Senator Lennex thanked senators who have sent her their FEPs and also the Provost's office for confirming those FEPs that the committee already had. In particular the committee wants to look at the FEPs regarding the students teaching evaluations. Some FEPs still state the IDEA student evaluation, which has not been used by the University for several years. Another thing the committee is looking for is if an FEP adheres to the tenure and promotion policies. If the committee will find inconsistencies between the FEPs and the policies, the committee will inform Senate, the Provost's office, and Tenure and Promotion Committee as well as the effected departments.

The other item to discuss was UAR 343 which regulates animals on campus (<https://www.moreheadstate.edu/MSU/media/UARs/343-001-Animals-on-University-Property.pdf>). The Evaluations committee looks at UARs in conjunction with the President's office, staff congress and other constituencies to provide comments and recommendations in particular on brand new UARs, like this one. Senator Lennex mentioned that the committee had commentary and this was mentioned to the Provost during the meeting with the Executive Council on September 12. However, when looking at the MSU UAR webpage after the meeting with the Provost, that UAR had been published already that day without waiting for any commentary or recommendations, which means these were not considered or included. We need to determine as Senate what an appropriate review period is. Senator Grupe said that the review period should be at least three weeks given that like in this case senators wanted to hear from their constituents their opinion on this matter. He also mentioned that on the other side it takes the administration months if not years to comment in Senate's resolutions and PAcS. Senator Lennex agreed and pointed out that this particular UAR was dated August 17, meaning it was long in circulation until the Evaluation Committee received it. Senator Hare supported Senator Grupe's comment that the 3 weeks is a minimum not a maximum. He also pointed out when he was Senate Chair that he was handed UARs for review, but by the time of the Senate meeting, the UAR had been already posted. Senator Lennex also said that when she was Senate Chair/President it took the administration upward of 8 months to give comments. Plus there are still some outstanding issues going on on the 2 to 3 year mark.

Senator Lennex then mentioned the motivation behind the survey. Yearly evaluations are different from department to department and in some cases it is just a one page report in others it is significantly longer. Given that the University is not following its policy regarding merit pay raises, the goal is to minimize the work for faculty in this process. In this way we can still do an annual evaluation, but it should be not us burdensome at it is right now. Senator Hare said that anything that would limit our time wasted by this process and cut down the paper work he would be all for it.

- **Faculty Welfare & Concerns** (K. Kaufman, 01:14:50): Chair Katie Kaufman mentioned that there was an overlap with items Evaluations Chair Lennex just addressed. One item the committee is concerned with is that some departments do not have two senators represented. The committee discussed the two senator requirement which maybe too difficult for smaller departments to fulfill. Another discussion was on banning uncompensated faculty workload and the committee revisited the ad hoc committee on workload with its chair Dr. Kessinger. The Evaluations Committee is

still working on the librarian issue to find out on the representation as faculty or staff and how these decisions had been made in order to resolve the issue of compensations for librarians. The last item discussed was the fast-clock tenure and promotion as well as looking into the merit pay raises, which says that there maybe merit pay raises, but does not say there have to be. There are no Cost of Living raises either specified in any UAR or PAc.

Senator Sharp added that she will be meeting with Ad hoc Workload Committee Chair Michael Kessinger tomorrow (Sep. 17) to discuss where the committee left off in June and the current membership list. The plan is to reconvene the committee within the next few weeks.

- **Governance:** (J. Finch, 01:18:26): Chair Finch said that the Governance committee did not meet last week, but they have to items on the Agenda, the revision of the description of the Student Media Board, as well as the discussion about the QEP committee on which the Executive Council had talked with co-chair Tim O'Brien and the committee is moving forward to establish the parameters for this committee. President Long mentioned that he is glad to see that the QEP committee is moving forward, and let's just get this done.

12. New Business: (01:20:00)

- Senator Finch as now the Senate President-elect pro tempore is also attending the General Education Council. Senator Finch said that the council met earlier this week. Not too much to discuss but Mark Graves was voted as Council co-chair again and Laurie Couch will be the administrative co-chair. This year we will have to report on the new SLOs. In October the final report will be given on the old SLOs. As for the new SLO assessment, the new system will be a sampling of courses. Not every course will be assessed only about 10% of all Gen Ed courses will be asked to submit their assessments. The Assignment sub-committee finished their assessment of assignments that were designed to assess the new SLOs. One question that came up in the Council was the enrollment numbers pre and past the transition into the new system. Another report was given by Lora Pace regarding the FYS subcommittee. There are currently 65 sections of FYS with 1114 freshmen, 62 in person and 3 online. 11 of the sections are reading enhanced. Regent Adams was wondering if there have been any changes made to the FYS-E course to make it compliant with the Enhanced Course rules. Is the course still set up with an additional reading component instead of having FYS being a reading class. The answer is basically that no changes to that regard have been done. Regent Adams remind that FYS needs to be a reading class and the E component can not be treated separately.

13. Old Business: no old business

14. Senator Grupe moved to adjourn, actually seconded by Senator Chatham, motion passed. Meeting adjourned: 17:13/5:13 PM

15. The **recording of the meeting** can be found at <https://moreheadstate.webex.com/webappng/sites/moreheadstate/recording/9ccc371df9541039be49005056810afe/playback>

1 **Faculty Senate Resolution on COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Morehead**  
2 **State University**

3 **Whereas other Kentucky academic institutions have moved to require**  
4 **vaccinations on campus for all students and employees,**

5 **Whereas the Faculty Senate at Morehead State University (MSU) recognizes**  
6 **vaccination as the leading prevention strategy to protect individuals from**  
7 **SARS-CoV-2, commonly known as COVID-19,**

8 **Whereas in a recent Faculty Senate poll (194 respondents), 77.8% were in**  
9 **favor of mandatory vaccination of students, staff, and faculty,**

10 **Let it be RESOLVED that the faculty proposes that MSU initiates a**  
11 **requirement of full vaccination of all students, faculty, and staff by the**  
12 **earliest practical date.** The Senate proposes that exemptions be made available  
13 for faculty, staff, and students of MSU who do not work or study on-campus, or  
14 who have documented medical conditions or bona fide religious beliefs that  
15 would justify an exemption.

16 MSU is in the eighteenth month of COVID impacts on our operations. The Delta  
17 variant of SARS-CoV-2 has proven to be much more contagious than previous  
18 variants, which has resulted in significant increases in cases in the region,<sup>1</sup> state,<sup>2</sup>  
19 and country.<sup>3</sup> While various mitigation strategies have proven effective at  
20 decreasing the spread of infection, the CDC “Guidance for Institutions of Higher  
21 Education (IHEs)”<sup>4</sup> dated July 23, 2021 states the following:

- 22 1. “IHE administrators can help protect students, faculty, and staff and slow  
23 the spread of COVID-19 by encouraging vaccinations...”  
24 2. “IHEs where all students, faculty, and staff are **fully** vaccinated...can  
25 return to full capacity in-person learning without requiring or  
26 recommending masking or physical distancing for people who are fully  
27 vaccinated.”  
28 3. In cases where the IHE community is not fully vaccinated the IHE  
29 “requires decision making to protect” those who are unvaccinated.

30 In short, according to the CDC guidance “**vaccination is the leading prevention**  
31 **strategy to protect individuals**

32 **from COVID-19 disease and end the COVID-19 pandemic.”** Furthermore,  
33 “current COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States are safe and  
34 effective, widely accessible in the U.S., and available at no cost to all people  
35 living in the U.S.” The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has now been fully  
36 approved by the FDA.<sup>5</sup>

37 As a model for the community, MSU should be leading the way in dealing with  
38 the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, vaccine requirements have been shown to  
39 increase rates even over voluntary incentives.<sup>6</sup> As expected, other colleges and  
40 universities are responding by adding vaccine requirements for faculty, staff,  
41 and/or students with the number now reaching 896, according to the *Chronicle of*  
42 *Higher Education*. This includes 437 public institutions with 226 requiring all  
43 students and employees to be vaccinated.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the *Association of*  
44 *American Medical Colleges*<sup>8</sup> along with almost 60 other organizations, including  
45 the *American College Physicians*,<sup>9</sup> support required COVID-19 vaccines. The  
46 Supreme Court denied a request without comment by students at Indiana  
47 University challenging the university's vaccine requirement on constitutional  
48 grounds and allowed the requirement to continue.<sup>10</sup> In Kentucky, Berea,  
49 Bellarmine, and Transylvania require all students and employees to be  
50 vaccinated.<sup>7</sup>

51 Finally, we at MSU know that in-person, on-campus engagement between  
52 students, faculty, and staff is critical to student success. Additionally, the COVID  
53 pandemic has resulted in significant financial impacts for MSU, which will only  
54 worsen with another suspension of on-campus operations. A vaccine requirement  
55 is an important tool to continue in-person, on-campus student engagement.

56 References (all accessed on September 10, 2021)

- 57 1. <https://www.nku.edu/covid19/statistics.html> ;
- 58 <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/cv19maps/incidencemap09092021.pdf> ;
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- 74 [employees](https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/press-releases/aamc-statement-covid-19-vaccine-requirements-medical-school-and-teaching-hospital-employees)
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