

Faculty Senate Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 23, 2026
1:00 to 3:00 PM EST, Conwell 3B

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://temple.zoom.us/j/94010152486?from=addon>

Present in person: Bognanno (MB), Kolodny (RK), Newman (SN); Curtis, Jiang, McCarthy, Minhas, Norris, Solow

Present Online: Ahmad, Gamero, Godel, Jones, Letarte, Racano, Schirmer

AGENDA

1. Call to Order – Dr. Mike Bognanno, Senate President - 1:04 PM

- Welcome
- President's Report

MB reported on the Federal Impact Advisory Group's 9/14 meeting, which focused on three issues:

- 1) The attempt by the Trump administration to limit international students to 4 years before having to leave the U.S. as well as putting limits on change of major and internships. This executive order has been put on hold for now by a District Court ruling.
- 2) Caps on student loans, including the elimination of Grad Plus Loans, caps for undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, both yearly and in aggregate, as well as a larger aggregate for undergraduate and graduate and professional education. Some estimates show that 1/3rd of all law students and perhaps a majority of M.D. and graduate STEM students would exceed this cap and be forced to resort to private borrowers to make up the difference. (One member of the committee pointed out that the Dental School tuition and fees are around \$80,000/yr, which would put borrowers above the cap before their studies would be over. SN noted that tuition at the LKSOM means that its students would also be in this situation.)

MB added that low income students would be hurt disproportionately, a situation made worse by the new requirements for Pell Grant recipients to take 12 credits in order to qualify for half-time status.

MB added that Parent Plus loans will also have new caps and that it's likely that high-cost masters programs will suffer.

- 3) Also in the offing are tests for median earnings for those who have finished undergraduate and graduate programs, using the earnings of those in the same state as a criterion. While very few undergraduate programs would fail this test, some master's programs may be in trouble.

Discussion

Q: How are they going to track this? What is the metric?

Department of Ed does have that data, apparently.

If more than 50% of a university's programs fail that test, its students will be ineligible for federally subsidized loans.

Comment: Martyn Miller, assistant vice president for global engagement, relayed to International Students that they shouldn't take domestic flights. ICE is monitoring them.

MB: A foreign student returning to the US from a conference had their university laptop seized. They had no letter from their university authorizing travel with the laptop. Anyone leaving the US with a Temple laptop should ensure it is permitted and obtain a letter.

Q: Was this laptop incident about the technology? Or was it university property?

MB: It could have been a concern that the laptop's potentially sensitive data was put at risk or that the university's laptop's use abroad was unauthorized - I don't know.

2. Approval of Minutes: September 9, 2026

The minutes were approved the following addition:

Michael Schirmer: We can make honors courses more rigorous without being made challenging because we can run them small.

Also, going forward, we will let guests know that they should indicate if there is anything they wish to remain confidential.

3. Vice President's Report: Robin Kolodny – 1:30 PM

- The 3rd ballot to stock committees has just gone out.
- Inventions and Patents Committee needs populating, but needs coordination with Steve Nappi/Admin
- The FSSC will be meeting with VPFA Jen Wood about the problem of an insufficient number of full professors to serve on promotion and tenure committees.
- After the presentation on the Honors College from Prof. Simon at the prior FSSC, VPUS Servaty-Seib and Dean Boardman informed RK that there will be more info coming. A separate honors application is now part of the common app, and Honors is about to hire somebody to oversee this, including outreach in general and to non-traditional honors students in particular. Given the staged timing of the gift, changes for the College will have to be sequenced, and that meshes with the Senate's desire for a multi-year plan we will be consulted on.
- On the mandate for first-year students to live on campus with exceptions: VP Jodi Bailey shared some info and agreed with RK's suggestion that they release a FAQ that will answer, among other things, what the exceptions to the policy will be. A member of the FSSC added that VP Bailey wants to meet with the FSSC.

- Committees: RK is following up to make sure that committees are actually meeting.
- In the wake of the column in *The Inquirer* about a faculty member's daughter being denied housing that matches her gender, RK reached out to the LGBTQIA Concerns Committee to see if there was anything they could do, perhaps a survey, though RK noted that surveys have to go through a process at Temple now before circulated.
- SN reported on the meeting between TAUP and Senate officers: We discussed their new platform on workload and the Senate's concerns about the task force report that will soon be released. We also discussed moves to include faculty on the Budget Advisory Committee and our effort to increase our representation on the Board of Trustees. SN will send the TAUP workload platform to FSSC members outside the bargaining unit.

4. Guest: Brian Keech (BK), Vice President for Government and Community Relations – 1:52 PM

- Since coming to Temple from Drexel, where he held the same title, last October 2nd, he has been assessing how Temple's various communities have dealt with federal, state, and city governments as well as our neighbors in North Philadelphia and other places where Temple has a footprint (Ambler, Terra Hall, etc.)
- Open lines of communication are particularly important here; perhaps the best decision he made while at Drexel was having regular meetings with community members, something he is continuing at Temple, meeting with the Community Council every 3 weeks.
- He has brought Governmental Affairs and Community Relations together; they were separate when he arrived. He now has 8 staff, including 1 new hire.
- He is also in regular communication with Strategic Communications and the Health Sciences campus
- MB asked about the flat funding from the Commonwealth for the past 7 years. He understands that some legislators might argue that this has kept pace per capita given our decline in students, but the inflationary cut has actually outpaced that drop in enrollment.
- SN asks whether faculty could be included in lobbying legislators.

BK responded that his office does put faculty with expertise in front of legislative committees but thought that the idea of pairing faculty with students from legislators' home districts was an idea worth considering

- SN also asked about the effect of the Medicaid cuts as a result of the “One Big Beautiful Bill”

BK responded that Temple projects very serious cuts, more than the Commonwealth could backfill.

- BK noted that he does not say “flat funded” but “level funded,” since its important to appreciate that the commonwealth appropriation is only one line item of Commonwealth funding, including money for the hospital and capital projects.
- RK asked why Temple is underfunded, especially in comparison to the PASSHE schools, which we outperform.

BK responded that there is some help from the new performance based funding pool and that our higher Pell-eligible percentage of students should help us.

- A member of the FSSC noted that it’s hard to keep morale up among faculty in the current environment of austerity, and SN added that our task is complicated by the needs of the current generation of students, making increased funding all the more urgent.

BK: Funding is a zero-sum game in the current fiscal environment, though there are revenue-generators that may occur, especially if the State Senate flips (e. g., legalizing marijuana)

- RK asked if there was any attempts to address the loan caps we discussed earlier on the state level.

BK said a conversation has been started on that topic. =

- MB asked how much flexibility we enjoy with funding for capital projects

BK: It depends on the funding: public property funding is not restricted but capital projects are earmarked for particular projects. Also, we have to realize that we can never assume funding year to year and make sure that we articulate our requests within a well-thought-out plan.

MB expressed a concern about the maintenance and utilities costs of the university's increasing square footage. Increasing square footage drives up our costs, whereas replacing old buildings improves our campus without driving up carrying costs.

- SN asked about the state of Temple's relationship with our North Philadelphia neighbors.

BK replied that he is in daily communication with the community, a lesson he learned from his 21 years of daily meetings at Drexel. It's crucial to listen to the community, and to uncover any negative history. We have made commitments in the past, oral and written and those are sometimes hard to track down. It's important that we build relationships to address problems and to use our institutional power to solve problems.

The community members we meet with head RCOs, are ward leaders, religious leaders, block captains.

My meetings with them so far have revealed that the east and west sides of Broad Street are quite different, but I'm hoping to bring them together to see what they share.

We like to bring in people from university to hear from community—trash and public safety are the key issues.

Q: How many community members are at these meetings?

A: Usually 5-8; at larger events, 17-20

4. Unfinished Business

5. New Business

Adjournment 3:07 p.m.

6. Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

Representative Faculty Senate Meeting, October 1, 2026
1:45pm-3:15pm EST, Center for Anti-Racism, 140 Mazur Hall
Guest: Richard Sobieray, COO

Faculty Senate Steering Committee, October 7, 2026
1:00pm-3:00pm EST, Conwell Hall Conference Room 3B
Guest: Evelyn Thimba, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Representative Faculty Senate Meeting, October 20, 2026
1:00pm-3:00pm EST, Center for Anti-Racism, 140 Mazur Hall
Guest: Provost Elizabeth Wentz

7. Adjournment - 3:00 PM