



Emory University Senate Meeting Minutes

**Zoom Meeting
January 25, 2022
3:00-5:00 p.m.**

Attendees: Octavian Ioachimescu, Grace Goh, Shana Ware, Benn Konsynski, Katrina Shafer, Sidney Stein, Lynell Cadray, Daphne Orr, Bridget Riordan, Holly York, Gregory Fenves, Rich Mendola, Carol Henderson, Zvipo Chisango, Rachelle Spell, Lisa Macklin, Tramaine Dowell, Allison Dykes, Alicia DeNicola, Hope Victoria Busenius, George Shepherd, Anjulet Tucker, Nick Everage, Richard Castillo, Susan Ray, Jonathan Poole, Donna Maney, Eric Abrams, Channelle Russell, Rkia Cornell, Zinzi Sebunya, Rachel Ding, Lori Jahnke, Tim Holbrook, Michael Epstein, Christa Acampora, Steve Sencer, Del King, Melissa Morgan, Modele Ogunniyi, Stacey Gall, Cameron Taylor, Dawn Francis-Chewning, Lynne Nygaard, Ashley Mastin, Rithi Mulgaonker, Kat Morris, Erin Cahill, Kathryn Wood, Susan Bonifield, Lauren Jeffers, Allegra Porter, Alexander (Sasha) Volokh, Ravi Bellamkonda, Carrie Keogh, Curtis Henry, Caroline Barry, Kelly Garner Shannon, Danielle Bruce-Steele, Melissa Morgan, Kate Yeager, Walter Kolis, Dawn Comeau, Giacomo Negro, Joseph Banko, Emmakristina Sveen, Nikki Hurtado, Robert Nobles, Nitika Gupta

Excused Absences: Joy McDougall

Unexcused Absences: Kathleen Campbell, Lisa Underwood, Doug Bowman, Erin Bonning, Roxanne Chou, Aditi Vellore, Renee Bourbeau, Faith Cheplick, Jordan Wirth, Jonathan Moore, Kaye-Ann Sadler, Eric Abrams, Barbara Abrams, Raphael Coleman, Doug Hicks, Madi Olivier, Theresa Milazzo, Emily Fisher

I. Welcome and Approval of Consent Agenda, Octavian Ioachimescu, University Senate President

Dr. Donna Maney moved to approve the consent agenda; Dawn Francis-Chewning seconded the motion. The motion carried.

II. President's Update, Gregory Fenves, University President

President Fenves began with some COVID updates related to university operating conditions and the move back to in-person instruction. He then reported on recent leadership hires and searches. In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President Fenves also highlighted Emory's efforts to honor the history of Black and Indigenous peoples, including the 3-day symposium held last semester titled *In the Wake of Slavery & Dispossession*; Emory rejoining the Consortium of Universities Studying Slavery; Emory adopting the first formal land acknowledgement statement recognizing the Muscogee people as the original stewards of the land Emory currently occupies; and welcoming a Muscogee nation delegation to begin a new era of connection and productive partnerships. President Fenves proceeded to report on current initiatives resulting from the work done by the Task Force of Untold Stories and Disenfranchised Populations as well as the University committee on Naming Honors. Emory received a transformative gift from the Southern Company Foundation to establish the Emory University School of Law Center for Civil Rights and Social Justice, led by the inaugural John Lewis Chair, Dr. Darren Hutchinson. Infrastructure updates include first interfaith center on campus, as well as remodeled student identity spaces in AMUC while third floor of Cox Hall is being renovated, expected to be completed in Fall 2023. Dr. Carol Henderson is developing a DEI strategy to be released early February and will be soliciting community feedback.

Questions from the floor:

1. What is the vision for the AI.Humanities and its strategic goals?



Irrespective of your discipline and field, every future endeavor will be affected by Artificial Intelligence. Emory has a unique role to play not only on the technology side, but also on the human side. What are the values, ethics, morality represented in technology? How do we explain decisions made in algorithms in social media feeds and ads? We have an active search for the Wagner chair in AI Ethics, and the Provosts Office is making available to deans a mechanism to hire more faculty at the intersection of AI and specific areas of interest for the department or unit. We are also looking to start educational programs such as a minor in AI studies to prepare our students for the future.

2. Where are we in terms of the 2036 Campaign milestones?

It began in 2019, and will end Aug 31, 2025. Our goal is \$4B and we had already raised \$2.6B when we publicly launched. We are now shifting focus on generating endowment to support faculty and students. Currently we have 154 endowed professorships, and we want to raise another 150.

III. Updates on Research Administration Operations, Robert Nobles, Vice President for Research Administration

Dr. Nobles reported that the Office of Research Administration (ORA) met the requests of the Faculty Advisory Board to: 1) Establish a relationship with ORA where the views and recommendations were respected, 2) Share a copy of the McKinsey report—commissioned by the Provost in 2017 to assess the research environment at Emory, and 3) Share a copy of the Huron Report – commissioned by the SVPR in 2019 to assess research operations.

Dr. Nobles then shared the initiatives for process improvement. Under his leadership, ORA was restructured based on these consultant recommendations. ORA 2021-2022 Vision: Building a robust and resilient infrastructure, pursuing operational efficiency, recruiting a strong and supported workforce. Achievements over the past year: Key senior leadership hires, enhancing partnerships across campus, salary benchmarking and equity adjustments, navigating the pandemic with Emory's research growth, establish the Office of Research Compliance and Regulatory Affairs, ORA strategic action planning, ORA leadership training, external reviews and organizational alignment, IT systems enhancement, demonstrating that ORA is trustworthy. Threat: high staff turnover.

Questions from the floor:

1. Delays in processing caused by Research Administration Services have caused faculty to lose contracts for time-sensitive competitive enrollment in crucial clinical trials. To prevent this, faculty are having to do the work that should be provided by RAS. What are you doing about this?

Staff are overloaded, but we have hired 50 members since September 2021 to handle these issues. ORA is working to change the accountability and levels of support by infusing more resources into the RAS. Dr. Nobles invited everyone to reach out to him personally if you are not getting the support you need.

2. Emory faculty at Grady is often neglected in research endeavors, I would like to see more support and accountability in timeliness to reduce the burden on researchers.

We have working groups on Emory-CHOA and University-Healthcare engagement, but not on the Emory-Grady relationship since it was never on our radar. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.



IV. Library Policy Committee Report, Benn Konsynski, Committee Chair

Dr. Konsynski reported that the Library Policy Committee might revise its mission in light of evolutions in structure and form of library and museum activities. The Library Policy Committee works with the Dean and University Librarian to enhance the quality, utility, and accessibility of the libraries at Emory. It advises the Dean and the Senate on significant policy issues, related to collections, services, and space, and acts as a major channel of communication between users and the libraries. FY22 topics include: Vice Provost for Libraries and Museum transition; Library continuity; Teaching and Learning Technology updates; Library Search launch; Collections budget. The libraries remain open with reduced hours in January 2022, and services will be offered both in-person and virtually.

V. Honorary Degree Committee Report, Kathryn Wood, Committee Chair

Dr. Wood presented on the nomination process for Honorary Degree candidates, then gave an overview of the eight nominees for AY 2021-2022. Details for each nominee can be found [here](#). The Senate will vote on the nominees in next month's meeting.

VI. Open Expression Committee Report, Ashley Mastin, Committee Vice-Chair

Ms. Mastin reported on the committee's inquiry into the allegations involving faculty and students at the Law School back in September 2021. Dr. Sasha Volokh is the chair of the Open Expression Committee and professor at the Law School, and was at the center of the recent controversy. He has recused himself from the inquiry and all other committee business during the inquiry. Timeline of events: At least three different law professors have verbalized the N-word in the classroom (where pedagogy was questioned) since Fall of 2018. On September 2, 2021, Dr. Volokh referred to the Westboro Baptist Church as the "God hates F-word church," verbalizing the homophobic slur, in a lecture for a 1L Torts class. This prompted a long class discussion about the incident; two groups of students organized simultaneous walk-out and walk-in demonstrations. In the conversation surrounding this controversy, the concepts of open expression and academic freedom were inter-twined. Academic freedom protects faculty with respect to selected topics to teach and strategies to achieve the learning objectives. Open expression protects the right of all members of the Emory community to speak freely and to express dissent.

Committee findings: no violation of the Respect for Open Expression policy occurred on the part of Dr. Volokh or the students organizing and participating in the protest and/or counter-protest. As long as speech is not considered to be a threat or harassment, it is allowed under the policy. Evaluation of whether there was sound pedagogy behind the language in question was outside the scope of this committee's work and investigation. The Law School administration has judged that the speech in question was protected under principles of academic freedom. However, the committee wishes to emphasize that open expression does not exist in a vacuum. Students feared professional repercussions and could not hold a private opinion on the matter. The series of slurs used in the classroom at the Law School has contributed to an extremely tumultuous environment, by numerous accounts. Open expression is also often misunderstood, as it is seen by some students as a tool for justifying hate speech, instead of being a mechanism to protect dissent, as originally intended.



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Lack of policy violation is not an endorsement of the language used. It was proposed that culture and environment changes, as well as more education on the topics raised may be needed in units such as School of Law.

VII. Executive Session

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04pm.