

University of Denver
Faculty Senate
Minutes
November 13, 2015
Room 290, Anderson Academic Commons

Senators (or proxies) present:

Anneliese Amschler Andrews, Michael Brent, Victor Castellani, Frédérique Chevillot, Mac Clouse, Kate Crowe, Bradley Davidson, Jared Del Rosso, Claude d'Estree, Maha Foster, Tony Gault, Jim Gilroy, Jennifer Greenfield, Sara Hart Micke, Cynthia Hazel, Annabeth Headrick, John Hill, Art Jones, Paul Kosempel, Michelle Kruse-Crocker, Rick Leaman, Luis Leon, Seth Masket, Eleanor McNees, Laleh Mehran, Erin Meyer, Julianne Mitchell, Pallab Paul, Ronnie Pavlov, Amy Phillips, Tom Quinn, Chip Reichardt, Aimee Reichman-Decker, Paula Rhodes, Dean Saitta, Carol Samson (proxy for Vi Narapareddy), Jonathan Sciarcon, Orna Shaughnessy, Mary Steefel, Kate Stoker, Billy Stratton, Nicole Taylor, Ron Throupe, John Tiedemann, Greg Ungar, Robert Urquhart, Michele von Merveldt, Kate Willink, Melanie Witt

Call to Order, Approval of Minutes

Art Jones, Senate President, called the meeting to order at noon.

A motion to approve the minutes from the October 23, 2015 Senate meeting was seconded and approved.

Faculty Panel Presentations and Discussion, DU Impact 2025

Art discussed his conversations with the Chancellor about the Strategic Plan. Chopp has noted that the input from Faculty Senate on the document was considered some of the most consequential feedback that she received and that much of it will be incorporated into the revised plan.

Art explained that the One DU section of the strategic plan has been noted as the least developed and that the Executive Committee has therefore invited a panel of faculty from different disciplines were to present on the topic “What is the meaning of ‘One DU’ from a uniquely faculty perspective?” at today’s meeting.

Panelists

- Mac Clouse, Professor of Finance, Daniels College of Business
- Sarah Pessin, Professor of Philosophy and Director, Center for Judaic Studies
- Tom Romero, Associate Professor, Sturm College of Law and Assistant Provost for Inclusive Excellence Research and Curriculum Initiatives

- Matt Taylor, Professor of Geography
- Nancy Wadsworth, Associate Professor of Political Science

Mac Clouse

Mac noted that he brings decades of experience to the discussion, not only as a department chair and administrator but also as a long-time faculty member. He sees One DU as one University with all the components working together. What can we do as One DU to provide the “value added” and “return on investment” expected by students as tuitions continue to rise. As a private school, we have a focus on a high-quality educational experiences. He would like to see DU as a leader in cross-disciplinary, cross-department, team-taught courses and programs at undergraduate and graduate level. As a private school, we can move quickly and respond to needs. He sees a need for stronger support for this and administrative changes to encourage, rather than discourage these activities. These would include a new model for tuition revenue sharing and recognizing and rewarding team teaching, rather than giving credit for only one-half of a course when team teaching. Academic departments also need to be creative and think about what departments and units they could best work with; within and across units.

He stated that while we do a lot for first-year students and have had many programs over the years, we need to do more for students at the end of their time at DU. He proposed a team-taught, cross-disciplinary Life Experience class during the last quarter or two of senior year that can help students transition to life after college. This course could include job information, but would also include financial literacy (renting vs. owning a home; how to get a mortgage, understanding insurance, retirement planning, taxes, and student loan repayment), community involvement and volunteering, networking, lifelong education, and ethics. Ideally this course would bring together students from different disciplines to help unite the seniors as part of One DU.

Matt Taylor

Matt recommended the book, as he does for his students, *Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman* by the founder of the Patagonia clothing company, who, Matt related has “always done the right thing” in terms of social aspects of his company and the environment. Matt stated that reading about One DU rings true to him in terms of our intentions as a University community, but we have not always been able to act on these intentions due to institutional limitations like those mentioned by Mac. These obstacles can be overcome to create One DU. Matt sees One DU not as a late addition to the document but as a framework within which the other three Transformative Directions exist. If we don’t do everything in a socially and environmentally just manner it is meaningless, no matter how many centers or knowledge bridges we create.

Matt discussed how he used books like *Let My People Go Surfing* and *Gaviotas: a Village to*

Reinvent the World to connect with the business students in his FSEM class on the human dimensions of environmental change and to challenge them to become active in their communities and in the University. He read One DU both with joy and with frustration, seeing that faculty are One DU already, living and teaching what is outlined in the document, but limited in practicing these principles at the University because of some of the structures that are in place. For Matt, One DU is really putting into practice what is inside all of us already and activating it. To do this we need more experimentation and innovation; we need to fail and our students need to fail and figure out why they failed. He discussed his own effort engage students in creative ways by taking them out of the University on trips to Nicaragua and Guatemala. Not only were the students, many of them non geography or environmental science majors, excited by the trips, but he as a faculty member found it stimulating to work with business and literature majors. He concluded by saying we need, “an environment where students can get excited by our passions” ... “The love of research, thinking big and solving big problems: that is what we need to transfer to our students.”

Sarah Pessin

Sarah distributed a handout titled, the “10 Commandments for Religious Inclusivity @ DU!” and encouraged faculty to be creative, strategic, and committed to creating a culture of religious inclusivity at DU. She noted that, “Commitment and thoughtfulness, not perfection and ideal outcomes are the keys to a more religiously inclusive One DU.”

10 Commandments for Religious Inclusivity @ DU!

1. Check the interfaith calendar.
2. Don't be a wishful thinker. Strategize changes! What is your strategy for you and your office checking the interfaith calendar as part of your routine event and meeting scheduling processes?
3. Never cite DU's policy that “religious holidays have no official status at DU” as an excuse for being anything less than 110% dedicated to and 110% creative around matters of religious inclusivity.
4. Don't use equality as an excuse for ignoring equity; don't use theoretical concerns for treating everyone equally in every way at every moment across the board without exception, as a way to avoid finding practical solutions that genuinely and actually make DU a more religiously inclusive place.
5. Be a creative problem solver. It might seem that some longstanding DU method or practice or calendaring custom is inviolable; it probably is not! DU creativity helps us revise, revisit, and revision!

6. Do not allow words like “worship” and “religious observance” to limit your sense of religious inclusivity. Life cycles, memory, culture, friends, food, identity, family—holidays are complex parts of the human experience with or without worship or religious observance!

7. Put people over pastry. An Islamic fast day is not a good day for a division-wide pastry party. Honor your co-workers: defer the event.

8. Hanukkah is not Jewish Christmas. Strategize ways to learn more about the many religious traditions celebrated by your DU friends and colleagues!

9. Don't disrespect, disparage or downplay feelings. If something you or your office is saying or doing (or not saying or doing) is making valued members of your DU community “feel excluded,” worry about it. And then strategize ways to do things better.

10. Be committed, and say you're sorry when you can't make it work. Commitment does not entail perfection, but if you are committed to greater religious inclusivity at DU, it will make a difference, even if you can't always get ideal outcomes.

Nancy Wadsworth

Nancy framed her comments in terms of the public/private distinction in higher education, and began by noting that she has become extremely skeptical that the current model of higher education – in which we privatize, brand, package, and sell education as a commodity - is sustainable. She sees One DU as an aspiration for a meaningful community based on core values and looked for those core values that we have at DU that are beyond those values that all good Universities share. We have packaged ourselves as a “Great private University dedicated to the public good.” In this climate of neoliberal privatization and the questioning of the very idea of public goods like education, how can we serve the public good if we are attached to this distinction between public and private? If we are to become what we want to be, we will have to reevaluate this attachment. Nancy appreciated that the Chancellor's inauguration put DU on the stage publically with public institutions, including community colleges, in a way she has not seen before.

Nancy saw the sustainable piece of the document as very superficial, ignoring climate change, our position of power and failing to position ourselves as a political actor in these issues, which include very serious issues including catastrophic floods, multi-year drought, extreme storms.

She also addressed the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence piece and related it to the protests at The University of Missouri. She stated that the only reason we have not had similar uprisings at DU is that we lack a critical mass and a culture of political engagement at DU. Even without a critical mass of students of color, students did meet in solidarity with Missouri. She then related some of the feelings that our current culture at DU engenders in underrepresented students that have been shared with her. Nancy has had numerous underrepresented students “breaking

down” in her office over her eleven years at DU as they relate what it feels like to be underrepresented at DU. A student also recently related that racist comments on YikYak remind her daily that she’s “not supposed to be here”. Students of color, according to Nancy, feel they are they are crashing a private party, or that they were only invited to make it look more diverse. Nancy noted that we have made great strides in the past eleven years but she still has students crying in her office on a regular basis. If diversity and IE are truly core values and we hope to build enduring community from them we have to teach this everywhere and at every level.

Nancy concluded with three moments of connection and meaning that were more uplifting. First, when attending the funeral of a faculty member’s husband she was surrounded by other faculty members, evidence of years of relationship building and evidence of true personal connections. Second, when she and other faculty stood on the capitol steps to hear the Governor apologize on behalf of the State of Colorado for the role of the Governor’s Office in the Sand Creek Massacre to Cheyenne and Arapahoe people. That was a public moment in which her work, her scholarship, her collaboration which was relational and important, and made a public difference. The third moment, was when her father, an 87 year old DU graduate, who is also a “conservative, libertarian, cowboy, bible thumper” noted that the Governor had done the right thing. He felt connected to the DU community and the work we had done that had a public impact. He went back to tell his friends in Wyoming how significant it was.

We have to think of ourselves as public, who are we as a public entity with a lot of power in this region.

Tom Romero

Tom opened with the observation that he can often tell where a person was raised or her socioeconomic class by how she washes her dishes. Those who come from an arid or semi-arid environment or who don’t have consistent access to water are likely to wash all the dishes in one suds-filled sink before rinsing them all, while those who grow up in areas where water is not so scarce will rinse, scrub, and rinse each dish again, often before placing them in a dishwasher to be washed yet again.

One piece of our strategic plan that stands out to Tom in relation to his work on social and racial inequality in the Rocky Mountain West is captured in this quote from *Impact 2025*, “Our ability to engage Denver and the region in an ethical and productive fashion depends on how we live our values internally in our culture. We need to create a culture that reflects our DNA for this day and age. Our deep commitments to inclusive excellence and sustainability are central to how we think about serving our aspirations and mission through our culture and structures.”

Tom raised two interrelated questions: Are our commitments to creating One DU through Inclusive Excellence and sustainability mutually exclusive? How is the answer to the first question connected to the follow-up question: How do we, as a DU community, collectively “wash our hands”? Tom then used an original poem he wrote to draw attention to ways DU

should think about its intertwined commitments to inclusive excellence and sustainability. Issues raised:

- Disparity between where the water is, where the people are, and how they can access that water. In Colorado 80% of water is on Western Slope, while 80% of population is on Front Range. This mismatch also is true globally.
- In agriculture, water law and policy supports high yield crops. The world grows twice as much food as it did a generation ago, but extracts three times the water to do so. Resulting problems included dammed rivers, depleted aquifers, and agricultural land that can no longer be farmed due to lack of water.
- Water problems are not limited to the developing world but also impact poor communities and those of color in the US. Examples include “colonias” along the border with Mexico, which have no water or sewage lines.
- Average household in Denver consumes 120 gallons of water a day. Add to that water needs for power generation (including renewables) and it exacerbates the human rights crisis around water for poor, and often of-color, communities.
- In 2007 alone, 10 billion gallons of untreated/ hazardous wastewater was dumped into US drinking water supply.
- Failing water infrastructure affects not only urban core but first-string suburbs, in Denver these are home to immigrants of color as well as historic African Americans and Latino communities.
- Linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic and other barriers make it difficult for these communities to advocate for their water infrastructure. Government funding shortfalls compound this issue.

Tom summarized that sustainability and inclusive excellence problems are intertwined and interdisciplinary, and that our best lawyers, engineers, historians, critical race thinkers, educators, and social scientists will need to work together to find solutions. Crises of the 21st century are almost always based in unequal distributions of power, resources, and ideology.

We have an opportunity in Impact 2025 to train transdisciplinary graduates and empower diverse faculty who are all committed to create and disseminate new knowledge to battle inequity in our time. To answer the question “How do we at DU wash our hands?” Tom concluded that, “No matter the work that we do, the school we are in, or the discipline that we are trained in, the added value that can make DU distinct is the shared commitment of every unit to interrogate issues of power, ideology, and the perpetuation of inequality in our common curriculum, research, and practices. A sustainable DU that serves and unequal Denver, an unequal Rocky Mountain West, an unequal world, requires no less.”

Q&A

Art invited panelists to ask questions of one other.

Nancy asked: Is it sustainable this public private division? Great private universities don't have to say that about themselves. Seems to indicate a wall that keeps the public out, in spite of the many people here are doing public good work.

Matt: These words don't really matter because we didn't create them, they came from an expensive advertising firm. We should use our innovation and students' innovation to come up with an identity that encompasses our commitment to sustainability in all aspects of business.

Mac: I don't see the distinction – private or public is not that critical – every university should be working to be great.

Tom: How does community view us? If you don't know we are a gated community; to the rest of the community this distinction does matter. But we can flip this around: What does being private do for us? It gives us resources, flexibility, ways to engage in ways that public Universities can't.

Nancy: The newly formed divestment committee has asked for DU's portfolio to see how deeply invested in fossil fuels the university is but the university won't share that information. The reason given was that as a private university, we don't have to share that, even with a small committee of members internal to the community.

Sarah: Thank you to Nancy for raising the question. Perhaps it doesn't need to be a blockade. If there are ways that the private status gives us some advantages then let's use them in the right way. To whom on the outside does the term private sound good and to whom does it sound like a fence?

Art asked: Sarah, how did religious inclusiveness get separated out from overall inclusiveness and how do we get to the point where it's not separated out if we are going to be One DU?

Sarah: Don't know where that happened, or why it gets left out that much. There's a group trying to bring attention to this issue, but there the hope is that more people become comfortable bringing up religious inclusivity and the interfaith calendar in meetings, etc. People may be uncomfortable talking about religion, but this isn't about your personal belief system or how deeply you believe in God but about how you celebrate your religion, about family events that may conflict with class schedules. Let's make these discussions less awkward. New language that "Religious holidays have no official status at DU" is better than "DU recognizes no religious holiday." Not sure how it gets left out, but it's everyone's job to make sure it doesn't get left out.

Art then called for questions and comments from the floor.

Dean Saitta: I'd like to clarified that the tag line about the great private university came from a faculty committee who spent a lot of time pondering the question, not a marketing firm. We

need to take advantage of opportunities to distinguish ourselves from the publics. Three of the worst violators of faculty rights and freedoms were on that inauguration panel: CU Boulder, Community College system and Western State University. Inclusivity is great but need to think about faculty inclusion. Faculty need to be more involved in University governance to help resolve the distinction between public and private. They need to be more aggressive and more activist.

Claude: I'd be happy to talk to you about the History of Chaplaincy at DU, being the Buddhist Chaplain here. There is a tradition for [many universities] for the chancellor to give a capstone course on ethics. Our chancellor could actually teach that. Recommends to all grads Paulo Friere's *Pedagogies of the Oppressed*.

Robert Urquhart: Very much agree with importance of Paulo Friere's *Pedagogies of the Oppressed*. We do need to address issue of neoliberalism in terms of our status as private.

Art: Faculty can be conveners in the implementation of One DU. We need to be bold. We also need to be careful about not looking at implementation as a zero sum game.

Matt: My daughter just went off to college, but didn't choose DU. If we do the right thing we will stand out, socially and environmentally, we will be a beacon in the region. As Dean says, how do we harness the power of what we have here, of our faculty? Do we have the power? Or is it just lack of action.

Sarah: Assuming we are in a time of change, if there are upper administrators who have been in the system for a long time, we might urge faculty senate to determine when the "boat steers" need to change.

Art: We need more diversity on big high profile committees. Same people are often called.

Tom: The people in power and systems matter. Need to interrogate how power works at DU. Strategic plans are just marketing strategies, but we don't have to buy into that. We need to think of people and power.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by

Erin Meyer
Faculty Senate Secretary