

LA & S Senate Minutes
Meeting of January 25, 2023

Departments represented and attending: Anthropology (Jessica Smeeks); Communication Studies (Lauren Mark); English (Usha Vishnuvajala); History (Heather Morrison); Philosophy (Eugene Heath); Psychology (Elizabeth Hirshorn).

Departments represented but unable to attend: Economics (Mona Ali); Political Science (Stephen Pampinella).

Departments not represented by a senator: Asian Studies; Black Studies; Communication Disorders; Digital Media & Journalism; Geography; Languages, Literatures & Cultures; Latin American, Caribbean, & Latinx Studies; Sociology; Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies

This was a special Senate meeting held (online) in order that we might hear from Dean Laura Barrett as to the feedback she had received from Department Chairs regarding the status and purpose of the Senate.

Dean Barrett stated, first, that most Chairs do not believe that the Senate should continue as it has been constituted. She said that the Chairs gave two reasons for this view: It is too difficult to get representatives and the process of curricular review, up to now a major responsibility of the Senate, is “redundant” (“redundant on what?” It was asked—on the reviews of the Dean’s Office, the Chairs, and the Curriculum Committee). Most chairs thought it useful to have a senatorial body that would do “other things.” As to the “other things,” the Dean noted that the Chairs had little to suggest as to what these “other things” might be. So, the suggestions for allocating distinct responsibilities to the Senate, noted below, were those of the Dean.

Review of faculty candidates for LA & S Awards in Scholarship, Teaching, or Service.

Oversee an early career faculty mentorship program (with mentors outside of the faculty member’s department).

Some LA & S Senators could liaise with the DEI or represent the Senate on the DEI council.

Manage the LA & S “Without Limits” program: for example, select a theme well enough in advance so that the “Without Limits” planning committee could function more effectively.

Strategizing and planning a “First-year seminar.”

There was some discussion of these ideas; most senators present seemed agreeable to these, though not everyone. However, everyone did agree that we should discuss these further and among ourselves.

Eugene Heath
Convener, LA & S Senate “on call”