

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting with President and Provost

September 12, 2025, at 10:00-11:30 PM, Rabi Reich Room

MINUTES

Attendance: Chair Corrin Gillis, Secretary Tatyana Lobova, Senator David Burdige, Senator Elizabeth Burns, Senator Ali Hosseini, President Hemphill, Provost Payne, EVP Schumaker.

Absent: Vice-chair Wie Yusuf, Senator Dennis Gregory, Senator Lucy Wittkower, Senator Lee Land.

- **President:**

- Title III (inc. ADA) cuts happened on top of all other federal cuts for financial aid. Our students are already impacted by the PELL grants cut.
- Instead of cutting funds and programs like other universities, we are implementing an active strategy of investment in digital technologies. What we have experienced before is nothing compared to what is coming up – we have to be very strategic and implement a new path forward, as the only way to remain relevant in the future.

- **Provost:**

- Other universities are increasing enrolment (VT to 40,000) as a coping strategy. We need to have a different approach if we can't get more freshmen due to the demographic cliff and competition. We need to make sure we increase retention and graduation rates. Student success is the priority.
- Provost was meeting with newly promoted faculty and will be meeting with each department next.

Questions for President & Provost:

1. Who decided to transition to an eight-week course format for online classes?

Considering that faculty and programs must redesign their courses for a different mode of delivery and a shorter duration, why is this not regarded as a curriculum change?

- Eight-week accelerated courses are a key component of the digital initiative led by the President, with execution overseen by VP Payne and VP Gonser. Recognizing the value of every degree program at ODU, the President aims to avoid potential program cuts in response to the anticipated enrollment decline. As a proactive measure, investing in digital technologies and

accelerated online programs is a strategic approach to enhance educational offerings and safeguard against future challenges.

- Curriculum changes affect the content of the courses, not the delivery time. The Chairs were informed last June and January that changes in online delivery are coming. The President introduced this concept in his State of the University address last Fall. Acceleration is necessary for the enrollment and retention of online students in today's highly competitive educational landscape.
- Implementation of 8-week courses will be discussed with the faculty. Dr. Van Lunen and Dr. Malogianni will be meeting with the different programs to discuss the implementation. Full redesign of the online course will be compensated. Faculty will have full support from DTT Instructional Designers who were subcontracted for this project.

2. *The communication regarding online PhD programs lacks clarity. Are all graduate-level courses required to be asynchronous? Should the same approach be applied to both M.S. and PhD courses?*

- Policies and infrastructure operations will be worked out with the departments.
- PhD courses changes are optional. If PhD courses are cross-listed, they will be treated as MS courses and transferred to an accelerated format.

3. *What are the objectives for these changes?*

- Improving students' outcomes, graduation, and retention rates (79% currently)
- Strategically grow the institution instead of cutting the programs due to the upcoming enrollment cliff.
- Future-proofing the university with multiple initiatives: AI inclusion, technology in the classrooms, and accelerated online programs.

4. *Who constitutes the target audience for this accelerated program?*

- Part-time students
- This format works for students in AZ State, Maryland Global and Perdue

5. *The increased grading workload may become impractical for faculty, leading to a curriculum change with fewer assessments and greater reliance on automated grading systems, potentially diminishing the quality of online education compared to*

face-to-face instruction. How can ODUGlobal ensure that the quality of online education is on the same level as face-to-face courses?

- This is not the responsibility of ODUGlobal. Faculty are responsible for the course's integrity oversight under the leadership of the Provost.
- Summer classes are examples of accelerated courses in 6-week format, and we have no indication that they are “low quality”.
- No more than 3 classes/9 credits will be offered per 8-week term
- Students will be advised if they should take 8-week classes as freshmen.

6. Is there an intention to differentiate between an ODU Global degree and a traditional ODU degree?

- No, it's never been such a plan. Online enrollment is growing and sustaining overall ODU growth. Online degrees are issued by ODU.
- We are not pursuing a model of the University of Maryland Global Campus, which is a separate institution within the University System of Maryland, and is not the same as the University of Maryland, College Park.

7. How will the 6 eight-week sessions fit within an academic year, accounting for breaks?

- Winter break remains
- It will be 6 entry points for each session
- A shorter break will be between the Spring and Summer semesters
- A very short break between Summer 2 and Fall semester
- Academic calendar will be available soon

8. Are there plans to modify the existing remote work policies?

- Yes, the goal is to make it more flexible for faculty and allow potential remote faculty to teach online courses.

9. To what extent is the administration willing to collaborate with faculty on implementation without enforcing a strict deadline for next Fall? Is there an opportunity for a soft launch next Fall, featuring pilot programs from various colleges?

- Dr. Van Lunen and Dr. Malogianni will be addressing the implementation; we will not expect a full redesign of all online courses.
- No pilots will be running in the Fall 2026. All courses that are regularly offered online in the Fall semester must be in an 8-week format next Fall.

- Pilot courses are scheduled for Spring 2026, with the primary aim of identifying and implementing necessary improvements, ensuring the courses are optimized for accelerated delivery.

10. What impact will this course redesign have on faculty productivity? Will they have reduced time available for research, service, and professional development activities?

- Instructional Designers will work with faculty in course redesign and/or conversion to an 8-week.
- The Academic Affairs office will include the time faculty spend on course redesign for promotion and tenure considerations.
- If the online program is successfully growing, more faculty lines will be created in the program.
- More flexibility for faculty teaching online will be offered in terms of teaching semesters and location.