



## CALL TO ORDER

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Chair Jarzynski called the meeting to order at 3:17 p.m.

## APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES, OCTOBER 3, 2023 MEETING

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Chair Jarzynski asked if there were any corrections to the minutes as distributed; hearing none, he declared the minutes approved as distributed.

## REPORT OF THE CHAIR

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### 2023 BOR Staff Awards

Chair Jarzynski informed the Senate that The Staff Affairs Committee is currently accepting nominations for this year's Board of Regents' Staff Awards. Chair Jarzynski reminded the Senate that these annual awards are the highest System-wide recognition of the exceptional work done by staff members across the USM. Awardees receive a \$2,000 stipend and formal recognition by the Board of Regents and the University Senate. Exempt and non-exempt staff who have been with the University for at least 5 years are eligible to be nominated in one of these five categories;

1. Exceptional Contribution to the employees' Institution and/or Unit
2. Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment
3. Extraordinary Public Service to the University or Greater Community
4. Effectiveness and Efficiency (savings of at least \$10,000 in an academic or administrative context)
5. Inclusion, Multiculturalism, and Social Justice

Any member of the University community, including students, can nominate an eligible staff member.

Chair Jarzynski announced that nomination packages would be due in the Senate Office by Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. Detailed instructions found on the [Senate website](#).

### Committee and Council Replacements

Chair Jarzynski gave several updates regarding recent Committee and Council replacements.

Two replacement representatives, one non-exempt member for the Campus Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) and one exempt member for Athletic Council needed to be replaced.

Due to the fact that there was no election for these positions in May 2023, there was no runner up available to fill the vacancy. Two individuals were appointed on an interim basis so the committee and council could resume their work.

Because these positions were appointed on an interim basis, they will need Senate confirmation to serve as an official replacement. Chair Jarzynski informed that surveys would be distributed to the

non-exempt and exempt staff Senator constituencies after the meeting to vote on confirmation of these interim based appointments.

There were two other vacancies, a faculty member on Athletic Council and an undergraduate student Senator on CTAC. The runners up for these positions were notified and will be serving as replacements.

### Senate Office Staffing Updates

Chair Jarzynski announced there have been two additions to the University Senate office.

On September 25th, Melanie Anderson joined the University Senate Office as a Coordinator, and Raahina Malik joined us as a Graduate Assistant. Melanie joins from Utah, where she previously served as an executive and Operations Coordinator at the Mountainland Association of Governments aging department in Utah, and played a key role in policy changes, board meetings, and database enhancements ensuring program efficiency.

Raahina Malik, is joining us from Atlanta, Georgia. Raahina is in her first year with the College of Information Studies getting her master's in human computer interaction.

Chair Jarzynski also announced the Administrative Coordinator position was re-posted and will remain open until November 15, 2023. The link was made available on the [University job website](#).

## **SPECIAL ORDER**

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### **Amy Karlsson, Chair, Academic Procedures & Standards Committee**

#### ***Revision to the Final Exam Provision in the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure (Senate Document #21-22-11)***

Amy Karlsson, Chair of the Academic Procedures & Standards (APAS) Committee provided a presentation detailing the history and context behind the current proposal on the Revision to the Final Exam Provision in the University of Maryland Policy on the Conduct of Undergraduate Courses and Student Grievance Procedure, being examined by APAS.

A portion of the presentation was dedicated to taking a straw poll of the Senate's feelings surrounding the major policy changes that would occur with the APAS Committee's current proposed revisions. It was emphasized that these questions were non-binding and would not be used as an official vote. All discussion would be informal. The questions were presented as follows;

1. Should final exams be a mandatory requirement in every undergraduate class? (Y/N)
2. If a final exam is given, should it only be given during finals week? (Y/N)
3. Do you support a limitation on assessments due or administered in the last week of classes to prevent overburdening students before finals week? (Y/N)
4. Do you support limiting assessments administered or due during the last week of classes to those representing no more than 10% of a student's final grade? (Y/N)

5. Is the revised language defining the “last week of classes” clear? (Y/N)

“The last week of classes, defined as the final seven calendar days of the semester ending on the “Last day of classes” published in the academic calendar.”

Following the responses to the poll, there was a discussion about the specific questions and proposed policy changes.

A member mentioned that the stipulation to avoid final exams during the last week of classes historically dates to the early 90s, which should continue. Another part of the stipulation for having final exams was to reach a threshold of credit hours, to adhere to [Code of Maryland Regulations](#) (COMAR).

Karlsson responded that the committee did discuss the credit hours and COMAR requirements but did not arrive at the conclusion that it was an issue if the final exam requirement was lifted.

Another member asked for clarification on whether projects being used as a final assessment tool, could be administered during finals week under the new plan.

Karlsson responded that the committee felt that typically any final assessment tool would be administered during final exam week, including projects, presentations, or performances. However, Karlsson further clarified that there are multiple exceptions allowed under the proposed revision. For example, courses where final presentations are unable to be scheduled during the final exam week (examples include courses where students have clients that they are presenting to and cannot be scheduled during one specific exam time) would be allowed to continue.

Another member asked about courses where both a final project and final exam exist. Typically, these would be due within the same week, and that would bring additional stress to not just students, but also Teaching Assistants who are grading these materials, as well as professors as they provide support and submit multiple grades.

Karlsson emphasized this was a central point in the policy’s revision. In this example being discussed, the professor would have the option to make the final project due a week earlier; this is a relatively minor change in deadlines that result in a greater result and respite for all involved.

Karlsson stated another option would be to eliminate the traditional exam, given that the new policy would not require one.

Another member explained that in their department, students have a mandatory final project, as opposed to a final exam, and that flexibility in not having a traditional exam has been beneficial.

Additionally, a member supplemented the previous anecdote by describing their own course, which has a final summative assessment, as well as a final formative project. The final project is a semester-long endeavor and is difficult to move earlier in the semester due to the material, drafts, and feedback required to submit a viable version. This member emphasized that in a semester that is already meticulously scheduled, its difficult to move project deadlines.

Another member shared that in the Architecture program, students have a design review with professionals in the last week of classes. This type of “charrette” with professionals would be difficult to put earlier in the semester, both for scheduling and for student preparation.

A member also spoke from the Physics department that has lab practical finals and presentations, done on the last week. The presentation being cumulative, often including topics that had been taught up until the last week. The member asked if the revised policy would preclude this?

Karlsson responded that if the lab practical and presentation were one assignment, that took place during the final week of classes, it would be an exception, so long as there was not also a final exam that took place a week later.

Member clarified that this course did not have a final exam. But the final lab practical presentation was over 10% of the grade.

Karlsson explained that there are exceptions to account for the many courses and exams and presentations that do not fit into the final exam week, for scheduling or content or proctoring reasons. This example would fit into those exceptions.

Responding to a clarification, Karlsson explained that the current policy stated that courses are required to have a final exam. However, the proposed revision eliminates that requirement.

A member stated their strong support for dropping the requirement of having a final exam. However, the unintended consequences might be an issue; for example scheduling a final presentation in final exam period, there are certain classes with finals and one cannot continue to hold their Monday, Wednesday, Friday class time as usual- because of particular final exam time blocks.

Karlsson thanked everyone for the contributions, and noted this feedback would be brought back to the committee.

## **PCC PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DATA SCIENCE (SENATE DOCUMENT #23-24-11)**

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Wendy Stickle, Chair of the Programs, Courses, and Curricula (PCC) Committee presented the PCC Proposal to Establish a Master of Science in Data Science (Senate Document #23-24-11) and provided background information on the proposal.

Chair Jarzynski thanked Stickle and opened the floor for discussion of the proposal.

Senator Hajiaghayi, TTK Faculty, CMNS asked if the Master of Science being proposed would be appropriately rigorous to match the quality of other master’s courses at the University.

Stickle responded that there is not necessarily a difference in level between the current courses, as they exist as iterations of Master of Professional Studies programs, which are also master-level courses. The difference in moving from Master of Professional Studies to Master of Science would be a different approval process for receiving this Master of Science as opposed to a Master of Professional Studies. There is no formal expectation of a difference in difficulty.

Chair Jarzynski called for a vote on the proposal. The result was in 102 in favor, 4 opposed, and 8 abstentions. **The proposals passed.**

## **PCC PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOINFORMATICS AND COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY (SENATE DOCUMENT #23-24-12)**

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PCC proposals #23-24-11, #23-24-12, and #23-24-08 were voted on as a group. The result was in 102 in favor, 4 opposed, and 8 abstentions. **The proposals passed.**

## **REVIEW OF PCC PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN APPLIED MACHINE LEARNING (SENATE DOCUMENT #23-24-13)**

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PCC proposals #23-24-11, #23-24-12, and #23-24-08 were voted on as a group. The result was in 102 in favor, 4 opposed, and 8 abstentions. **The proposals passed.**

## **REVISIONS TO THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY (PLCY) PLAN OF ORGANIZATION (SENATE DOCUMENT #19-20-24)**

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Gene Ferrick, Chair of the Elections, Representation, and Governance (ERG) Committee presented the Revisions to the School of Public Policy (PLCY) Plan of Organization (Senate Document #19-20-24) and provided background information on the proposal.

Chair Jarzynski opened the floor for discussion of the proposal.

Senator Ravichandran, Graduate Student, CMNS, asked why members were being asked to vote on matters that they were not sitting on committee for and may not necessarily have expertise in.

Chair Jarzynski explained that the materials were distributed a week in-advance of the meeting, and voting members are requested to familiarize themselves with the materials, which includes a report detailing the work the committees have done.

Chair Jarzynski called for a vote on the proposal. The result was in 100 favor, 1 opposed, and 10 abstentions. **The motion passed.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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Senator Fang, Tenured Faculty, ARHU, yielded time and introduced Bill Kules, College of Information Studies, to speak on the development of new remote work policy.

Kules expressed concern that the new remote work policy being developed would jeopardize several hundred faculty positions, and no information has been shared publicly, creating either a communication issue or a transparency of policy issue. Kules continued to describe the effects of the policy, including overriding existing arrangements between faculty and colleges, superseding tenured protections, as well as concern that the shared governance process must take place, with Committee and Senate approval.

Chair Jarzynski responded that while no proposal has yet been brought before the Senate, meaning there has not begun an official process of changing the remote work policy at the University Senate

level. However, Senate Leadership has upcoming meetings with administration and will bring this concern to the table.

Senator Raianu, Tenured Faculty, ARHU, yielded time and introduced Renee Hill, Interim Associate Dean of EDI in the College of Information Studies.

Hill expressed similar concerns about a policy that has not been developed through the shared governance process on campus, and has potential to affect job security, academic freedom and individual flexibility.

Chair Jarzynski clarified that this policy being discussed is not yet an official proposed policy, and while an interim policy or draft is being discussed, there is no policy in front of the Senate. Any official policy change must and will come to the Senate, at which point an opportunity for full consultations, considerations, discussions and votes will take place.

Senator Clegg, Tenured Faculty, INFO, spoke about the effectiveness of remote work, allowing more interaction between faculty, more creativity in projects, presentations, research, and teaching. Clegg asked that these remote practices, as benefits to the University, being taken into consideration and not lost in any future policy changes.

Senator Wasdin, Tenured Faculty, ARHU, highlighted that being unable to hire the most competent and qualified individuals, because of a restriction of where they work- when the University has the capabilities to allow individuals to work virtually, would be disservice to the students and the world-renowned programming of this campus. Wasdin also commented that the process of developing policy; with proposal, committee work, recommendations and Senate discussions are vital to principals of university shared governance and should be implemented.

Chair Jarzynski introduced Betsy Beise, Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs.

Beise responded that the University System of Maryland (USM) has developed a [policy on remote work](#). One of the criteria in their requirements is that each USM institution develop its own local policy. This requires the University of Maryland to implement an interim policy to satisfy the USM requirements, and then the policy will come forward to the Senate for full procedural approval.

Beise clarified that even the interim policy has not been established.

## ADJOURNMENT

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.