



**Academic Assembly
Monday, November 13, 2023
2:05 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.
Student Center 130 & Zoom**

MINUTES

Members Present: Carol Adams, Wan Bae, Philip Barclift, Marc Cohen, Douglas Eriksen, Kerry von Esch, Naomi Hume, Nalini Iyer, Tayyab Mahmud, Shane P. Martin (Provost, *ex-officio*), Patrick Murphy, Robin Narruhn, Jodi O'Brien (Vice Provost, *ex-officio*), Rachel Olsen (Staff Council, *ex-officio*), Benjamin Jones-Rice (SGSU, *ex-officio*), Gayle Robinson, Bryan Ruppert, Patrick Schoettmer, Frank Shih, Aditi Somani (GSC, *ex-officio*), Kirsten Thompson, Phillip Thompson, Erin Vernon and Glenn Yasuda.

- I. Opening Remarks, AcA President Marc Cohen** **2:08 p.m. – 2:11 p.m.**
- a. Meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m. by Academic Assembly President, Marc Cohen.
 - b. **MOTION** Moved by Marc Cohen: "Move to approve the agenda for the November 13, 2023, meeting of the AcA." Seconded. **Approved. Unanimously.**
 - c. **MOTION** Moved by Marc Cohen: "Move to approve the meeting minutes from October 30, 2023, as revised, out of session, by AcA members." Seconded. **Approved. Unanimously.**

II. Revisions to the Repeated Courses Policy, AcA President Marc Cohen **2:11 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.**

The Assembly discussed the proposed revisions to the Repeated Courses Policy. There was a consensus that the Assembly would like to further discuss the policy revisions with Chief of Staff and Associate Provost David Lance, specifically about the implications the revised policy may have on various academic programs, before voting on it. Provost Martin emphasized that the intention of the revisions to the policy and the expediency of voting on it is to allow Nursing students to improve their grades as soon as this winter quarter, providing them an opportunity meet College of Nursing GPA requirements. Assembly members from the College of Science and Engineering stated they agree with the spirit of the policy, but have concerns about the practicalities pertaining to their programs. Members from other schools/colleges echoed this statement. If faculty have any further concerns, VP of Policy Bryan Ruppert invites faculty to contact him directly.

MOTION Moved by Marc Cohen: Move to table this discussion. Seconded. **Approved. Unanimously.**

III. MS in Cybersecurity Proposal

2:25 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.

Dean Amit Shukla & AcA VP of Curriculum Patrick Murphy

CSE Dean Amit Shukla joined the Assembly to present the MS in Cybersecurity proposal alongside AcA VP for Curriculum Patrick Murphy. AcA's Program Review Committee recommended that AcA approve the new program with conditions.

As a part of the *Reigniting Our Strategic Directions'* (RSD) goal to develop new graduate programs, this prospective program will be interdisciplinary among the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), Albers School of Business and Economics (ASB) and the School of Law (LAW). ASB Dean Joseph J. Phillips and LAW Dean Anthony E. Varona are a part of this collaboration and endorse the program and its interdisciplinary approach. As the program grows, the plan is to expand the interdisciplinary focus to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the College of Nursing (CON). Dean Shukla emphasized that this program centers the interdisciplinary aspects of cybersecurity and is not Computer Science (CS) intensive. The current approach to creating and implementing this program is to seek approval from the AcA, move forward with hiring a Program Director, and have the Program Director work closely with an advisory committee dedicated to building the program. Main points and concerns discussed by Assembly members are highlighted below—

- a. Relying on external expertise. A handful of Assembly members were concerned about the scope of the tentative hiring search for the Program Director and the inclusion of external partners on the advisory committee. As a University, the Assembly suggests that some of the external experts should also have a background in pedagogical development.
- b. Timeline. The proposal was presented at this meeting to align with the Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting later in the week. If approved by the BoT in its November meeting, the new graduate program would aim to launch Fall 2024.
- c. Procedures. Assembly members inquired about the process should the conditions outlined in the proposal not be met during this program's pilot year. Following a discussion, the Assembly concluded that should this program be approved through the shared governance structure and should the program not meet its conditions, the AcA can make additional recommendations to Provost Martin regarding future development of the program.
- d. Budgeting and financial management. The AcA VP for Curriculum noted, based on the market study, the tuition costs will amount to approximately \$628 per credit hour and the program is expected to break even in its second year. A couple of members raised concerns about creating a new program with limited resources at the University. Provost Martin stated that RSD calls for new graduate programs and pointed to the market study that identified cybersecurity as a program with a window of opportunity for implementation.

MOTION Moved by Patrick Schoettmer: Move to waive the seven-day rule (7.6.1, AcA Bylaws).

Approved. Unanimously.

The vote to approve this proposal will be conducted offline within the following 24 hours.

IV. Alternate grading policy, *Chief of Staff and Associate Provost David Lance & Registrar Joyce Allen*

This topic will be moved to a subsequent meeting. Send questions to AcA President Cohen and/or AcA VP Ruppert.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Addendum 1:

AcA representatives voted on the cybersecurity proposal electronically on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.

Eight voted to affirm the PRC recommendation, to approve the new program with the stated conditions; five voted against; and four reps abstained. So, the proposal passes by a plurality.

Addendum 2:

At the open AcA meeting on November 6, 2023, an AcA representative asked that a letter about the current crisis in the Middle East—one written/signed by CAS and some COE faculty—be included in the record.

That letter follows, along with the response sent by the Provost and President.

October 27, 2023

Dear President Peñalver and Provost Martin,

We the undersigned faculty and staff are writing to amplify the voices of 35 student groups, who wrote a [letter](#) calling on the administration to issue a statement recognizing the ongoing slaughter of civilians in Gaza.

While you might not agree with everything the students have said in their letter, we can and must, in the name of free speech, recognize their powerful call for justice and recognition of how members of our community are suffering. In the current climate, where political polarization, biased media content, antisemitism, and Islamophobia hinder the possibility of dialogue, we, the undersigned faculty and staff, affirm the following principles as foundations of non-violent, compassionate communication regarding the ongoing conflict:

- Israeli and Palestinian lives have equal value.
- Criticizing the policies of the State of Israel towards the Occupied Palestinian Territories does not mean denying Jewish people's right to have a state and feel safe.
- Affirming the Palestinians' right to self-determination does not mean condoning Hamas' violence.
- Using the words Jewish, Israeli, and Zionist as synonymous causes antisemitism.
- Conflating Hamas, ISIS, and al-Qaeda contributes to Islamophobia.
- Calling for a deeper analysis of the root causes of Islamic terrorism does not mean supporting it. Rather, it means envisioning responses to a phenomenon that are based on an understanding of it.
- Limiting the definition of terrorism to non-state organizations prevents holding state actors accountable for acts of terrorism and war crimes.
- Public activism against violence and injustice are valuable elements of engagement with deeply important issues, but those taking part in protests must refrain from slurs, calls for violence, vandalism, or attacks (verbal or physical).

We agree with the students that the University must recognize the pain felt by Muslim students, faculty and staff; the anguish felt by Palestinian and Arab students, faculty, and staff; the isolation felt by Jewish students, faculty, and staff; the distress felt by Israeli students, faculty, and staff; and the rekindled intergenerational trauma felt by all populations with roots in the region and ideological and religious connections to Israel and/or Palestine. The administration must also recognize that witnessing the scale of human suffering in Israel and Gaza and the West Bank causes moral angst in all justice-minded members of our campus community.

In his March 27 email to campus, President Peñalver emphasized that statements sometimes feel performative and shared his philosophy on issuing them. However, he recognized that sometimes a statement is necessary, including when “an issue or event directly and significantly impacts members of our academic community and their ability to carry out their roles and/or functions as faculty/staff/students.”

It is hard to see how the massacre on October 7 of 1,400 Israeli civilians and the taking of over 200 civilians hostage by Hamas, a paramilitary Palestinian resistance organization that advocates for the use of violence to achieve Palestinian liberation, and the ongoing bombing campaigns in northern Gaza which, at the time of writing have killed over 7,000 civilians, among them 3,000 children, the forced displacement of 1.2 million civilians, and the denial of water, food, fuel, and electricity to 2.2 million civilians in Gaza, does not fit the President's criteria for a response. The definition of genocide in the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide includes, "the systematic killing of members of a group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group the conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part." International support for Israel was spurred by the Shoah. Today, the Israeli government is engaging in genocidal acts against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

The lack of response from the administration regarding the crisis reveals institutional ignorance around the current crisis and its history. All crises around the world ripple back to our campus community, but the effects of those in Israel and Palestine are felt all the more acutely due to the way the conflict is felt in the Jewish community and among the umma and Palestinian diaspora. We have students and faculty from all impacted communities on campus and the University's silence is speaking volumes, and not in a good way. In the absence of a statement recognizing the humanity of victims in Israel and Gaza, and reinforcing the Jesuit commitment to peace and understanding, the University is creating a space in which hurtful speech is circulating, which is harming faculty, students, and staff and is making it difficult to do our jobs of teaching, learning, and supporting those processes.

If the University is staying silent for fear of drawing ire from different constituencies impacted by the violence, they are making an incorrect call. In many instances silence is violence; this is one of those moments. The fear of ire is creating space for antisemitism and Islamophobia to spread on our campus, which goes against our Jesuit values of creating a space that values interreligious dialogue.

Not engaging what is happening now in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and responding to, as the students note, other instances of human suffering, sends the message that it is acceptable to stay silent in the face of terrorism, horrific and disproportionate state violence, and oppression, which is not a message that aligns with our social justice mission. It also sends the message that some people's suffering merits our reaction and the suffering of others does not; this is not a message we want to convey to our students.

While it is helpful to put the Israel-Hamas conflict into historical context – the long history of antisemitism in the Christian-majority world, the violence of British imperialism in Palestine, the violence of Zionist settler colonialism in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the many modes of Palestinian resistance, including terrorism – you do not need to be an expert in the history of Palestine, Israel, antisemitism, the Holocaust, or Islamophobia to recognize that what happened on October 7 is morally and ethically wrong and that what is happening in Gaza today is morally and ethically wrong. Teaching ethics is a cornerstone of the University Core educational system. We call on President Peñalver to listen to our students and take an ethical stance on wanton violence. It should not take 20 days and nearly 9,000 civilian deaths for the University's leaders to recognize and decry violence.

In solidarity and hope,

[signed in alphabetical order]

Vinod Acharya, Department of Philosophy

Carol Adams, College of Education

Robert Aguirre, Department of English

Robert Andolina, International Studies

Byron Au Yong, Interdisciplinary Arts—Arts Leadership

Onur Bakiner, Department of Political Science

Hidy Basta, Department of English

Russell Black, Department of English

Kathryn Bollich-Ziegler, Department of Psychology

Mary Kay Brennan, Department of Social Work

Shelley Carr, Lemieux Library

Sarah Cate, Department of Political Science

Rashmi Chordiya, Institute of Public Service

Serena Chopra, Department of English, Creative Writing Program

Natalie Cisneros, Philosophy and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Mark Cohan, Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Kathleen Cook, Department of Psychology

Lydia Cooper, Department of English

Serena Cosgrove, International Studies Program

Elizabeth Dale, Nonprofit Leadership

Joseph Nicholas DeFilippis, Social Work Department

Eva Dicker, Department of Psychology

Yancy Dominick, Department of Philosophy

Fade R. Eadeh, Department of Psychology

Rob Efird, Department of Anthropology and Sociology

David Fainstein, College of Education

Christina Friedlaender, Department of Philosophy

Paige Gardner, College of Education

Claire Garoutte, Department of Art, Art History and Design

Kimberly Gawlik, Philosophy and Environmental Studies

Haejeong Hazel Hahn, Department of History

Sam Harrell, Department of Social Work

Tanya Hayes, Environmental Studies and Institute of Public Service

Allison Henrich, Department of Mathematics

Randall Horton, Department of Psychology

Benjamin Howe, Matteo Ricci Institute

Pao-Yin Huang, College of Education

Audrey Hudgins, Matteo Ricci Institute and International Studies

Naomi Hume, Department of Art, Art History and Design

Wai-Shun Hung, Department of Philosophy

Nalini Iyer, Department of English

Michael Jaycox, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Sonora Jha, Department of Communication and Media

Alexander Johnston, Department of Film & Media

Kate Koppelman, Department of English

David Kwon, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Beatrice Lawrence, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Charles Lawrence, Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Claire LeBeau, Department of Psychology

Yangjung Lee, Department of English

Erica Lilleleht, Department of Psychology

Colleen Loranger, College of Education

Rachel E. Luft, Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Mark MacLean, Department of Mathematics

Reine Mages, International Studies, Asian Studies

Thomas J. Mann, Department of Political Science

Kira Mauseth, Department of Psychology

Allison Meyer, Department of English

James Miles. Performing Arts/ Arts Leadership

Inés Miranda, Department of Modern Languages and Cultures

Alexander Mouton, Department of Art

Elise Murowchick, Department of Psychology

Felipe Murtinho, International Studies and Institute of Public Service

El Hadji Malick Ndiaye, Modern Languages and Cultures

Marilyn Nash, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

David Neel, Department of Mathematics

Erik Olsen, Department of Political Science (Emeritus)

Chris Paul, Department of Communication and Media

Harriet M. Phinney, Department of Anthropology and Sociology

Katherine Raichle, Department of Psychology

Robin Reich, Department of History

Victor Reinking, Modern Languages and Cultures

Matthew Rellihan, Department of Philosophy

Emily Rigsby, Department of Psychology

Christina Roberts, Department of English

Nova Robinson, History, International Studies, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Alexandra Romanyshyn, Department of Philosophy

Eric Severson, Department of Philosophy

J. McLean Sloughter, Department of Mathematics

Avery Snelson, Department of Philosophy

Rebecca Snow, Department of English

Randall Souza, Department of History

Benedict Stork, Department of Film and Media

Sharon A. Suh, Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Nicholas Tamarkin, Department of English

Maria Tedesco, Matteo Ricci Institute and Theology and Religious Studies

Hannah Tracy, Department of English

Ashli Tyre, Education

Jerome Veith, Department of Philosophy

Jason M. Wirth, Department of Philosophy

Emily Wright, Department of Environmental Studies

Dennis Young, Department of Political Science

Enyu Zhang, International Studies Program

John Teegarden, Department of Mathematics

Diana Luna, Modern Languages & Cultures

Kerry Soo Von Esch, College of Education

Mimi Cheng, Department of Biology

October 28, 2023

Dear Colleagues –

Thank you for your letter asking us – or Seattle University – to issue another statement regarding the terrorist attacks in Israel as well as the ongoing violence in Israel and Palestine. We particularly appreciate your reference to the President’s message of last March 27, 2023, which lays out our general approach to presidential and university statements. Although we disagree with your specific conclusions about what that approach suggests for the present circumstances, we certainly believe reasonable people can differ on that score, and we are grateful for your constructive engagement.

Your letter asks for several things that we have already done. Aware that members of our community were deeply affected by the events in Israel and Palestine, on October 10, a university message in SU Today expressed solidarity with the civilian victims of Hamas’s terrorist violence as well as prayers for “all those living in ‘terror and anguish’ and for peace and healing” in Israel and Palestine. That message called attention to Pope Francis’s prayer for peace in Israel and Palestine. It also included a prominent link to the discussion led by Dr. Nova Robinson. On October 26, another message to the community in SU Today further acknowledged “that the attacks and ongoing violence in Israel and Palestine are a source of pain, anger, and even fear for many members of our diverse academic community.” Your letter closes with a call for the administration to express Seattle University’s unwavering opposition to “wanton violence.” We think that reiterating Pope Francis’s condemnation of terrorism and war and his “prayer for peace” did just that.

The university has responded in other ways as well. On October 12, in response to a request coming out of a discussion among senior leaders at the President’s Roundtable, Campus Ministry organized an interfaith vigil for peace. Again, on October 27, the university offered a Mass for Peace in the Chapel of St. Ignatius in answer to Pope Francis’s call for that day to be a day for prayer, fasting and penance for peace in Israel and Palestine. These responses are congruent with our Jesuit and Catholic values. We are actively exploring additional steps to further support our Jewish and Muslim students on campus.

We realize that your letter may have been written and circulated before our October 26 message, where we urged community members to care for one another and underscored the importance of civility in our campus discourse. That same message included a clear statement that bias speech and discrimination (specifically mentioning antisemitism and islamophobia) are antithetical to our Jesuit mission. It also provided links to resources for community members to report any bias or discrimination they might experience and to seek emotional and other support if needed.

Your letter includes several claims (for instance, your characterization of Hamas as a “resistance organization” and Israeli actions as “genocidal”) that many Seattle University community members would consider contestable and incomplete – even hurtful. The positions you take in

the letter are an appropriate expression of your academic freedom as individual faculty members. By affirming and signing your names to the letter, you have expressed your views for all who read it. But to add the university's endorsement to your perspective would fundamentally transform it for those in our community who reasonably disagree, potentially leading them to feel silenced, excluded, or disregarded by the university itself.

Bringing people with diverse perspectives together to discuss, debate, and learn about complex issues is an activity at which universities excel. This commitment to reserving space for reasoned disagreement is entirely consistent with the university's willingness to articulate and affirm our Jesuit values. But when university administrators too frequently stake out official institutional positions on contentious public issues, the result can be to crowd out legitimate discussion and disagreement and to deprive members of this community of opportunities to teach and to learn from one another.

Our community is enriched – not impoverished – by the various dissenting expressions included in the student letters we have received, as it is by your own letter. Maintaining space for these opportunities to deliberate, discern, and grow seems particularly important in light of the astonishing belief expressed in one aforementioned student letter that the conflict in Israel and Palestine is actually not a very complex situation. Rather than preempting vital conversations by laying out a university orthodoxy on the Israel-Palestine conflict, we encourage you to continue to exercise your own voices to engage and educate.

Respectfully,

Eduardo Peñalver, President
Shane Martin, Provost