

## University Senate Opening Day Wednesday, September 1st, 2021

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1. Call to Order

Call to order at 4:00pm.

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Alvares, Axelrod, Bellum, Berger, Billings, Brennan, Buckley, Carr, Coleman-Carter, Collins, Connolly, Coutras, Curnutt, Curran, Fackina, Field, Fleming, Gurskis, Halaby, Harness, Hollister, Hood, Jacobson, Judge, Wilson for Kingstone, Korotkin, Lafountain, Lin-Cook, McCarthy, McDermid, McKinley, Misra, Mizzy, Panorkou, Sangregorio, Schmidt, Smolowitz, Soufleris, Spitz, Sullivan, Temoney, Trubatch, Vernon, Wallace, Wolfson, Woolston.

3. Announcements

**Jacobson:** We will have an orientation for new senators so they get a sense of their responsibilities. Date tbd.

**Jacobson:** All Senate meetings for Fall 2021 will remain on Zoom.

4. Introduction of President Koppell

**Jacobson:** Welcome to our new university President, Jonathan Koppell.

**Koppell:** I am excited to be here today and I hope this can be interactive. I'm looking forward to meeting and talking with you all, and to hear about the things that are going on in the community.

5. Questions for President Koppell from the University Senate

a. Covid-19 Vaccination Exemptions

The Process of Granting Religious Exemptions: Who is responsible? What is their training? Have any requests been turned down?

**Koppell:** We're moving to a more comprehensive back to campus policy, which means that the questions about granting religious exemptions is a broader one. HR, with the guidance of the University Council created a process in compliance with New Jersey state laws, to evaluate requests for employee accommodations and vaccination exemptions.

b. Covid-19 Protocols for Unvaccinated Students

What will be done to make sure instructors can feel secure about how these students (who may be in their course and who will be not identified) will be monitored in terms of their ongoing health?

**Koppell:** Under 7% of the students who are taking classes are unvaccinated due to religious or medical exemptions. Some of those students are only taking online courses. For those students on campus, they must follow all Covid-19 protocols including mask wearing. They have to be tested twice a week. All unvaccinated students living on campus are in single rooms. There are restrictions for high risk activities, for example no unvaccinated students can participate in athletics. Employees will face the same basic arrangements if they are unvaccinated. There will not be any public list stating which students are vaccinated and which are not. There will be some number of people who are aware of these students in order to ensure students are in compliance.

c. Health and Wellness Committee

What is the remit of this committee? How will it interface with various parts of the campus community who are not represented on the committee itself (e.g, professional staff) or bodies that are in contact with people working in various parts of the university (the Senate, unions)?

**Jacobson:** I thought it would be good to have a more broad well being committee that could talk about not just physical but also mental well being. This committee seemed to be replaced by the Restart Health and Safety Committee specifically focused on Covid-19.

**Koppell:** We will have that committee reinstated.

**Wolfson:** There's a lot of questions about the HVAC systems, particularly, for rooms in University Hall that have no windows. Is there anything that we can do to let the campus community know that these rooms are safe, that there's appropriate air exchange and filtering protocols in place?

**Koppell:** Every building was tested, and the capacity of filters were amplified centrally. For internal rooms and rooms without windows there's a plan for supplemental ventilation.

**Connolly:** University Hall is a building that does not bring in 100% outside air all the time but we've limited the amount of the minimum outside air volume to 30% and those built in, so at any one time we're bringing in at least 30% of the outside air with 100% of the air going across a Murph 13 filter; the air is changed seven or eight times an hour according to CDC recommendations. All of our newer buildings have very high airflow changes, for example, CELS will see something like 15 air changes an hour, and it's 100% outside air.

**Sullivan:** Just because there are windows in a room, doesn't mean they open, for example many rooms in University Hall.

**Connolly:** Send me an email separately for rooms you know will have high density of students.

d. The Provost Search

The Provost Search; What is the process going to look like?

**Koppell:** We have a search committee which will meet Friday. It is made up of predominantly faculty members that are representatives of the student body; there is also a member nominated by AFT. The process will be defined but we are interested in making sure there's a level of transparency. When we arrive at a set of final candidates they'll visit campus and there will be opportunities for engagement with constituents from the administration. A very high priority for me is to add to the diversity of the leadership and have this senior leader reflect the diversity of campus.

e. Open Floor

**Sullivan:** I'm starting my 33rd year at Montclair and my 28th year in the Senate; the sense of community over the past 15-20 years has deteriorated. You mentioned in your opening address that you're going to take questions, which did not happen under the past president, that is a legacy you are now dealing with, and some in leadership positions are still in that mentality. I would suggest that if you want to carry out your agenda, it is better to have progressive, inclusive leadership. We used to have committees where faculty and staff took part in shared governance, bringing this back would bring a better sense of community.

**Koppell:** I'm modeling what I think is the right way to behave. And I do want to create a community and I do want to create a place where people have a voice and feel like they can participate.

**Misra:** What is your vision of shared governance and the role the Senate could play in the life of the University?

**Koppell:** I think that there's an important role in a healthy University for faculty and other members of the community to have a voice and opportunity to participate in the direction the University is going.

**Jacobson:** To respond to the President's recommendation that we explore a hybrid modality for Senate meetings.. We're going to go through it in a mindful process to make sure that it's going to work and we really want to maximize the amount of voices that we hear in the University Senate. Thank you to the President for his time today. We look forward to seeing you in the first working meeting of the month.