

**Student Leader Roundtable Meeting w/ President Barron, Provost Jones, & Vice President Sims
June 10, 2020 @ 4:00PM-5:35PM EST**

Minutes:

- (Barron) Introductory remarks: The incidents that were presented to us and which caused such..., they were in some ways the complete outlier on the range of incidents on the range of incidents that the university could address.
 - It is very clear that if you have an imminent threat, the university can address it.
 - It is off campus, no clear connection of the university at all, something that happens years ago, we would have absolutely no leg to stand on. We would be sued and we would have to pay their legal fees.
 - This is where we are the least capable or responding.
 - Our process is secret. You have never heard the university announce the outcome of a conduct process. Even if we suspend/expel someone, this is not public information.
 - There is a range of student conduct behavior and they are not judge and jury, only there for the educational institution.
 - Privacy laws over the institution are very different for public and private (and laws over free speech)
 - That doesn't mean they don't want to do something or that student conduct doesn't take some action, but this is not announced.
- Barron: First set of comments were about expelling, but the first objective was to answer this concern.
 - Then Barron had another set of comments about condemnation.
 - Doubly painful for Barron to see free speech as a weapon to promote and enable to say hateful things.
- Barron: Now people are saying "okay fine, but what are you going to do?"
 - Talking to 85 students before this, "don't waste a crisis"
 - Mandatory training:
 - Students have been saying for a while that there ought to be mandatory training.
 - Many faculty resent the notion of mandatory training, think they don't need it.
 - But this is an opportunity where we might be able to get this motion through- this is the time to push.
 - We know students want this- bias and diversity training, financial literacy, etc.
 - Shared governance- last time the Faculty Senate decided not to do it, but we can look at it again.
 - Added urgency now to look at this again.
 - Calling for this now, with shared governance, is something that might be possible now.
 - Student Conduct:
 - Perhaps you don't want something you did 5 years ago would get you expelled now.
 - Barron is ready to have us look at the student conduct.
 - Ready to have student be co-chair of the student code.

- If there is an opportunity to improve, we should absolutely improve upon it.
 - Barron is concerned that people will not feel safe when they come back to campus.
 - For example, concerned about graduate students of color that are instructors and about their experience.
 - Many people want instant response, and the President's Council sat down and came up with these items.
 - Barron sat down with 126 students with the PRCC.
 - Also communications from SLRT and communications from faculty, students, and alumni.
- (Zach): Want to preface that I am not here to facilitate. Wondering if you can touch on the timeline for the code of conduct and selection for co-chairs for student leaders that could co-chair.
 - (Barron): Happy to take recommendations from the SLRT
 - Happy to have different student groups make suggestions
 - Student representation will not be limited to the chair
 - Barron would rather not pick
 - Feel free to nominate people
 - (Bryan): should make sure that students of color or well represented
 - (Barron): these are unusual circumstances but getting good at Zoom. We want to constitute the committee quickly and have them get to work. People need to feel that the campus is safe and that we are paying attention. We will get people named and charged and work at deliberate speed.
- (Nathaniel): you mentioned that a hesitation is that it leads to the situation where people will look through old social media posts. There is a big difference between posting something stupid and posting something that is racist.
 - (Barron) I agree with you.
 - (Nathaniel) Looked at charges against the dad in this case. Something like this (ethnic intimidation) could be put into the code of conduct?
 - (Barron) We think that ethnic intimidation is a valid point. The state of PA has the right to charge him but Penn State cannot act because of the lack of association with Penn State but the local community can. This is what our lawyers say could happen. That is what happened at the event in which they were addressing the protesters. It was a form of intimidation.
 - That is in my opinion what it was, but it wasn't on our campus or related to a student activity or to the classroom.
 - (Nathaniel) Worry that there may be a requirement now that people live or work with this person. Worry that Penn State can't do anything with this person just because it is off campus.
 - (Barron) If this were referred to Student Conduct, they would have to follow privacy laws. So even if it happened, you would not know that it happened.
- (Katie): It would be great to hear next steps about educational programs. What are the next steps for us? What can we be doing to support the initiatives of the university that have been announced?

- (Barron) The level of involvement in these different groups- the administration is offering to support these groups.
- Notion of opening up Student Code of Conduct- students will be heavily involved.
- Need to populate the committees.
- Student population sees many things that we might contemplate.
- Feedback that they have received: budget signals your true view on life.
- Might look into where the university is investing.
- COVID is rocking the budget but this is something that we are considering.
- Time to be involved and thoughtful in what other things we are missing.
- **(Hibah): In the email, it talks about the commission. I know you are planning, but are there plans for that commission to be established separately on commonwealth campuses?**
 - Students often feel Ed Equity is very UP-focused.
 - (Barron): General discussion about how Ed Equity penetrates into campuses.
 - With Nick's help, we will bring this up at the next academic leadership meeting and talk about how it will go across campuses.
 - Thinking about bringing in alumni who have had different experiences on the campus.
 - Need to talk with Chancellors about how this effort might have a mega-group but also might translate to campuses.
 - This is something he will move forward.
- (Jacob): Coursework designed for race and bias- who is creating it? Is it going to be like alcohol training or classes to get a degree? Are students and faculty going to be involved in creating the coursework? Who will be involved in this effort (what departments, etc)?
 - (Barron) I will be more happy if it is a course than a training.
 - Every once in a while I wish I was a dictator and say which faculty I don't want to listen to and...
 - Notion of shared governance means we empower the faculty to deliver the curriculum.
 - If they are going to have a course on social justice, social just experts should pick the person developing the course.
 - I will work in conjunction with students in the spirit of shared governance to address this problem.
 - There may be other ways to do this then what was done with general education (this approach didn't work).
 - We don't want a physics professor to be teaching about racism and bias.
 - Supporting the students in their effort to re-look at this.
 - May decide that it is more like a training than a course, but we have a chance to have a stronger argument than last time that this is something that is important to accomplish.
 - By virtue of the fact that this is an expectation of students coming in may change the composition of the student body a bit.
- (Nyla): I know you have been feeling pressure just like I have been feeling pressure. I know students don't feel safe on campus. It is so much bigger than these occurrences. These ideas have been suggested for decades, the advocacy is not new.
 - Want to move away from these two people: it is so much bigger than that.
 - Having racist roommate/classmate and microaggressions from faculty.

- Letter got to what we can do moving forward? But these should have been done a long time ago.
- It is not the responsibility of students to make all these changes happen.
- Regardless of what students contribute, the administrators in the room should be pushing this forward. It is their job- not the job of students. We are trying to get degrees.
- Avoid tokenism of a couple of Black faces or faces from marginalized communities.
- Don't want to tokenize student leaders who may only have their interests in their hearts. Recommendations need to be open to more students who aren't privileged enough to be in these rooms. Perhaps consider surveys.
- (Barron): we are a city of 100,000 people/students. What is the representation in terms of how people think? We try to pick our neighbors. We sense a difference in opinions in this pool. It isn't your job but we don't want to leave you out.
- There is a lot here that is very disappointing. Worked with students, from Black Caucus, to create All In. The students that came in the next year thought All In was a PR campaign but this was designed by the students.
- Maybe we fail to put ourselves in your shoes. We struggle in how to balance this across the perspective of 100,000 students who all feel so differently and sometimes passionately.
- This isn't your job but I hope you will be involved. We don't want students down the road to say "this is awful, it is just faculty trying to feel better"
- If anyone doesn't think this is the slowest moving train, than they are stuck somewhere, because this is a slow moving train.
- Provost from another school asked me how I did this so quickly but I thought it was slow.
- We are fearful that we will fail once again.
- (Allie): Anti-hatred and bias training. Want experts in the room. "If you are truly an expert on something, you should be able to teach it." We believe every professor should be an expert (or become an expert) as this will be the new standard. We want a faculty full of experts, instead of this being a burden on marginalized populations.
 - (Barron) There is a huge amount of literature that we have created diversity fatigue. The person is expected to represent an entire race, while everyone else can represent themselves.
 - Gives someone else a burden that others don't have.
 - Training: want to make people more aware, might not make people experts.
 - Have learned from surveys that if a physics professor has picked an interesting topic. Students say physics person will not be enthusiastic about "general knowledge" topics. Students believe it is not genuine, not coming from heart and mind, they would rather be teaching physics. If students had serious questions, they won't understand it.
 - We want someone scholarly on this topic to be teaching it- this comes from surveys of students. Students want someone who knows what they are talking about.
 - Advancement of women in science: why so slow?
 - Series of experiments where we see the bias.
 - Men are chosen over women as the head, when they aren't speaking, etc.

- It would be a great world if everyone was passionate about it but right now we are looking at making everyone aware of the things that they are doing that they might not be thinking about clearly. Might not realize how they are acting towards other human beings.
- This professor discounts my experiences because they don't see it.
- Coursework: perhaps want an expert, but I understand what you are saying about what would be ideal.
- (Luis): Don't tokenize. 6th bullet point. Reconvene Policing Communities of Color Task Force- how will this look? Especially with practices relating to bias. Would Penn State be willing to have continuity with training? How will these trainings go? Want to make sure there is continuity. Make sure students feel safe. (Sorry you talked fast. :))
 - (Barron): Put this together in response to Ferguson in 2017.
 - Couldn't be Penn State police force, had to be surrounding communities police force.
 - Comparing Penn State community to surrounding community.
 - We saw several incidents on our campus, especially relating to McDonald's in State College.
 - Campuses haven't been historically included in this- not all of them have their own police forces.
 - Ask them to look at their practices, to include bias training, and above all else to diversify police force.
 - I think a lot of good came from it. There has been progress in Penn State police, perhaps less progress in surrounding communities.
 - All agreed on way to move forward.
 - Asked them to get back to move forward- Penn State police and community.
 - How far have we come? How many recommendations did we meet?
 - Information on use of force should be part of the policy
 - "This" shouldn't happen here.
 - First report is public.
 - How far have we come? Want to make sure we have procedures in place so we don't have that happen here.
- (Keith): Make sure that the voices of minoritized students on campus aren't overlooked. Even though it starts out with good intent, eventually it seems that minoritized students are put on the back burner. These students aren't here to teach anyone about our experiences- this is a collective work. Need level of transparency. Level of transparency would help students feel in the know about what is going on (like with All In and that history). After we get a draft of what we are going to do, can we revitalize this after the first year? Want to make sure we are consistently trying to be inclusive in all areas.
 - (Barron): Hope it doesn't end. Attention on this issue won't end, the way our world is going.
 - Want to know what we can do in terms of investment and in terms of scholarship - want Penn State to be a leader.
 - Communication is important. All In had many outcomes. Many volunteers to serve as mentors on search committees.

- First person who is focused on recruiting/retention of underrepresented faculty.
- Campuses in small towns were doing public events on LGBTQ students and efforts around the country with many people pounding them for introducing these topics in small rural towns.
- Don't know the best way to get people to read things.
- Communication is the biggest challenge in all of the things we are trying to do.
- This is an example of a communication failure.
- (Eric): Are any of these initiatives new to higher education? Who is already doing these things?
 - (Barron) We work closely with other schools.
 - 8 other presidents facing the same issues.
 - Lots of phone calls lately...
 - Students don't feel safe on campus at many schools
 - Every once in a while there is a good idea that we implement.
 - I don't think there is any university that "has it together"
 - There are already some modules in place, but everyone isn't doing it yet.
 - There may be some other modules that are better that we could learn from.
- (Lexy): Task force on policing: are student leaders able to be a part of this task force?
 - (Barron) I think there were students that were on it but high probability that they have graduated.
 - He will go back and look.
- (Luis): Faculty that are missing things or having pushback- when it comes to accountability and respect, need to be held responsible to continuous action. When it comes to these trainings, can there be more than just one fall semester "checklist training"? How do we keep it continuous.
 - (Barron): Let me get it done once. Someone wanted to take it out "this fall" but Barron wanted to keep pressure on.
 - Want to get it done and see reaction and then have it evolve and have it be a continuous thing.
 - When we hire faculty, we look at ability to teach, expertise in discipline. People say there are lots of democrats on faculty but we don't know their political affiliation, same with religion.
 - If someone had latent issues in terms of bias, we wouldn't know that either.
 - We need to make sure that people become more aware.
 - Used to pushback on mandatory training but at the end, people said it had a lot of value and they learned a lot. Real case examples, real "science" behind it.
 - Reread every letter of recommendation for words of "gifted", "solid", "respectful". Workshop leaders suspected that language for white male was different for others, and this was true. More conscious of this now.
 - Many may learn to appreciate it.
- (Nicole) Penn State needs to reprioritize how we invest in students of color. Penn State needs to prioritize funding for multicultural organizations/offices/employees- people and organizations that make marginalized students feel safe. This needs to happen sooner rather than later- things are not going to feel safe in the fall.
 - (Barron): This is in two places in the letter.

- Cases for building sense of community. Select group that is focused on safety.
- Investments are important.
- Budget shows what we value.
- Receiving pushes to have expansion of PRCC in the HUB.
- Haven't forgotten this, COVID might make things difficult with investment, but still looking at it.
- Investments will show a lot.
- (Barron): Your views are important and I will join the roundtable if you want me to do so. Hopefully we are doing better and we are doing the best we can be doing.
 - Just say, "he is not doing this well enough, we need to see him again" and I will show up.