

# Faculty Governance Newsletter

Following are some of the key actions taken within academic governance in October 2020.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) remains a high priority for MSU. The new Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Jabbar Bennett, will start on December 1. One of the VPCDO's first tasks is implementing [MSU's DEI plan](#).

Faculty Senate passed [the first of four DEI-related motions](#) at its October 13, 2020 meeting. The remaining three motions will be considered at the November meeting.

The Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives has begun rolling out online DEI training for all members of the campus community.

## Fall Semester

There is a 91% persistence rate of enrollment this fall, which is a 0.2% decline from the 2019 rate. 27% of members of the incoming class are people of color.

There is recognition of the stress, strain, and exhaustion that all are experiencing this semester – teaching takes longer to prepare and deliver, students are juggling multiple educational platforms and struggling to remain engaged.

The Provost's Office is developing online learning guides and mental health resources for both students and faculty.

## Webcam Policy

The Provost's memo on webcam policy arose from real concerns about privacy in online classrooms. Instructors cannot require students to have their webcams on without a specific and compelling justification, and students should not be penalized for not turning their cameras on. The University Committees on Undergraduate Education and Graduate Studies will further consider the issue.

---

**“There is recognition of the stress, strain, and exhaustion that all are feeling this semester.”**

---

## Guidance on Faculty-Involved Curricular Materials

The Provost has asked for guidance regarding faculty members assigning curricular materials in which they hold a financial interest. This item has been assigned to the University Committee on Faculty Affairs, and those with comments or concerns should contact their [UCFA representative](#).

## Policing

Work of the policing task force is ongoing. Following the July Faculty Senate meeting, the Associated Students of Michigan State University and Council of Graduate Students passed resolutions outlining their recommended changes. During its October meeting, Faculty Senate held breakout group discussions addressing the following questions: What are the most important issues to address, and what are the easiest or immediate issues to address? Resolutions will be drafted from the feedback generated during the discussions and presented at a future Faculty Senate meeting.

## Motions and Agenda Items

As a reminder, anyone can send potential motions or agenda items to the Office for Academic Governance at [acadgov@msu.edu](mailto:acadgov@msu.edu). These items will be sent to The Steering Committee to determine what group should respond. Detailed and specific items are easier to triage, but anything can be submitted.



**Andrea Kepsel**  
*At-Large  
Member of  
The Steering  
Committee*