

FACULTY SENATE Minutes
November 9, 2022

Present: Henri Akono, Susan Bennett-Armistead, Jen Bonnet, Emmanuel Boss, Debbie Bouchard, Tim Bowden, Stephanie Burnett, Sabrina DeTurk, Paula Drewniany, Phil Dunn, Nuri Emanetoglu, Nancy Hall, Matt Hawkyard, Liliana Herakova, Stephen Jurich, Jesse Kaye-Schiess, Andre Khalil, Amanda Klemmer, Sarah Lindahl, Sara Lello, Danielle Levesque, Margo Lukens, Ivan Manev, Eric Martin, Derek Michaud, William Nichols, Harlan Onsrud, Elizabeth Payne, Brain Pitman, Deborah Rogers, MJ Sedlock, Kathryn Slott, Rosemary Smith, Sean Smith, David Townsend, Tim Waring, Manuel Woersdoerfer, Todd Zoroya, Joan Ferrini-Mundy (President), Anosha Raziq (Undergrad Rep), Jen Bonnet (PEAC), Provost John Volin, Robert Dana, Emily Haddad, Joanne Yestramski, Kelly Sparks, Jacob Chaplin

Absent: Elizabeth Armstrong, Catahrine Biddle, Carla Billitteri, Ian Bricknell, Alice Bruce, Kristina Cammen, Ana Chatenever, Mauricio Da Cunha, Allison Gardner, Michael Grillo, Mark Haggerty, Cynthia Isenhour, Steven Kimball, Anil Raj Kizha, Eric Landis, Jessica Lewis, Dmitri Markovitch, Shannon McCoy, Renae Moran, Bob Rice, Amber Roth, Michael Scott, Matthew Wallhead, Peter Van Walsum

I. Welcome and Announcements

MJ Sedlock begins the meeting acknowledging the attendance of many students and news outlets due to the discussion of the matter of Maine Day.

MJ reiterates that the faculty senate can only vote on a motion on whether to endorse the decision of the administration, and that any vote has no effect on the cancellation of Maine Day, or no vote can occur at all and the senate can have no decision on the matter.

II. Approval of Minutes

September 14th 2022 minutes: **Tabled until 11/30 Elected Meeting**

October 12th 2022 minutes: **Tabled until 11/30 Elected Meeting**

III. Announcements and Updates from Administration

President Ferrini-Mundy discusses the history and traditions of Maine Day over its 90 years of history, including the goal of a day of service. Former students and current students alike identified with Maine Day and its motivations on bettering the community and the campus.

President Ferrini-Mundy continues by saying how all these traditions and goal of service needs to be preserved but that the administration also has to take into account the need to maintain safety and wellbeing of students and the community.

Dean Robert Dana explains that over the last 6 years, the administration has been working to change the focus of the off campus aspects of Maine Day such as partying. The details of the partying is upsetting, with multiple people getting hurt, police intervention, and the partying creating an unsafe environment.

Dean Dana restates that there was a huge effort to solidify the values of Maine Day and tone down the partying, there has been no stopping and it has evolved into something of its own. There has been a lot of film and photos that led to a group being created to look at the future of Maine Day and the best way to proceed, the group involved people on campus and the town of Orono. The recommendation by the group was to remove the day off on Maine Day due to its high risk and hazardous nature to public health. The goal is to rebrand and reconceptualize Maine Day while keeping the main value of community service. The day will change from a day off in the spring to a new day in the spring semester while maintaining the service and philanthropy aspects.

Members of the committee spoke on their research around Maine Day, discussing how they spoke to not just faculty and administration but students as well. The committee tries to tackle the huge partying and Maine Day events each year but it is becoming a huge strain on town resources and overwhelming them, leading to the suggestion of changing Maine Day.

IV. Student Comments on the Future of Maine Day

Remarks from Undergraduate Student Government

Student Body President Allysa Ciasullo opens the remarks, they feel that student opinion has been overlooked and a lack of transparency around discussions of Maine Day have led to misinformation and uproar amongst the student body. They continue, stating that students hope to keep Maine Day and traditions alive, as a day of service and camaraderie, not just partying. Maine Day helps maintain school spirit, which they feel is lackluster. Continuing on their point of lack of transparency, Ms. Ciasullo says that many students felt Maine Day was being taken away completely, and that a revamp and rescheduling of Maine Day is a disservice to students and community stakeholders and will lead to a decrease in not just school spirit, but service and trust in the administration.

Another student government representative talks about how much Maine Day means to the students after a long winter and spring and the projects that students take on during Maine Day. One of these large projects includes packing thousands of meals to be sent across the state of Maine to help feed those in need. This project had over 300 volunteers and is just one example of the acts of service done by students on Maine Day. They see Maine Day as a day for students to be more involved in the community and provide the community with service and that reinstating classes on Maine Day would take away the ability to do these projects.

The next representative, Jacob Chaplin, who also serves as the faculty senate representative for the student government, he talks about how he always felt it was great that UMaine had a day like Maine Day, a day for students to do a day of service. When rumors of Maine Day being canceled popped up, Mr. Chaplin was disappointed and confused, mainly because of how there was no official correspondence or transparency on the discussions around Maine Day. Mr. Chaplin also feels that canceling Maine Day and ruining the tradition of service and

volunteering would be a mistake, especially due to rising numbers of volunteers since COVID affected volunteering efforts. As a senior student, Mr. Chaplin reminds the senate that many current seniors have only experienced one Maine Day due to COVID.

The next representative is Jake Newton, he acknowledges that Maine Day does have an issue with partying and disruption but is still seen by many as a day of celebrating community and service. Mr. Newton makes clear how important the day is for students and the staple it has become for student life at UMaine and that shutting it down completely would be impossible due to the amount of interest and excitement from the students about Maine Day. Mr. Newton speaks on how out of hand the partying has gotten, with people from different colleges and states coming just for the party on Maine Day, with on campus hotspots like the Ave getting ripped apart during these parties. He proposes that instead of reinstating classes on Maine Day, allow student leaders to try to control and organize Maine Day events and that student leaders can focus these events towards the tradition of service and maintaining needed accountability. Mr. Newton reiterates how important Maine Day is to the students and that reinstating classes may lead to only more chaos and distance Maine Day from its values of service.

Remarks from Graduate Student Government

Secretary of the Graduate Student Government, Anosha Raziq remarks that classes should not be reinstated to preserve the tradition of Maine Day and the day of service is maintained as well as acting as a mental break for students before finals. Ms. Raziq provides some suggestions to help the functionality and culture of Maine Day, such as holding those that contribute to the public safety concerns accountable as well as a more structured day of activities and better promotion of safety guidelines. Ms. Raziq also states that a stronger relationship between the administration and student government will help these concerns.

Open Comment from Students in Attendance

Student Michael Delorge opens the student comments, Mr. Delorge says that the amount of students in attendance at the meeting shows how important Maine Day is to the students and how it is a source of great school spirit and the cancellation of Maine Day will only hinder the student's relationship with UMaine.

The next student comment comes from Ben Parks, Mr. Parks brings up the idea of stakeholders stepping in and managing the off campus events of Maine Day and without management, could lead to further dangers to the community. Mr. Parks also believes that not enough has been done to try and reduce the danger and injuries caused by Maine Day events, and that there is a lack of care for trying to reduce these things.

The next student comment comes from Christine Kusnirak, President of the Women in Business organization at UMaine. She touches on the philanthropy of Maine Day, how important it is especially to greek life at UMaine. Having no classes on Maine Day is a big part of that philanthropy, as it allows accessibility for students to partake and host service events.

The next student comment comes from Maggie Shourds, opinion editor for the student newspaper, Maine Campus Media. Ms. Shourds brings up the issue of transparency. They feel there was a lot of confusion over what's going on with Maine Day, and a lot of students weren't sure what to think as there was nobody from the administration or faculty senate outright disclosing what was happening with Maine Day which led to students having to hear it via

rumors and word of mouth which was very distressing for some students.

The next student comment comes from Nick Tiner, president of college dems at UMaine Orono. Mr. Tiner believes that changing the day of service from spring to winter while maintaining classes are held, will drastically impact the desire and ability for students to have service events. He also feels that UMaine itself has lost a sense of school spirit with the feeling of less people caring about school spirit and attending events like hockey games. He feels some of this can be attributed to COVID but that changing Maine Day will be a “death nail” for school spirit and students desire to be involved on campus in general, not just for Maine Day.

The next student comment comes from Mary Collias. They bring up the issue of harm reduction done by administration for Maine Day, like the possibility for a medical tent and better preparation for Maine Day. Ms. Collias also brings up the question of what the difference is between drinking and partying for homecoming compared to Maine Day. They also raise the question of why classes are being canceled because partying is inherently something that isn’t endorsed or allowed by the university and that by reinstating classes, you will lose the tradition and spirit of Maine Day.

The next student comment comes from Meredith Waters. They bring up the almost \$3 million dollars raised by Maine Day of giving last year, and that if Maine Day is canceled by administration, alumni donors may not be as interested in giving to UMaine and can result in programs at UMaine facing the consequences. They also state that canceling Maine Day will leave many students unhappy and they would make their gripe known.

The final student comment comes from Vanessa Solomon. They remark how much Maine Day and UMaine means to them and their family, who are also UMaine alumni, and that by reinstating classes on Maine Day, would mean not just them, but many students would lose out the chance to celebrate the tradition of Maine Day when it means so much to them.

MJ ends student comments by thanking all the students that came to today’s meeting and how important their comments are to the discussion around Maine Day.

V. Discussion: Motion to Hold Classes on April 26, 2023

Motion to Hold Classes on April 26, 2023

Rationale: The University of Maine administration’s Maine Day Committee has recommended the cancellation or radical rebranding of Maine Day. The academic calendar falls under the purview of the Faculty Senate, and therefore the Faculty Senate moves as follows.

Motion: In the event that the administration of the University of Maine follows the recommendations of the Maine Day Committee by canceling, rescheduling, or radically rebranding Maine Day, the Faculty Senate moves that classes at the University of Maine be held on April 26, 2023.

To begin discussion, a senate member starts by making the suggestion that instead of just posting meeting minutes, that the full senate meeting zoom recordings are also posted due to the confusion between students and the faculty senate. They make it clear that the issue of Maine Day was brought up in the September 14th full senate meeting and the impression was that no matter what the senate did, the administration was going to cancel Maine Day regardless and that the motion the senate is potentially voting on is only to endorse a decision, not make one.

The same senator continues, stating that they are in favor of reinstating classes on April 26th, due to the amount of time already lost to holidays and days off during the spring semester.

MJ clarifies that recordings of senate meetings are available one week after they are held, but making them public permanently is something that can be discussed at the next elected senate meeting on November 30 2022. It is not possible to post recordings of previous meetings at this time.

President Ferrini-Mundy addresses that she is very alarmed by the reports and footage of the partying occurring on Maine Day but that she is not in favor at all of completely removing Maine Day. She still feels the idea of something terrible happening at these parties is extremely alarming and that a definitive decision on Maine Day will have to be made. President Ferrini-Mundy makes it clear that any decision made will be made public and the administration will be completely transparent on the decision such as keeping the traditions of Maine Day but changing the day or time frame of it. Her concern for the wellbeing of students and the community is leading to a deep commitment to find a solution.

Undergraduate Rep Jacob Chaplin feels that if there is a safety issue around Maine Day, that harm reduction strategies will be the best approach and that reinstating classes may not do anything at all against students having parties. He believes that doing something about the party instead of reinstating classes and taking away the day of service will be more beneficial, students will skip class regardless due to the tradition of a break the last wednesday of the spring semester, and that reinstating classes is a surface level solution to this issue.

Senator Allison Gardner talks about discussions they have had at academic affairs committee meetings, referring to other campuses around the country that have tried to deter partying through reinstating classes and it has been usually unsuccessful. Instead, putting the event on pause and working towards a better long term solution as opposed to a quick short term solution. The recommendation of the academic affairs committee is to table any motion to vote on Maine Day, wait for the administration to announce its intentions, and then bring the issue forward again in the future.

Senator Mike Scott feels they should give the opportunity to maintain Maine Day's traditions and turn it back into what it should be.

Senator Emmanuel Boss seconds what Mike says, he feels the issue of school spirit is extremely important and that post COVID, student and campus morale can increase. He also feels students should get the opportunity to create solutions for Maine Day and ensure safety.

Senator Brian Pitman also agrees with the points made by Mike Scott and Emmanuel Boss. Giving students opportunities to help fix Maine Day's issues. Mr. Pitman thinks harm reduction methods are something to be pursued due to the amount of dangerous drug and drinking issues of previous Maine Days. He brings up the issue of campus housing, saying that a lot of the issues can be prevented if there were better on campus housing options as there hasn't been any new housing options built in the last 30 years which would result in better control over these issues that you don't get with off campus housing, where the majority of these issues are arising.

Senator Sara Lello acknowledges that this is a complicated issue, with students asking her what the difference is between Maine Day or a regular weekend, as students can party and get hurt drinking or doing drugs on either day. Ms. Lello feels that since it is such a long way from April, that the administration should bring in students and really find a way to manage the partying due to the amount of service being done by the students and reinstating classes would take away from that service.

Senator Dee Nichols also agrees with the points of Mike Scott. Dee agrees with many of the student points that there needs to be greater social events on campus and engagement activities, not just on Maine Day. He also feels the same that harm reduction and management should be a focus, and that further discussion including students and faculty should be held to find the best solution.

Senator Sabrina DeTurk felt the understanding amongst the faculty senate was that a decision on Maine Day was already made and that the administration only wanted feedback or opinion on the matter of reinstating classes and that before voting on the motion that there should be a broader conversation about the motion and the matter.

President Ferrini-Mundy responds, saying that her deepest concern is the safety issues but that student conversation has really helped bring new ideas together. President Ferrini-Mundy proposes that a very fast track task force is created involving student and faculty representatives to look at what's already been done, like work with campus police and the town or Orono, and what needs to be done. This task force will make recommendations to the administration and help create and implement solutions for Maine Day. The President wants to maintain the traditions of service and philanthropy while focusing on the public safety issue. This task force will help create a decision before the end of the semester to make everything clear about what is going to happen with Maine Day, and that a compromise can be made.

Senate President MJ Sedlock adds a comment, that the investment from the students and the administration can create a solution but that if the solution does not work, it is hard to have the same kind of discussion held today again in a year. MJ is excited there is still an open window

to discuss the issue and that all students who are passionate about the service aspect of Maine Day will remain invested in the discussions to lead to the opportunity to keep Maine Day without classes.

Senator Brian Pitman points out that on September 14th, he brought up a question about what has been done and tried for Maine Day and was given a short response. He would like a comprehensive list of everything that has been tried so far. He did request that information through executive committees and was given another short response, and he feels that he has not received as much detailed information as he would have liked.

MJ responds to Brian's point, saying that she did pass his request to the administration but thought it was specifically about harm reduction tactics not necessarily alternate activities.

Senator Derek Michaud proposes that they table the motion for today's meeting.

The motion is tabled for later discussion with the potential for no future vote at all or a different motion being voted on in the future.

Undergrad Rep Anosha Raziq asks how will those interested be able to join or assemble the task force to look at the information surrounding Maine Day.

President Ferrini-Mundy responds that she will confer with her cabinet and put an announcement out about how people can register to join. She also suggests that those that are deeply interested in being on the task force and want to bring their recommendations can email President Ferrini-Mundy directly. She reiterates that the safety issues are her first priority, and that methods to mitigate it that haven't been tried will be looked at very carefully. \

A student asks for a concrete answer on if Maine Day is currently canceled or not. Dean Robert Dana responds saying it is still being discussed.

MJ Sedlock acknowledges that there has been a lot of confusion stemming from bits of information coming out or not coming out from these conversations.

One final student comment, they ask that if there is an effort to completely get rid of public parties on Maine Day, if anything will be done for private parties in dorms, on the Ave, etc, due to the same amount of danger posed for private parties as public parties.

Dean Robert Dana says that the students can always help prevent this danger, not just for themselves but for others. The administration is not responsible for the parties and those that are have to take the responsibility and have self regulation and personal agency.

To end the discussion, MJ Sedlock makes sure to clarify that the motion is being tabled and there is no guarantee that version of the motion comes forward again, especially with the task force by President Ferrini-Mundy coming together. She also says she will think about ways for the senate to be more transparent moving forward and having more effective communication. MJ apologizes to senators who wished to discuss things other than the issue of Maine Day as the meeting ran out of time.

VI. Questions of the Administration

No available time for questions during the meeting. This will be pushed back into the 11/30 elected meeting. One senator brought up the issue of about 80 faculty that are retiring and the need to know the commitment of replacing those faculty members as soon as possible. This will be pushed back to the 11/30 elected meeting.

VII. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 PM