

**A Resolution of the Bowling Green State University Faculty Senate**

Title: A Statement of Commitment to Academic Excellence by the Faculty of BGSU

Presented on: May 5, 2020

By: Matt Lavery

On behalf of: Senate Executive Committee.

WHEREAS the University's Vision Statement identifies BGSU as "a premier, inclusive learning community that develops, transforms, and impacts individuals and communities through learning, collaboration, and discovery;" (1).

AND WHEREAS BGSU's first strategic objective is to "provide undergraduate and graduate students (traditional and post-traditional) a demonstrably superior and innovative learning experience that intentionally prepares them to lead meaningful and productive lives;" (2).

AND WHEREAS Priority Initiative #1 of BGSU's Focus on the Future is to "ensure that each traditional undergraduate student has been intentionally prepared for lifelong personal and career growth, engaged citizenship, and leadership. We will redefine student success to make BGSU a stand-out university of first choice," and that "we will achieve this by transforming what we are teaching and how we are teaching;" (3).

AND WHEREAS BGSU has been ranked third for teaching quality among America's public universities and first among public universities for student engagement; (4).

AND WHEREAS evidence of BGSU's enrollment growth for fall 2019, as well as over the past five years, in spite of national trends of declining enrollment suggest that our historical commitment to academic excellence, teaching quality, and student engagement have been successful in making BGSU "a stand-out university of first choice;" (5).

AND WHEREAS the Academic Charter, the principal document through which shared governance is defined at BGSU, states in section (A)(1)(d) that "the primary responsibility for the development and maintenance of the University's academic programs belongs to the faculty;" (6).

AND WHEREAS this responsibility is further defined in (A)(4)(c)(i), which states that "it is essential to the character and mission of a mature university that the faculty have the primary authority and responsibility to develop, sustain, and enhance the intellectual quality and reputation of the institution and maintain its academic integrity;" (7).

AND WHEREAS (A)(4)(c)(i) continues, stating that "the Senate, as a representative body of the faculty and subject to the faculty's right to review, advise, and consent as set forth in (4)(c)(iv), (14)(b)(v), and (14)(b)(vi), is obligated through its policy and standards framing authority and by other means to promote to the fullest extent possible (a) a climate of academic freedom for all faculty; (b) equity and excellence with regard to all academic policies and standards; (c) an optimal academic environment throughout the University; (d) the definition and establishment of standards and procedures of accountability concerning professional faculty ethics and responsibilities;" (8).

AND WHEREAS section (A)(4)(c)(ii), states that "the Senate has the discretion to offer recommendations and advice on issues germane to the academic function of the institution and to the welfare of its students;" (9).

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the faculty of BGSU, through its representatives elected to the Faculty Senate, affirm our obligation to promote to the fullest extent possible equity and excellence with regard to all academic policies and standards through this statement of commitment to academic excellence; (10).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that academic work (including but not limited to teaching, scholarship, service, advising, assessment, grading, and curriculum development) is exclusively done by BGSU faculty members who have been appointed following an approved faculty hiring process that requires BGSU faculty review and recommendation, and who have been selected and vetted for employment at BGSU because of their academic expertise, experience, and abilities; (11).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the academic work of BGSU faculty members may be supported by BGSU-employed academic advisors who deliver BGSU faculty approved academic information; BGSU-employed instructional design, technical, and library specialists for the faculty's course design, delivery, and management; and BGSU-employed graduate assistants and post-docs appointed via an approved process that requires BGSU faculty review and recommendation; (12).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the curriculum taught at this institution is developed by BGSU faculty members and, before it is published and taught, passes through curriculum approval processes at department, college, senate, and university levels as outlined in the Charter; (13).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BGSU shall follow approved course enrollment caps, which have been pedagogically determined and vetted through the curricular review process outlined in the Academic Charter; (14).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that changes to the enrollment caps may be made on a one-time basis with the prior written approval of the faculty member of record, and that changes beyond that one-time must be made through the official curriculum revision approval process at department, college, senate, and university levels; (15).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BGSU should follow the best research available when determining enrollment caps for online courses, which according to [one recent review](#), suggests that large class sizes ( $\geq 40$  students) can be effective for foundational and factual knowledge acquisition requiring less individualized faculty-student interaction, and that small class sizes ( $\leq 15$  students) are indicated for courses that develop higher-order thinking, mastery of complex knowledge, and student skill development; (16).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that academic freedom, which is or is at the bedrock of shared collegial governance, benefits scholarship, learning, and citizenship and is an inalienable right for BGSU faculty, graduate assistants, and students; (17).

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BGSU faculty commit to facilitating student engagement through active learning, critical thinking, deep content knowledge, and the development and application of relevant skills. (18).