

2020.09.08 SEC/Provost Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 8, 2020 // 2:30-4:00PM // via WebEx

1. Call to Order (Chris Frey, Chair) 2:30

2. Roll Call

Members in Attendance: Christopher Frey, Marlise Lonn, Virginia Dubasik, Gene Trantham, Kenneth Borland, Jacqueline Justice, Sri Kolla, Montana Miller, Alexander Chiarelott, Shubham Sundriyal

Absent: Michael Slates

3. Approval of Minutes

No minutes submitted.

4. Chair Report / Remarks / Updates

Chair Frey mentioned the minutes from last week's full Faculty Senate minutes will be distributed later this week. He noted it has been a busy semester already and recognizes the significant work that many faculty have been engaged in to prepare and adjust as classes started while dealing with COVID-19 uncertainties.

5. Academic Business (*none at this time*)

6. Old Business

a. Faculty Senate *Summer Survey of the University Community*

Chair Frey reported that Richard Anderson gave a summary and update at the FS meeting on 9/1/20 and asked for guidance on desired additional analyses. Chair Frey opened the floor to comments and thoughts on additional analysis or reports. No further analysis are requested at this time. Chair Frey will pass that information on to the committee and thank them for their work.

b. COVID-19 Testing/Campus Updates

Chair Frey opened the floor for Conference members to bring up questions, thoughts or concerns faculty may have expressed related to BGSU's planning, testing, or current considerations. He noted recent opinion letters published in BG News voiced significant concerns about the University's reopening plans, testing plans, and the safety of faculty, staff, students, and the community.

Provost Whitehead reiterated that BGSU is working on increasing testing and noted two main challenges: 1) the current lag-time between when a test is administered and when the results come back is generally 3-7 days, so their usefulness is

somewhat limited. Test results providing a snapshot in time of positive (or negative) cases and 2) testing resources (at the national and local level) are not available on the scale needed to conduct widespread surveillance testing. BGSU's primary approach to limiting virus transmission is to consistently engage in the best preventative measures we can: 6-foot minimum physical distance, facial cover, and proper, frequent hygiene/handwashing. He noted there is testing available for individuals who are symptomatic or who may have been exposed based on the advice of a medical professional. More widespread surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals is also occurring.

- i. Discussion revolved around concerns about students related to understanding asymptomatic spreading, health status/severity of symptoms in students who have tested positive and how BGSU receives reports of students who test positive. Students are encouraged to report via health@bgsu.edu or the BGSU COVID hotline. If students make faculty aware, faculty should share that information via these methods. All positive test results must be reported to the county health department who then notifies BGSU if the individual is a BGSU student. Did the health team positions get filled? Yes, a health team and contact tracers are in place. Anecdotally, faculty shared that a student who tested positive, and students who believe they were exposed to an infected individual were following isolation/quarantine protocol as directed. It was also noted that some students reported being exposed, requested COVID tests and were denied by FHS. This caused concern among some SEC members. The Provost reiterated that BGSU is following CDC guidelines. A member raised that this may not include the most current science on aerosols and would like testing to be available to all who request it. No action taken.
- ii. Planning for spring 2021 semester, what should faculty and students expect in terms of course delivery? Provost Whitehead shared that BGSU expects to deliver courses in all three formats (in-person/hybrid, remote, and online) again in the spring semester. Similar to the process for fall, we are working to provide a robust learning experience for all students with a special focus on supporting new freshmen and courses essential for students who are close to graduation. There will be a thorough analysis and comparison of the fall-to-spring persistence rates. In-person/hybrid courses allow design flexibility. Now that it is in use, we are getting feedback from faculty about the technology and their experiences.

c. Dis-enrollment for Nonpayment Policy (Chris Frey)

No report at this time. Provost Whitehead shared that the number of students dropped for nonpayment was smaller this year than last year and that approximately 40% of the dis-enrolled students reenroll. BGSU is proactive in contacting these students and working with them on developing a payment plan, etc. to minimize the impact on these students within the constraints of federal guidelines. This is a socioeconomic issue; students from minoritized demographics are disproportionately

impacted compared to other demographic groups. Chris Frey expressed his appreciation for the work BGSU is doing to mitigate this problem.

d. Statement of Academic Principles/Academic Quality and Excellence at BGSU

SEC needs to discuss how/if to move forward on this. Gene Trantham thanked Ken Borland for his work on this. No further discussion. No action taken.

e. Instructional Connections

No discussion

f. Vice Chair/Chair-elect Vacancy

Chris Frey and Marlise Lonn both reached out to several people who politely declined nomination. Discussion on how to encourage someone to serve in this capacity included the suggestion that each SEC member to suggest a potential candidate to Chris Frey prior to the next SEC meeting. A consideration/concern with taking on additional University service is the increased faculty workload due to nonrenewal of QRF contracts. Questions and discussion concerning possibility of rehire and/or new faculty lines this cycle given the budget situation is different than expected. It was noted that SSI funding is dependent on the health of the state economy and may be adjusted mid-year. In terms of SCH's, our enrollment is down. A lot will depend on student retention between the fall and spring semesters. All of this makes it difficult to make long-term financial commitments. Expect that the University will be very conservative in their approach to hiring and will be working to identify and carefully prioritize the different levels of need for faculty lines.

g. Fall Forum: Freedom of Speech (Chris Frey)

Chris Frey asked for clarification on how these events generally come about and the division of responsibility. Discussion: historically (a) the President or Provost may ask if Faculty Senate would sponsor an event/forum, (b) SEC can ask the officers to put an event/forum together through delegation and direction, or (c) Faculty Senate presiding officer informally brings the idea to the floor for comments and ideas. Chris Frey envisions the primary topics of this forum as (a) faculty and student "free speech" in classrooms, including a review of relevant BGSU policy, and where the lines are regarding faculty introducing politically sensitive topics, (b) what the recent Supreme Court ruling on "free speech zones" on university campuses means for us, and (c) political speech in general and faculty limitations around that - particularly during election time.

- i. General consensus, this is a timely and relevant topic and view a forum as favorable. For example, Some directives from director/chair caution faculty not to condone or condemn anything/anyone political or perceived as political which is confusing and restrictive with regard to addressing some course topics/content. Other faculty report navigating this through presenting policies, beliefs, etc. for examination and analysis which is different than an advocating or opposing stance. Although the forum is

geared toward faculty, USG and GSS would like to have a presence. Provost Whitehead indicated that he will confer with General Counsel and Interim VPFA, Sarah Bushong, about sending a communication regarding this. He last sent an email to faculty regarding this on 2/27/2020. Chris Frey will reach out to potential speakers to hold an event in October.

- ii. Free speech is on students' radar as anti-LGBTQ beliefs have recently appeared on social media posts by members of a religious organization that has a regular presence at BGSU and of which some BGSU students are members. This was brought to the attention of USG with the question as to whether this was considered free speech or discrimination. Although this church is not officially affiliated with and does not receive funding from BGSU, some students perceive that it is a student organization. Provost Whitehead affirmed the place of this institution to help people navigate and evaluate information in the internet-driven information age and that one of the prices of democracy is the allowance for different perspectives, some of which are not condonable.

7. New Business:

a. Upcoming Items/Issues for AY 2020-2021 (Provost Whitehead)

General items to keep in our awareness:

- As mentioned by President Rogers, we will be working to provide a more uniform and effective BGP educational experience related to race, ethnicity, democracy, and identity.
- We will continue to closely examine enrollment, productivity, and other factors that impact finances and mission.

b. USG Resolution 2020-2021 01 on Fall Grading Policies (Alexander Chiarelott)

The resolution is linked to the SEC/Provost agenda. Students continue to experience uncertainty related to the COVID-19 public health crisis, potential challenges with technology, and other circumstances that may impact their academic experience. USG wants the University to provide the means for every student to succeed during this unprecedented time by applying the same grade change policy extension temporarily allowed during spring 2020 (in response to the potential impact on grades due to the abrupt pivot off campus to fully remote/online course delivery) to the fall 2020 semester.

Provost Whitehead stated he and President Rogers will examine and discuss this resolution but did not have the opportunity to prior to this meeting.

- i. Discussion and questions involved consideration of the differences between the situation during the spring semester and the current semester regarding choice and preparation for a variety of course delivery options. As of June 4th, just under 20% of students requested the S/U grade change option (3,086 individual students for a total of 7,035 grade option

changes). Although the number of students/grade changes is significantly higher compared to spring 2019, this could also be interpreted as 80% of students were satisfied with their final letter grades despite the disruption in spring 2020.

- ii. Chair Frey asked if there is anything as a body we want to do with this. No motion was made. Chris Frey indicated he will bring this up again at SEC. Further discussion revolved around potential faculty concerns about specific language/lines in the resolution, possible advantages of and inadvertent consequences for (some) students choosing the S/U option. The group was reminded of the weight Faculty Senate gave student opinion when considering implementation of a plus/minus grading policy so there might be faculty support for this. General consensus, while this is an admirable and important USG resolution, additional consideration is needed before presenting this to Faculty Senate for any action.

c. Diversity and Belonging Comprehensive Strategy and Plan (2020-2023) (Chris Frey)

This document was shared across campus and faculty should be aware of and actively engaged in this. Chris Frey perceives that a lot of the impact and action will occur at the college level. Future topic of discussion: How can Faculty Senate work with Administration in supporting this? Chris Frey publicly praised the President's communication about this, noting it was a well-executed, holistic, important statement to campus. No action taken.

d. Senator Attendance

We have received two requests SEC Approval/Appointment of Alternates and one request for an excused absence.

- i. **Motion to approve Roc Starks as alternate representative** for Mingsheng Li for AY 2020-2021, Marlise Lonn; Second, Sri Kolla
No discussion. No objections. **Result: Motion carried by consensus**
- ii. **Motion to approve Abby Braden as alternate representative** for Ann Gordon (FIL) AY 2020-2021, Marlise Lonn; Second, Sri Kolla
No discussion. No objections. **Result: Motion carried by consensus**
- iii. **Motion to grant Virginia Dubasik an excused absence** from the September 1, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting (personal emergency), Marlise Lonn; Second, Sri Kolla
No discussion. No objections. **Result: Motion carried by consensus**

e. Committee on Professional Affairs - Appointments

Reminder that SEC appoints two faculty members to the CPA. Agreed to do this at the next meeting. We need time to consider and reach out to potential members. The appointees are not required to be Senators. No action taken.

8. Issues and Concerns

None brought forward.

Chair, Chris Frey, thanked everyone for their time today.

9. Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 4:04