

Senate Exec Meeting (4/8/2021)

Attendees: Dinesh Pinisetty, Lori Schroeder (Provost), Matt Fairbanks, Christine Isakson, Frank Yip, Cynthia Trevisan, Elizabeth McNie.

- Minutes
 - We will approve all the previous minutes during the next meeting.
- Announcements from the Chair
 - S&M representative was selected – Matt Fairbanks for a two year term.
 - Library representative selection is delayed due to Margot Hanson’s vacation.
 - Current At-Large nominations – Ariel Setniker, Steve Browne, Aparna Sinha.
 - Having difficulty finding Senate RTP committee members. Professor Holden will continue. Professor Malaquias will serve for L&S. No one from MTLM volunteered despite being approached. Potential candidates from engineering – Snell, Nordenholz.
 - April 14th, 5pm, President will have an open meeting (sort of office hours) with faculty. Pinisetty wants to be sure we have some faculty committed to attending and also have some advance subjects for conversation for the President to prepare for.
 - Class classification codes. Dean Neto made a presentation on these to Chairs, Provost, etc. This will be shared with Curriculum Committee and Senate Executive. Invitation will come to us next week from Graham.
 - Curriculum Committee policy and procedures: we need to consider these carefully. A faculty member has raised objections about their department being treated inequitably regarding course caps, etc. Isakson – do we have time to discuss this more specifically later? Pinisetty – yes, we should.
 - Commencement plan: Yip articulated (via email) some questions/objections to the 2 guests allowed by the new commencement plan. Our feedback was requested on this. Despite that, we received no response from Chelsea McClain and David Taliaferro who were the recipients of the message. Pinisetty did not write an endorsement for the LRPG memo because of this. The Provost will inquire why no response was sent.
 - Pinisetty – two more issues A/V support issues and VPAT approvals for software.
 - On VPAT, Dinesh relating the issues here. A specific example:
 - PMAG money was awarded for an ET faculty (Evan Chang-Siu), did two months of research lining up software, etc, and only then the VPAT application was declined. Chang-Siu is considering giving up on the project. Pinisetty understands the accessibility issues and legal issues around VPAT, doesn’t want to challenge this, but there need to be clear expectations and timelines. Professor Nordenholz has also had issues with this and has sent a letter.
 - McNie – I’d like to add the continuing internet issues in Maritime North to our list of tech issues. Isakson noted that this has been known for a long time and she has better internet in the middle of the desert. Pinisetty noted that he’s mentioned this to Julianne, and her solution seems to be the wifi hotspots, but these have data limits.
 - Trevisan – regarding the CLC off-site. Is the 20th in-person? Pinisetty – I think so, based on my information. Provost confirmed.
 - Trevisan – In that case, I’ll need to decline attending on the 20th. I have vulnerable people at home, and I’m not going to add to the risk to them.

- Pinisetty – I understand and support your choice. The same goes for anyone else on Senate Exec for this in-person meeting.
 - Yip – we need to make sure that we can get the ARC meeting for the Captain of the Training Ship done, with deference to the licensed members of the Senate Exec.
 - Pinisetty articulated the scheduling issues. Some meetings for the Captain or President come up on very short timelines. Will continue working to make it happen.
- Scholarly Activities Task Force
 - Pinisetty – we’re still looking for someone from Engineering.
 - Yip – I appreciate that, but the people who have volunteered may feel that it’s not being prioritized.
 - Yip – I think it’s sad, for the record, that no one volunteered for Senate RTP from MTLM. In fact, I think it’s shameful.
 - McNie – getting people for the SATF has been a challenge. Has got someone who’s on the fence about it, but she will make sure that it moves forward.
- McNie Updating on the Residential Life Working Group
 - Part of the strategic planning task force.
 - They’re working on the policy for off-campus housing.
 - Seniors have very high off-campus living rate. This reduces their participation in various campus activities, being RHOs, etc.
 - The new policy gives exceptions to people with domestic partners, for former military, a few others categories.
 - The idea is to have more consistent policy and one that promotes the idea of a residential campus.
 - Isakson – noted that some local students cannot shoulder the extra cost of living on campus. A lot of the locals are IBL, GSMA, etc. Understand the idea about freshman being required to live on campus, but this disadvantages these local students.
 - McNie – appreciates the comment, and perhaps there can be other ways of handling local students.
 - McNie – on uniform requirements: Dorms would be a uniform free zone. Previous policy still applies in lower campus, classrooms, etc.
 - McNie – discussing pro-staff reslife situation. They will return, but work more closely with the commandants. A model with the commandants in the lead on reslife was rejected by the Working Group.
 - Deferred maintenance issues – more funding for maintenance in the dorms to make them more attractive. New living spaces will allow more flexible and inclusive living arrangements (family or partnered living, etc.)
 - Pinisetty – how is the working group soliciting student input and feedback?
 - McNie – Connor Crutchfield is on the working group. They’ve also conducted a survey of RHOs and housing staff. Connor also has been taking issues to the Triad for more feedback.
 - Pinisetty – great, just wanted to be sure the student body was getting heard in this process.
 - Yip – appreciates the report on this. Wanted to ask, what’s the time frame on when the students would be mandated to live on campus?

- McNie – there's an age cut-off (26). Plus locality, military background, and domestic partners. Not sure on the implementation, whether it's immediate, or rolled in over time.
- Provost is not sure that the issue [in the two bullet points above] has been discussed in the CLC.
- McNie – I'll see if I can get some information on that.

- Senate Committee Discussions (IRB, Curriculum)
 - Isakson – What are the rules on IRB? Does its composition change? Who appoints people? Us?
 - Provost knows that she appoints certain members, but isn't sure.
 - Pinisetty – I think it's Academic Affairs. Sue Opp appointed Professor Bachkar and worked with the Schools to get Matt Fairbanks and Amber Jansson as faculty reps.
 - Provost – open to thinking about terms of office and taking nominations from Faculty Senate on the faculty representation. The policy wasn't clear on the rules.
 - Provost noted that certain people, like the campus health director, make sense to always be on the IRB.
 - Isakson brought up the Curriculum Committee (CC) issue she wanted to discuss. She outlined the issue and presented Steve Browne's email on the issue. The basics – who decides the course caps and what process should be followed when Deans and CC and faculty disagree on course caps? There was an IBL course that had a lower course cap passed by CC, which was then changed unilaterally, presumably by the Dean of MTLM. Also, should there be pedagogical reasons behind all course caps? Or other standards?
 - Pinisetty – response to me from the Dean was that he just changed it to whatever PeopleSoft said it was, but that was apparently a clerical error. The course cap has been reverted to the appropriate one. Also, on who changes or sets the course caps: sees it as not the purview of a single person (Dean, etc.). Should be guided by a reference document so that the decisions are equitable and defensible. We need definitions of what, for example, a writing-intensive course is. The CC can then reference these when CCRs come to them from faculty. This would solve issues and accusations of bias, etc.
 - Isakson – our (IBL department's) culture at the moment is that if we submit a CCR (say for a hands-on or discussion class) with a lower course cap, the assumption is that it would be overridden by the Dean, so the course caps are set high pre-emptively by faculty to avoid the conflict.
 - Provost – Regrets that this issue came up in the middle of what is meant to be a collaborative process. She noted the CSU standards can provide equitable treatment of classes of certain types, and then we need to tailor to our campus standards to be workable for us but also in alignment with the CSU. Also want the standards to be agreed upon across the University so that all faculty can rely on them. Need a CC that is strong and robust enough to work with faculty across campus so we know what we mean when a course is in a certain category.
 - That said, it should also be that the Deans are in agreement with the standards. The Provost acknowledged that there would sometimes be disagreements, and thus she would be interested in an appeals process like the one proposed by Steven Browne in his message. ...but we need the definitions and classifications before we skip to the appeals process.

- Provost noted that there's distrust in both directions – Deans worry that CC will be willy-nilly with course caps with no regard for budget, and faculty feel that Deans would only look at course caps in terms of budget.
 - Yip agreed that clear standards are important. When he was on the CC, he looked up these definitions and standards, but it's not necessarily something that all CC members are acutely aware of.
 - Provost noted that Dean Neto's presentation was meant to be the first step in educating on and discussing these issues.
 - Trevisan – would encourage the presentation from Dean Neto be to the General Faculty Senate, not just Senate Exec. Noted that she requested CFA be involved in these initial presentations, and was turned down, and the General Senate meeting would at least allow anyone who wanted to to see it and comment on it. Thinks that grievances, etc, could result if CFA isn't brought in early on these issues.
 - Yip agreed that the General Senate is probably better than just the Senate Exec. Notes that some de-coupling between course credit and WTUs might prevent some of re-classification of classes to obtain certain WTUs or course caps.
 - Pinisetty – no problem having CFA involved. It's a CSU policy that Dean Neto is presenting, so she would hope CFA was involved in its development.
- Open Floor
 - Isakson – wondering whether faculty or staff got any reimbursements for various expenses related to remote teaching or work. ASCSU is discussing it. Pinisetty will check with Franz Lozano. Apparently some CSU campuses have programs for this.
 - Yip – noted that the costs can be significant (internet access, ergonomic issues, etc.)
 - Issue of in-person CLC meeting again: Dinesh noted that he fully supports Trevisan (and Yip, who won't be attending in-person in solidarity) not attending. McNie agreed, and that she would be reading a statement at the meeting on behalf of Senate Exec members about the equity issues involved.
 - Some further discussion of the issues discussed during the meeting. Dinesh noted Provost had already sent an email inquiring about a response for the commencement issue.
- Meeting Adjourned