

Arts and Sciences Executive Committee Meeting - Minutes  
Zoom Meeting  
Thursday, December 17, 2020  
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Attendees: Ruth Beattie, Christian Brady, Anna Bosch, Betty Lorch, Sarah Lyon, Carrie Oser, Peter Perry, Brian Rymond, Rich Schein, Michelle Sizemore, Suzanne Segerstrom, and Akiko Takenaka

Excused: Cristina Alcalde

Akiko Takenaka called the meeting to order.

### Minutes

- Minutes from the November 19, 2020 committee meeting were reviewed. Susanne Segerstrom moved that the minutes be accepted as submitted, and Brian Rymond seconded the motion; the committee unanimously approved.

### Recent request from the Provost and Dean to add more in-person classes in Spring 2021

- Dean Brady discussed the Provost's recent request for more in-person instruction in the spring semester. He stated that central administration reviewed data to get a general sense of student performance having a fully online schedule. They determine at risk groups of students that would benefit from more in-person classes and want to increase the number of in-person or hybrid course sections offered in the spring. Approximately 20 A&S courses were identified for these students. A&S already had about half of these courses available in-person or hybrid formats. One of the identified courses had always been listed as online only. Dean Brady has been talking with MATH, CHEM, ENG, WRD, PSY, and BIO department chairs over the last week to develop solutions. The departments have been supportive and accommodating but have had lots of valid questions and concerns.
- Susanne Segerstrom stated that the Executive Committee heard about this directly from the Provost in the A&S elected officials meeting. Their concern is about the source of the data being used to make this decision. The data used in making this decision has not been shared. Other concerns included: why are students being pushed into in-person classes with a PTI when they would do better in a class, online, taught by faculty seasoned at teaching; the very students who are at risk may be at further risk if they are required to be in-person; and, concern about offering PTI's to teach courses during these times when they receive no health insurance benefits. Anna Bosch responded that the associate deans agree with the committee's concerns. Anna stated that to her knowledge the college has not employed anyone to teach in-person courses without health insurance. All individuals have been faculty who will receive an overload or unfunded TAs who will now receive fully funded TAs with benefits.
- Peter Perry expressed that the question should have been phrased differently perhaps to consider what could be improved upon or resources utilized to make the student experience better rather than hiring PTIs to teach more in-person courses. Also, faculty have made out-of-pocket

purchases for equipment, materials, etc. to facilitate the transition to teaching their courses online.

- Michelle Sizemore stated of major concern is that the Provost is presenting this request to teach more in-person courses as a choice, seemingly not understanding that depending on the individual this could be perceived as coercive i.e. for junior faculty, lecturers, or grad students. Anna stated that mostly tenured faculty have volunteered for to teach these courses. Suzanne said that they feel the students will likewise feel pressured to take the in-person courses which is also inappropriate. Dean Brady said the advisors will present this to the students as an option versus being forced to take an in-person course. Suzanne stated that the Provost said it would be presented to the students as being better for them.
- Brian Rymond said this is also not being done within the context of what happened this fall. Students dropped out of the in-person classes and decided to go online. Betty Lorch stated that instructors changed pedagogy to online when things in the classroom deemed necessary to transition to online and the decision was made with the students who determined what might work better.
- Akiko Takenaka stated central administration is using data on paper, but the students voted with their feet. Many of the courses were hybrid and not showing up as such on the paper data, so feels that the data is inaccurate. Anna reiterated that arms are not being twisted to teach in-person. Several departments stated that they are already doing the best they can and what is appropriate. Math demonstrated the pedagogical benefits of teaching recitation sections online versus socially distanced in-person.
- Brian stated the Provost indicated that if faculty said no to teaching in-person then they would hire someone. Dean Brady stated it is the department chair that will determine who teaches a course. We have all had the same ethical concerns and questions. There are many variables at play here and we do not know all the factors that impacted these students. Dean Brady has initiate conversation with the main office about starting a study to look at pedagogy and what leads students to choose certain modalities for courses to produce a broader base of experience to draw from.
- Akiko suggested that a quick message/email from Dean Brady to all faculty that there is no pressure to change teaching modalities would help ease anxiety. Some of the colleagues do not know that this request is coming from the provost.

Instructors' concerns about in-person instruction in Fall 2021 (with uncertainty about vaccination timeline and effectiveness) and the current plan to alleviate those concerns

- Dean Brady stated at this point we are planning for a normal fall semester. He does not have any specific information currently. In discussion with deans from other SEC schools, some states have legislation in place that requires a minimum level of courses be taught in-person and persons who do not want to teach in-person have to apply/submit a request to not be required to teach in-person. With the availability of the vaccine, the assumption is that we will go back to in-person instruction in the fall. Dean Brady is asking departments to be proactive in planning for the fall schedule. Survey the faculty to determine how they feel about taking the vaccine - if

they have received the vaccine, will they be willing to return to in-person teaching, etc. and take this into consideration in developing the fall schedule.

- Suzanne mentioned students should be vaccinated as well to establish herd immunity. She said it is less important as to whether you have had the vaccine but more importantly if the people around you have been vaccinated. State legislature may pass a bill preventing a mandate that students must take the vaccine.
- Michelle Sizemore stated departments already have good solutions for the fall schedule in place now based on timelines and restrictions that are currently in place. Faculty are concerned if they will receive the vaccine in time or if there will be herd immunity by the fall. English dept had decided that they will put all faculty with concerns into courses that are online. Asked Dean to convey the message to the provost that the fall schedule could be in disarray if required to make changes to plans already submitted.
- Anna Bosch said we have a process to get a course approved to be taught online but is there a process to allow a faculty to teach solely online? Rich Schein responded the only mechanisms at this time are those under the ADA or to go through the faculty senate to make the exceptions.
- Akiko stated we are operating under the assumption that students are craving in-person classes. We do not know if they prefer in-person versus zoom learning, using chat. Dean Brady stated there is no clear data that we are operating from. UK is late to the online course/program offerings. It is a new area we can be moving into as a university. We are built as a residential university. All our structures are set up around the residential experience. There is a lot of debt in housing and dining. This generation of students we do not know if they want to get back in the classroom. There are so many variables at play that it is hard to get a handle on it. It will be interesting to see what students will do in the fall enrollment. We need more time and data to be reflective. Dean Brady mentioned that faculty in one department, rather than adding more in-person classes, have decided to divide up the identified at risk students and mentor them throughout the year.
- Dean Brady asked what specific points should be communicated in his note to faculty. Akiko suggested to ensure faculty that there is no pressure to teach in-person and that the decisions are to be made based on pedagogical appropriateness. Let the faculty know that the dean and associate deans are fighting/negotiating on the behalf of the A&S faculty. Rich discussed the various faculty engagement roles/committees/workstreams that he serves on and that he is continually working as an advocate for the faculty of the college, to uphold the faculty side of things.

#### COVID Vaccine Distribution Plans at UK

- Dean stated there will be a plan forthcoming, but no information is available yet. It may be mid-summer before the vaccine would be available to faculty. Carrie Oser stated that the Governor is managing the State's vaccine allocation and distribution plan.

#### Faculty Workload, and Faculty Mental and Emotional Health

- Michelle Sizemore asked that this item be placed on the agenda. She has been hearing from faculty members across the college that people are struggling having to deal with – sixteen to seventeen hour work days, seven days a week; caregiving for children and elders; providing

emotional support for students; partners loss of jobs or loss of family/friends to death, etc. Peter Perry stated the situation must be particularly hard for tenure track faculty. One faculty stated they have become academically dysfunctional, meaning barely being able to meet teaching obligations and not making any research progress. Rich Schein stated that chairs need to reach out to work with faculty and reiterate that and there has been a timeline extension on their tenure clock. Encourage people in your departments to talk to folks about that. Brian Rymond stated faculty success is viewed externally so some of the stress cannot be resolved by the college. Rich suggested to work on this through your national organizations. Brian stated the concern is the competition for funding opportunities with the larger funding organizations.

- Dean Brady said there is only so much an institution can do. The college has policies and resource in place, but mental issues are deeply challenging. Suzanne stated the impact does not affect everyone the same, i.e. there is a greater impact on women, men tend to be able to continue with their level of output. A blanket recognition of the issues is a first step, but it must be recognized that some people may need more help and support due to a gender bias in the academic field. Rich will follow up with chairs to reiterate the instructions given regarding the FMER.

#### Update on the budget: Projections for Spring and Fall Budgets and the Impact on the College

- Dean Brady stated that he and Jennifer Bradshaw are still working on the budget. No additional updates at this time. We are bare bones at this point and the goal is to work with central administration to make the budget whole. Having a solid budget will be vital in attracting a new dean.

#### Other Business

- Next Meeting – Thursday, January 14, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

Submitted by:

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Office of the Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences