Faculty Senate, Tuesday, December 8, 2020, 5:00 PM
Via Zoom

Voting results are in red.

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

2. The November 10, 2020, minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

3. Announcements and Information

Speaker of the Faculty Simon Lewis noted that, technically, senate meetings continue to be out of order because the by-laws do not contain a provision for meeting and voting online. Having tried a few times to arrange a brief, in-person Senate meeting to approve a change to the by-laws that would validate votes taken online, Speaker Lewis said that he may try one more time, the Friday before spring semester starts Jan 8. Otherwise, we may have to wait until we’re back in person in the fall of 2021 to ratify the votes taken at online meetings during the pandemic.

He reminded faculty that grades are due by 5 pm Wednesday 12/16; the deadline for sustainability literacy course proposals has been extended until 12/21.

4. Reports

a. Speaker of the Faculty Simon Lewis thanked everyone for their dedication in getting through a difficult semester, with special acknowledgment to those whose family obligations made things even tougher. He noted that there had been occasions when false rumors threatened to sour the atmosphere, but he has perceived the general mood on the virtual campus to be positive. The College has continued to offer not only the basics of instruction and mentoring but also a variety of co- and extra-curricular offerings for students. Despite the fact that spring semester will be much the same in terms of COVID protocols, he hopes now that we have a clearer sense of the crisis having an end, as the days begin to get longer, our spirits will rise.

b. Provost Suzanne Austin echoed Speaker Lewis’s thanks to everyone for their hard work throughout the semester. She expressed concern for our students, saying she worries that some of them have fallen into habits that we don’t want to encourage. She wants us to think of the spring semester as a transition to a new normal.

Academic Affairs, schools, and departments are making coordinated efforts to “close the gap” on spring registrations. Many students and parents may still be waiting, though, to make a decision on spring enrollment. Ultimately, she believes most of our students will be back in the spring. Meanwhile, projections for fall 2021 enrollment are strong, with
applications up 6% for residents, 50% for nonresidents from a year ago. Virtual admissions events have been well-attended.

With thanks to Mark Del Mastro and others who served on a subcommittee, Provost Austin reported that there will be some guidance coming out in the next couple of days about attendance policies for the spring. The new language will reflect our effort to make spring 2020 a transitional one.

Following up on the memo sent jointly by herself and Speaker Lewis, Provost Austin reported that while the PS/NS (pass/fail) option was not renewed for the fall semester, in spring 2021 students will have the option to select one course as PS/NS.

The School of the Arts’ Dean search is underway. Professor Mary Beth Heston is chairing the committee. With Godfrey Gibbison’s departure, Provost Austin will launch an internal search for Dean of the Graduate School, with the committee to be chaired by EHHP Dean Fran Welch. Provost Austin said she would like to have someone in place by March 1. She has asked HSS Dean Gibbs Knotts to serve as Interim Dean until then.

The Provost’s Office is working on a faculty survey as part of regular evaluation of deans. Faculty were last surveyed about deans’ performance in 2017, so there is precedent. Provost Austin said that she would like the process to include deans preparing written responses to major themes that emerge from the survey results, followed by school-wide meetings to discuss those themes. This process would generate plans to address issues raised in the surveys.

“Shells” for courses in OAKS will be ready within days. She would like faculty to post a syllabus (in some form, possibly a draft or basic syllabus) one week before the beginning of classes.

c. **Chief Diversity Officer Renard Harris** gave a [Presentation](#) on the Diversity EDU program. The self-paced program takes about three hours to complete (divided into three modules). He said the goal is universal participation among faculty and staff, but he is not sure how to “enforce” compliance. He would like input from faculty on how to do that.

Senator Irina Gigova (HSS) noted that adjunct faculty are already overburdened, and she asked if it would be possible to pay them to complete the program. Dr. Harris responded that they had not considered that. Senator Gigova asked if departments might be able to pay adjuncts out of their own funds, and Dr. Harris replied that he assumes that would be up to deans and chairs.

Senator Ashley Pagnotta (Physics and Astronomy) asked if it is possible to get statistics on compliance by department, in which case it might be possible to create competition among departments. Dr. Harris said he is sure that’s possible.
Senator Fran Scudese (Adjunct Rep, Teacher Education) reported that she has completed the program and found it informative and valuable.

5. New Business

a. Approval of degree candidates (December): approved by unanimous consent.

b. Curriculum Committee (Nenad Radakovic, Chair)

1) PSYC: Course change:


2) GLAT: Program change:


3) REAL: Program and course change

https://cofc.curriculog.com/agenda:171/form  Approved by online vote.

4) CPLT: Deactivating minor and two courses:


5) FINC: Course changes:


c. Senator Jonathan Neufeld (Philosophy): Motion to reconstitute the ad hoc REI (Race, Equity, and Inclusion) Committee in order to bring a formal proposal for the REI curriculum requirement through Curriculog and the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The motion was seconded by Senator Merissa Ferrara (Communication). The members of the committee are as follows:

Anthony Greene (African American Studies) and Morgan Koerner (German), co-chairs; Julia McReynolds-Perez (Sociology), research subcommittee chair; Charissa Owens (Office of Institutional Diversity), Kristen Monet Graham (ICAN Curriculum Chair), Ghazi Abuhakema (Asian and Arabic Studies), Kristi Brian (Women’s and Gender Studies), Nenad Radakovic (Teacher Education), Jason Vance (Biology), Chris Korey (Biology), Lance Affonso (Honors College), James Malm (Finance), David Hansen (Entrepreneurship), Judy Millesen (Public Administration), Meg Goettsches (African Studies), Mark Del Mastro (Associate Provost), and Mary Bergstrom (Registrar).
The motion passed by online vote.

d. Committee on the By-Laws and Faculty-Administration Manual (Merissa Ferrara, Chair): Motion to delete from the By-Laws item c (implementation) under Section 3.B.20 (Advisory Committee on First-Year Experience). Revision

Senator Ferrara explained that this is essentially a “housekeeping” change; the provision being deleted is obsolete. The motion passed by online vote.

e. Senator Chris Warnick (HSS): Motion to form an ad hoc Committee on Teaching Effectiveness and Mentoring to serve through Fall 2022, with the following charge:

- Identify and implement more effective approaches for gathering formative and summative student feedback that better informs teaching effectiveness and promotes students’ metacognitive engagement with their own learning;

- Develop guidelines for faculty end-of-course self-reflection that draw on formative and summative feedback from students and that can be used to demonstrate growth in annual reviews and major reviews;

- Incorporate a fourth evaluation category into the Faculty Administration Manual that rewards and incentivizes outstanding faculty advising and mentoring;

- Create an effective professional development infrastructure to support these project goals.

Rationale and Proposed Timeline

Senator Warnick reviewed the rationale and goals (see attachment). The motion was seconded by Senator Gretchen McLaine (Theatre and Dance).

Citing the second goal, which includes “self-reflection” and demonstrating growth in performance reviews, Senator Irina Gigova (HSS) expressed concern about creating more work for faculty. She asked whether that item was just something for the committee to consider or something they must endorse.

Senator Warnick replied that it’s something that other schools have done, but he can see how it could become busywork. He said it would be up to the committee to decide on the exact guidelines, but the group making this proposal wants there to be follow-up on evaluations.

Senator Gigova asked if faculty will be able to weigh in on these discussions with the committee --- for instance, through a survey.
Senator Warnick replied that the committee would do focus-group surveys with students and faculty and have conversations with department chairs and the tenure and promotion committee. He said this effort should be ground up, not top-down.

Senator Jessica Streit (Art and Architectural History) said she worries about mandatory “reflection,” especially when it is part of tenure-and-promotion process. It can easily become performative, she said. She is also concerned about the prospect of another merit category for tenure and promotion. While she and her department are wary about adding those requirements, they are in favor of revising the evaluations provided by students to try to mitigate bias against women and people of color. Senator Warnick responded that his group imagined that the “reflection piece” would not be an add-on but, rather, something to support faculty. Senator Streit said that in her experience with faculty reviews, “optional” usually becomes mandatory in practice.

Associate Provost Deanna Caveny reminded the Senate that the administrative portion of the Faculty-Administration Manual, which includes evaluation policies, is controlled by the Provost. The Provost’s Office has, in the past, sought feedback from relevant faculty committees, chairs and deans. But essentially for items in the administrative section in the manual, the Provost would have the final say.

Senator Ashley Pagnotta (Physics and Astronomy) asked, if a fourth pillar of evaluation (advising and mentoring) were to be added, will we get more pages for our tenure-and-promotion narrative? Senator Warnick replied that that would be determined by Academic Affairs. Associate Provost Caveny added that some of these measures would affect departments differently from one another, so her office would work with departments accordingly.

Professor Vince Benigni (Guest, Communication) suggested that we put the burden for supplying advising data on advisees rather than on faculty. He added that the College does not place enough importance on service as it is, and perhaps service and mentoring could be combined rather than creating a fourth “prong” of evaluation. Senator Warnick said that advising “shows up” in reviews under both teaching and service, so he hopes the committee would work on clarifying that.

Senator Brian Bossak (Heath and Human Performance) said that he sees this as a complicated question; there are benefits of this initiative, but he shares concerns expressed by others about where such well-intentioned proposals might lead.

Senator Warnick expressed hope that this proposal will spark discussion about course-instructor evaluations, but he also hopes that we can gather information about perceptions of teaching. The proposers want this committee to help us as an institution define what effective teaching is.
The proposal passed by online vote (26 yes, 14 no, 4 abstain).

f. Committee on Academic Standards, Admissions, and Financial Aid (Meta Van Sickle, Chair): Proposal to revise the policy on X XF Transcript Notation (Academic Dishonesty)  
   Presentation / Proposed Revision  The proposal was withdrawn by the committee.

6. Constituents’ General Concerns

Senator Tom Carroll (EHHP) asked how members of the ad hoc REI Committee were chosen. Speaker Lewis replied that he and several others put the committee together in October 2019. Senator Carroll asked if there were a way for others to get involved in those conversations. Speaker Lewis said that the idea was to have representation across schools on the committee so that they could solicit input from across campus before a curricular proposal comes back to the Senate.

Senator Ashley Pagnotta (Physics and Astronomy) asked how the ad hoc Teaching Effectiveness and Mentoring would be chosen. Speaker Lewis replied that the selection would go through the Committee on Nominations and Elections, who will try to get as wide a range of faculty as possible.

Speaker Lewis thanked Katy Flynn, who is leaving the College after serving as Faculty Secretariat and Administrative Assistant in the Provost’s Office for the past year. He also acknowledged Dean Valerie Morris, Dean Jeri Cabot, Dean Godfrey Gibbison, Professor Elaine Worzala, and Professor Chris Starr, all of whom are retiring or leaving the College this December.

7. The meeting adjourned at 6:18.