Faculty Senate Minutes

Monday, May 04, 2020

Zoom Meeting Room: <https://sou.zoom.us/j/91206694541>, 4:00-5:30p

Present: Melissa Anderson, Jeremy Carlton, Prakash Chenjeri, Paul Condon, Brian Fedorek, Paul French, Andrew Gay, Marianne Golding, Justin Harmon, Cynthia Hutton, Dennis Jablonski, Laurie Kurutz, Matt Moreali, Jesse Longhurst, Tiffany Morey, Anna Oliveri, Michael Parker, Aprille Phillips, Mark Siders, Ellen Siem, Michael Stanfill, Chad Thatcher, Precious Yamaguchi, Kemble Yates

Absent: none

Guests: Linda Schott, Sue Walsh, Jody Waters, Lee Ayers, Sherry Ettlich, David Bithell, Alena Ruggerio, Donna Lane, Kristin Hocevar, Rattiphon Wuthisatian, Kelly Moutsatson, Britney Sharp, and Sarah Guenther.

Meeting called to order at: 4:00 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes from 04/20
   * Fedorek motioned to approve the minutes and commended Anderson who said the transcript was helpful; Stanfill seconded. Carlton, Condon, Fedorek, French, Golding, Harmon, Hutton, Jablonski, Kurutz, Moreali, Longhurst, Morey, Oliveri, Parker, Phillips, Siders, Siem, Stanfill, Thatcher, Yamaguchi, and Yates voted in favor. None opposed. Chenjeri, Anderson, and Gay abstained. **Motion passed.**
2. President’s Report – Linda Schott
   * Tuition Advisory Council has been working and sent their recommendation to the president Friday. Their recommendation is for anything below 4.99%. They are giving her some leeway. The president does not feel that this is the year to go above 5%, go before the HECC, etc. She doesn’t know what she is going to recommend, but it might be even less. It will make our budget situation even worse unless it increases enrollment, but it is the right thing to do. We would be criticized soundly even with a 4.9% increase; she thinks it will be closer to 3%.
   * We have been talking about the re-opening process. All the Oregon universities are discussing it; Neil Woolf has been working with people from other universities, and VP [Janet] Fratella and Woolf have been leading this effort on our campus. They have been doing really amazing work figuring out how to keep everyone safe and resume functions around September
   * Gay had asked Linda to talk about the announcement on Friday. As Spring Term started there were too many unknowns to say how we were going to be affected by the pandemic. We got a sense of Spring term enrollment around April 20, and that it was down around 7%. We also needed to know how much we would be going to get from the CARES Act. We got confirmation of 3.4 million, but 1.7 million goes to students which helps our students stay enrolled, but does not directly address financial problems. The administration is in the process of figuring out how to best utilize the other 1.7 million.
   * At the end of that week, on 4/24, the administration got information from the State about budget reductions. Greg Perkinson came to the Friday meeting with news of an 8.5% reduction for the biennium, which works out to a 17% reduction since one year of the biennium has already passed. This reduction was run through the funding model, which was good for us because even though the funding model underfunds us, it also means that the reductions were a bit less. It works out to 3.1 million in reductions for us.
   * That same day the administration also learned about Oregon WorkShare; a program that could help or even benefit our employees without having SOU pay the entire unemployment. HR and the administration began exploring that program that weekend.
   * They had planned to implement June 1; but then Jason Katz met with a woman who was very knowledgeable about the program and she encouraged us to jump on it to give employees more of the federal unemployment benefit--May, June, and July instead of just June and July.
   * They worked quickly with SEIU leadership. They were great to work with; they worked late into the night and negotiated a letter of agreement.
   * Fedorek asked how the students are getting the 1.7 million. Schott said that they created a short application and sent them out to all eligible students. They are limiting it to $1,000 per student for now because we can use it in the fall also. But we are sensitive to student needs; we can give them a larger amount if needed.
   * Sharp noted that resource centers sent out the application to students who aren’t eligible. She was concerned about students inadvertently breaking laws/rules if they didn’t realize they weren’t eligible. Schott told her to ask Neil Woolf or Kristin Gast [Financial Aid], but she didn’t think that anyone who was not eligible would get money. Sharp thought some students might need clarification about why they aren’t eligible.
   * Thatcher asked if we knew what other institutions in Oregon are doing with regard to tuition.
   * Walsh said UO is doing 3% for new students, no increase for returning students, Oregon State is doing something similar, others are still deciding. All the institutions are a little behind; they lost time with the extra week of Spring break.
   * Yates said he hoped we were still advocating for a fairer funding model. Schott said we will keep pressing on that. They are now talking to people who have influence with the governor. They had a good meeting with Ben Cannon and Jim Pinkert, agreeing on data, which is a step forward.
3. Provost’s Report – Sue Walsh
   * When VP Woolf gets the reopening plan, she will make that information available to chairs and everyone involved in planning.
   * The university will provide professional development for faculty around hybrid and other kinds of course delivery; we made a huge effort over spring break but now we need to go and look more at the pedagogy, assessment, etc. and to do more professional development around these other delivery modes. She hopes faculty will take advantage of these professional development opportunities
   * INL is going to do a survey of faculty about the remote experience and they want to do one for students too. She’ll be reaching out to Sharp about this. They want to know more about what this experience has been like for students and faculty.
4. ASSOU President’s Report – Britney Sharp
   * They are working on elections right now; ASSOU hasn’t had a lot to meet about, so Sharp has been meeting with Oregon student presidents, bringing in CA schools, trying to bring in AZ schools, too, to learn from each other about how they can help students. It’s going well.
   * Sharp would love faculty to show support to students; there are 12 different support groups for students but students aren’t showing up; CARES reports haven’t increased like you would expect. We need to connect to our students.
   * Sharp thinks a lot of students feel isolated and do not feel connected. She wants faculty to encourage students to show up to remote events, and for faculty to show up too.
   * In the resource centers they are not hearing anything from students and they are concerned.
   * Sharp asked faculty to be lenient because it’s hard to stay focused; time is moving quick and it feels like a lot. She’s heard a lot of faculty are doing a good job with this and she asked faculty to keep it up.

1. Advisory Council Report – Chair-Elect Kemble Yates
   * AC discussed a “trial balloon” by the Gen Ed Task Force; AC discussed the possibility of making one big change to US as early as fall; the idea was that maybe we should reduce the number of required EFG courses from 3 to 2.
   * In addition to our usual AC folks, we also had Karen Stone in that discussion. There was enough concern by many on AC that the effect on enrollments might be negative; that alone is not a reason enough to decide it, but with all the other factors it seemed that it might not be a good time to move forward with that.
   * We are robustly gathering nominations for open Senate seats. There are no At-Large seats open--this will be it. The committee was empowered to adjust terms to get them staggered. This year STEM is notable because all three are open. OCA is another one--we’re running a three year term instead of a one-year replacement for Cynthia Hutton’s seat.
   * About the President’s announcement; faculty are not yet subject to the furlough. The University and APSOU have a number of issues they are negotiating, and likely there will be something like that for Faculty too. Faculty learned about this on Friday with everybody else, and APSOU is now going to work on this.
2. Report on Remote Recruitment Efforts – Kelly Moutsatson
   * Moutsatson is Director of Admissions; COVID-19 is making college decision more complicated--there are lots of issues, campus visits, standardized testing, etc., in a rapidly changing environment
   * Moutsatson will discuss how the Office of Admissions is adapting
   * We’ve got to be innovative, more than ever. How do we help mitigate challenges?
   * The new web page is a depository of information for students and guests with all info related to admissions
   * The team got virtual events ready at lightning speed; SOU Virtual Connections has all the virtual events listed
   * One of first messages went out to HS seniors; it was created to alleviate concerns
   * Live Zoom Info Sessions have allowed prospective students to connect
   * Weekly Zoom sessions continue to roll out to applicants and recruits, signup is available on the website
   * Raider Ambassadors are included, staff are included
   * Video chats with admissions counselors allow prospective students to get questions answered quickly; they sign up for an appointment and get confirmation right away
   * They will keep using this moving forward because it’s been great
   * Admissions is sunsetting their old CRM and getting a new one, but they are still sending personal emails to everyone, using Zoom phone numbers etc.
   * Admissions blog helps keep in contact with applicants, admitted students, and confirmed students
   * They are doing live events, providing lots of info on social media also
   * They have an AI RockyBot that is able to get info out to students
   * Raider Receptions are happening virtually; they encourage students to commit to attending during the reception
   * They’ve already reached more students than they would on the road
   * Lots of How-Tos, pieces by students, options for exploring more
   * Moutsatson thinks students will get a lot more out of these tools
   * Today invites for Raider Reg went out
   * Moutsatson did a demo of some of the online events, Instagram AMAs, live tours, etc.
   * Ambassadors have done a great job continuing tours and connecting with students
   * Admissions is committed to being innovative and working to bring students to campus in the fall
   * Gay said that if anyone has questions, they can send them to him and he will pass them along to Moutsatson
3. New Bylaws Waiver Proposal Re: Use of Spring Teaching Evals in Tenure/Promotion Applications (Possible Vote)
   * Fedorek moved to approve the proposal, Kurutz seconded
   * Anderson, Carlton, Chenjeri, Condon, Fedorek, French, Golding, Harmon, Hutton, Jablonski, Kurutz, Moreali, Longhurst, Morey, Oliveri, Parker, Phillips, Siders, Siem, Stanfill, Thatcher, Yamaguchi, and Yates voted in favor. None opposed. Gay abstained. **Motion passed.**
4. New Undergraduate Curriculum (Discussion)
   * There is one new minor; E-Sports, and a variety of new course proposals. All are available for faculty to look at and Oliveri can answer questions
   * Carlton talked about the E-Sports minor; it was a year in the making, and included discussion with industry insiders, corporate sponsors, infrastructure companies, gaming companies, etc.
   * There is a huge movement afoot with e-sports everything; it is a billion dollar industry, and lots of universities are starting to talk about it. We would be the first university on the west coast to offer a minor in e-sports, and we’ve decided to go with e-sports management. It would be housed in BCE, and would have two core e-courses; Introduction to E-Sports Management and Contemporary Ethical Issues in E-sports. There would be 399-type seminar opportunities with industry insiders. The minor would be interdisciplinary, with lots of elective courses through multiple programs such as EMDA. We also will have an e-sports team on campus.
   * Fedorek asked about the library “minimal” support and about the burden on Carlton in particular if he was the one teaching the classes and he is incoming Chair of Business. Carlton said it wouldn’t be just him, and they’ve been having conversations about other people who could teach as well. He said the idea is for him to take it on in the beginning, and then get other people involved. He said the intro classes are fine for him
   * Anderson responded about the “minimal support” from the library and explained that the phrase is a standard for new programs when no additional funding for materials is provided. She is already selecting some materials for e-sports with Business funds, and that will continue. She feels confident the library can support it.
   * Siders asked if we had people with expertise in this in-house, or just people who play games
   * Carlton said there are no experts so to speak, because it’s so new. That’s why they are focusing on the management side--event planning, event management is what the industry needs--they don’t need gamers, they need the support side. There are full stadiums of people cheering on six gamers playing games; it’s growing fast. There really aren’t a lot of content experts out there yet.
   * Gay said that faculty could send questions to Carlton about e-sports, or to Oliveri about other curriculum proposals.
5. Recommendations from the Student Evaluation of Teaching Task Force (Discussion) – Melissa Anderson
   * Anderson shared a PowerPoint presentation on the work of the task force and the new proposed survey. It is in the Senate drive for review.
   * The biggest takeaway is that the new model is not a student evaluation of teaching effectiveness, it’s a survey of the student learning experience
   * The task force started last year with research into the problems with student evaluations of teaching, and then this year added new members and began working on a new model and new questions. They did more research, looked at what other institutions are doing, and discussed goals and possibilities with the Registrar and with Suresh Appavoo
   * The goals are to solve the problems related to bias in student evaluations of teaching, provide useful feedback to instructors, and get some information about inclusiveness that might help meet the requirements of HB 2864
   * UO launched a new model this year too, and although it is not the same, it does share some of the elements of our model and recommendations--a focus on the student learning experience, peer feedback, and self-reflection
   * Proposal is for survey with 5 all-campus questions and up to 5 program-related questions; clear instructions and class time given to students for evaluations; removal of language around student evaluations of teaching in bylaws; replacement of quantitative evaluation of teaching effectiveness with self-reflection on survey feedback in FPAR
   * 5 all-campus questions address student effort, aspect of course most supportive of student learning, aspect of course most needing improvement, class atmosphere and inclusiveness, and additional comments about student learning experience in the course
   * Discussions with vendor are currently in place to determine if “chose one” can be replaced by “select all that apply” for questions around most helpful aspects/aspects needing improvement
   * Programs can write their own questions, and can be either quantitative or qualitative--Environmental Education has already drafted some potential program questions
   * Chairs will review survey feedback as needed and will also continue to use other methods of evaluation such as peer observation, direct reports from students, grades, etc.
   * The survey has different goals and uses from the “student evaluations of teaching”; the focus is on using the feedback on the student learning experience to improve instruction and not on benchmarking teaching effectiveness based on student scoring
   * The survey itself will need to be assessed by a new Senate committee--the questions themselves will likely evolve over time depending on usefulness and assessment needs; mid-term formative assessment is recommended and could also be developed by the new committee
   * If possible, a fall rollout of the new survey is recommended
   * Gay asked if new bylaws could be written this term, and Anderson responded that the Constitution Committee might be able to have a draft for the next Senate meeting
   * Oliveri asked if senators could see the questions submitted by Environmental Education, and Anderson said she would send them to Gay to add to the Drive
   * Oliveri also asked if students could just choose “other” for the questions about most useful aspect of the course/aspect most needing improvement and then write “nothing,” or if they would be forced to write in a real comment. Anderson replied that the instructions given before the survey would encourage students to provide real feedback, but students could just write “nothing” if they wanted to. There are always some students who do that, with the current model this also happens, but hopefully the instructions would discourage this.
   * Gay asked senators to discuss this proposal with their programs; the goal is to move forward for fall implementation if possible and the response so far has been positive
6. COVID-19 Recommendations from FPC (Discussion) – David Bithell
   * Gay stated that recommendations for changes for promotion and tenure due to COVID-19 are in the drive; they were vetted by AC first
   * Bithell said that the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC)wanted to recommend changes that would be flexible to address the COVID-19 situation or other situations in the future
   * FPC tried as best they could to address the factors they know about, like challenges to scholarship; and allow for the unknowns. They didn’t want to limit accommodations to what has been identified already. They wanted to open it up for people to address in their P&T packets how they were affected by COVID-19.
   * The envisioned accommodations have three parts.
   * First, the bylaws amendment is related to the tenure clock; it includes language for more collective challenging situations, adding in language that has some flexibility to it; a Senate resolution might be needed if some situation arises that is not included; it is still up to the faculty member’s discretion whether they actually use the tenure clock extension
   * The second part involves temporary adjustments to P&T expectations; they are separated into teaching, scholarship, and service, and include the things that FPC was able to foresee
   * FPC included Winter Term in the optional inclusion of student evaluations of teaching for P&T
   * The third part involves FPC extending the invitation to programs to make further adjustments as needed; FPC didn’t feel they should make reductions campuswide, but would allow, for example, programs to reduce required scholarship/conferences by some amount; programs can work out what appropriate reductions in various categories might be
   * The timeline on temporary changes to expectations is a challenge; FPC gave June 12 as a deadline since that’s the end of the term and the rubric would be available for fall applicants
   * If there are impacts that are expected to longer lasting, programs can use the regular process to make changes to expectations
   * Fedorek asked if FPC had discussed colleague evaluations; and wondered if they had a recommendation for situations where it is difficult for programs to get colleague evaluations done within the 2 year window
   * Walsh said that if the faculty member they hadn’t had one within 2 years, they would have to get on it right away in fall. There are ways to do it remotely if necessary.
   * Bithell said that the committee had not really spent time on the question of colleague evaluations
   * Yates raised a concern that if the student evaluation of teaching model changed, we will have to change our model of evaluating teaching performance for P&T. For better or for worse, a lot has hung on the campus-wide question score, and it’s not totally clear what will replace that. Anderson responded that programs could still add in quantitative questions if they needed those to evaluate teaching, but it’s true that any “scores” that come out of that still wouldn’t be in P&T packets. Yates clarified that he didn’t necessarily think we need quantitative information, but we did need to know how people were going to be evaluated. Anderson said that there is already a lot in the bylaws about the things that people can include as evidence of teaching effectiveness, and that wouldn’t change. Chairs would be commenting on the student feedback and the instructor self-reflection also, and the program committee would be commenting on teaching in the colleague evaluation. There will still be a lot for the FPC to use, they just won’t have the “score” based on student evaluations of teaching.
7. Announcements/New Business
   * Ayers said that University Studies is no longer accepting template applications for the current year; they are reviewing the ones they already have but the window is too narrow for new ones. They are pulling their templates down to improve them; if you need a template over the summer, reach out to Ayers
   * Gay stated and Waters confirmed that there is a change in the FPAR that will allow you to describe impact of COVID-19 on your teaching, service, and scholarshihp
8. Meeting adjourned at: 5:32