Faculty Senate Minutes

Monday, March 8, 2021

Zoom Meeting Room: <https://sou.zoom.us/j/96304283998>**, Passcode**: SOUSEN, 4:00-5:30p

*Present:* Melissa Anderson, Amy Belcastro, Jeremy Carlton, Paul Condon, Brian Fedorek, Paul French, Andrew Gay, Justin Harmon, Jesse Longhurst, Brendan McMahon, Matt Moreali, Anna Oliveri, Michael Parker, Aprille Phillips, Ellen Siem, Michael Stanfill, Chad Thatcher, Kemble Yates

*Absent:* Marianne Golding, Laurie Kurutz, Tiffany Morey, Merrilyne Lundahl, Mark Siders, Precious Yamaguchi

*Guests:*  Lee Ayers, Sherry Ettlich, Terry Longshore, Erik Palmer, Alena Ruggerio, Linda Schott, Matt Stillman, Sue Walsh, Jody Waters

Meeting called to order at: 4:00 pm.

Note: The Senate web page incorrectly states that we have a meeting Monday, 3/29.

1. **4:00p Approval of Minutes from 2/22**

**Motion & Vote:**

Fedorek moved to approve the minutes, and Phillips seconded. **Motion passed** with 1 abstention from Stanfill.

1. **4:05p President’s Report – Linda Schott**

Report:

American Rescue Plan Act

* + This relief bill has been passed by the Senate, and it seems as though it will be passed by the House without any changes.
  + In its current form, it will provide about $40 billion for higher education.
  + As for the first Cares act, approximately half of this money must be used to give emergency aid to students.
  + We do not yet know how much we will receive, but it will be a very welcome relief for us and the students. Many of the students or their families will likely receive the $1400 relief checks.
  + The bill contains significant funding for state and local government. Jeanne Stallman stated there will likely be a lot of one-time funding available because of this infusion of federal aid to the states.

Furloughs

* + If the relief bill passes without significant change and the rules continue as before, we will continue the current administrative and classified furloughs through the end of the associated time period, which is September 6.
  + There may be certain places on campus where operational need will necessitate lifting furloughs before that date, particularly as vaccines roll out and we work toward a smooth transition to a more customary fall.

Fall Term

* + We are hopeful that we can return to a more normal situation in fall, with a larger presence on campus.
  + This return to normal will be balanced with any health/safety considerations and with accommodations for individuals with particular circumstances.
  + From a marketing perspective, it is important that we quickly provide a very clear message that we will be open in the Fall. If we do not, we face losing students to other universities advertising that they will be open.
  + Please note (and share with your colleagues) that though the message to students will not be nuanced, we will do what we need to to balance health, safety, and any other concerns.
  + Provost Walsh will be working with division directors and others to better understand any particular complexities associated with the return to campus.

Structure of the State University System

* + This was discussed at the last Senate meeting.
  + The HECC will meet tomorrow, and the meeting will be run by a design thinker.
  + At the meeting, members of the HECC will consider the following question: *How might we design a process that helps optimize the organization of Oregon higher education so that all learners are served equitably and sustainably?*
  + There is a HECC meeting tomorrow afternoon, and members of the HECC will consider the current structure of state universities.
  + Ben Cannon (HECC ED) wrote the following in a separate email: *My rationale for suggesting adding a commitment to evaluate our higher education structures is a result of (a) the passage of time since Oregon's last consideration of these issues, (b) the demographic trends that seem likely to subject institutions to greater compressed competitive pressures, and (c) the continuing emergence of this communication and the legislative interest or concern.*
  + *On* a positive note, the HECC has invited representatives from the University administration and Board. President Schott, the current chair of the Board of Trustees (Paul Nicholson), and the former chair of the Board of Trustees will attend, and President Schott believes they will be allowed to participate rather than simply observe.
  + President Schott will keep everyone informed on any developments.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked if SOU intends to follow state vaccine protocols for fall, or if we might consider requiring vaccinations for students and employees. **Schott** replied that, from her understanding, we can encourage but not require anyone to be vaccinated. **Walsh** concurred. **Schott** stated that Jeanne Stallman heard that OHA will give students the opportunity to be vaccinated before the end of Spring term. If this is the case, it is unclear whether or how quickly the governor will lift the restrictions that limit the number of individuals in gatherings.

**Schott** emphasized that though we intend to have a more open campus in fall, she encourages faculty to keep any changes that have worked out for the better for students. The goal is to provide the most effective instruction for our students, so while we want a vigorous campus presence, not every class will necessarily need to continue face-to-face.

**Gay** referred to the plans for a virtual commencement and asked if small program commencments would be allowed. **Schott** that this is the intent, and **Waters** concurred, stating that this will be allowed and that the administration would like to encourage and provide resources for this. The University Ceremonies Committee offered to create a template or division/program “ceremony in a box” to help provide meaningful ceremonies. The next meeting with our vendor is this week. Once we learn what they might be able to offer, we will communicate this information. **Schott** has received emails from students wondering why we are planning to have a virtual commencement when things are opening up. Planning the ceremony requires a lot of time, and we will use a vendor to help us provide a much better experience. President Schott will remain flexible, and, if we can do something in addition to a virtual ceremony, she is very interested.

1. **4:10p Provost’s Report – Sue Walsh**

Report:

Commencement

* + In regards to smaller, additional commencement ceremonies, Provost Walsh spoke to division directors about this on Wednesday of last week.
  + To begin the conversation about holding a program-specific commencement, please reach out to your division director.

Space Limitations and Distancing Requirements

* + Provost Walsh has been following a Provost Council thread regarding whether the governor will relax space limitations and/or distancing requirements as more vaccines become available.
  + Ben Cannon has reached out to the governor’s office about this.
  + There are many what-ifs at this point, but the conversations are happening.

1. **4:15p  Advisory Council Report – Chair-elect Melissa Anderson**

Report:

Bylaws Changes Requested by Grad Council

* + Grad Council has requested a bylaws change that will help address logistical challenges associated with obtaining appropriate membership and regularly communicating the membership.
  + It is not yet clear if a bylaws change is necessary. It might be possible to address the challenges with more direction to the Committee on Committies.

ERS Curriculum

* + ERS currently has questions regarding its administration. However, AC concluded that this should not impede a Senate vote on the proposed ERS curriculum.

General Education

* + Subcommittees for the new gen ed proposal have completed their work, and a lot of time has been allocated to this on the agenda.
  + AC discussed the question of whether Senate should vote on the capacities again at this new stage.
  + Anderson believes that it is difficult to vote on these capacities without having a model and stated that it might make more sense to wait until we have approved a model before taking a final vote on the capacities.
  + The capacity work done by the subcommittees will be presented today, and a final vote will take place at another time.

Relinquishment of Tenure for Administrators

* + Yates’ email from last week summed up the conversation about this fairly well.

Discussion:

**Yates** and the chair of Grad Council (which might formally still be called the Graduate Studies Committee) are close to zeroing in on plausible bylaws language that will help address issues that Anderson discussed – getting the right membership and updating the membership through the Committee on Committees. The proposed language will be discussed at a future Senate meeting.

1. **4:20p ASSOU President’s Report – ASSOU President**

Note: There was no report this week. **Schott** and **Walsh** shared that the current president, Andrew Zucker, is graduating at the end of the term. **Yates** will invite the new president to future meetings.

1. **4:25p Academic Policy Committee recommendation (Action):**

**Raising to 20 credits threshold for students to register without permission**

Preface:

**Yates** shared that the proposal has been modified by the Academic Policies Committee and Matt Stillman to reflect feedback from the last Senate meeting – namely, that the registrar’s office check students who utilize are in good standing with a GPA of at least 3.0.

**Stillman** stated that the amendment is intended to provide the governance that was suggested at the last Senate meeting.

**Motion:** Fedorek moved to approve the recommended policy change, and Belcastro seconded.

Discussion:

**Fedorek** asked for more information regarding the challenge of using Banner to recognize a 3.0 GPA and whether there a workaround had been found. **Stillman** replied that he does not believe there is a way to program Banner to preclude students on academic probation or with a GPA of less than 3.0 from registering for more than 18 credits. He will work with the Banner team to see if there is a way around this – perhaps through a baseline modification / technical option at the front end – and if there is not, he will write an error report against any students matching those parameters, immediately ask their primary academic advisors for thoughts on these students, and intervene accordingly.

**Yates** commented that this puts something of an onus on the registrar’s office, as students register on an almost continual basis and this will need frequent checking, particularly during the week classes begin and the first week of classes. We don’t want a student to attend a class for a period of weeks before we tell them that they can’t take the class. **Stillman** agreed and stated that he would write this as a daily or overnight report. He suspects there will be a reasonable way to address the academic probation or academic warning component at a technical level, but he is less confident that the GPA constraint can be checked this way. His office will come as close as they can to an easy solution and will spot-check the remaining constraints. **Yates** stated that this would address the primary concern addressed by a number of senators.

**Moreali** asked for clarification regarding the exceptions for first-year and transfer students. **Stillman** replied that first-year here refers to new freshmen or new transfer students rather than first-year as in freshman standing. **Yates** asked if the GPA check is done against an SOU GPA, such that a student who does not have a SOU GPA would need to obtain permission. **Stillman** replied that transfers probably would not be an issue; in many cases, we would catch new students wanting an overload in Raider Registration. **Moreali** asked if, hypothetically, a first-year student or freshman student who started in fall term could register for 18 credits in winter term without an override. **Stillman** replied that this is correct and the question of how to handle brand new students raises an interesting question.

**Ruggerio** shared that she wrote the language of the current proposal and that the word she added to address this is “incoming”, such that students who are incoming as freshmen or transfer students will need manual approval. Once they are no longer incoming students and have an established record, they will be able to use the proposed mechanism.

**Yates** clarified that students who have a GPA lower than 3.0 based on a period of time at SOU of one term or greater could register for more than 18 credits but would need approval from both their advisor and the registrar. **Stillman** and **Ruggerio** replied that this is correct.

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

1. **4:40p Curriculum Committee and Graduate Council proposals (Action)  [Please see Summary and subfolders in Faculty Senate 02-22-21 Agenda Items/ Curriculum Committee/Grad Council folder]**

Preface: **Yates** stated that the documents for all of the items are located in the folder for the 2/22 agenda items. **Stanfill** (chair of the Curriculum Committee) stated that there were some modifications to the courses based on feedback from the Curriculum Committee, and that the committee was happy to see these proposals move forward.

* + **Certificate in Professional Social Media**

**Motion:** Fedorek moved to approve the certificate in professional social media, and Stanfill seconded.

Discussion:

**Belcastro** asked how certificates are scribed on students’ official transcripts. **Waters** replied that certificates do not appear on a diploma or a degree, but they appear on transcripts with the associated title. **Belcastro** asked if students receive an actual certificate in addition to the note on their transcripts, and **Waters** replied that they do receive an actual certificate, adding in the chat:

*Students receive a separate “diploma” but in Certificate form, both electronic and paper.*

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

* + **Minor in Ethnic and Racial Studies**

**Motion:** Gay moved to approve the minor, and Stanfill seconded.

Discussion:

**Yates** commented that the minor is a wonderful addition to the curriculum but, as mentioned by Anderson, there was some concern in AC that the minor currently does not have a home, clarifying that it was created by faculty in GSWS but will not be administered by GSWS. **Walsh** commented that at least one other program participated in the creation of the minor and that the question of whether it is a standalone program or will be housed within an existing academic question is really a resource question. The proposal requests that someone coordinate the program and receive a course release as well as an S&S budget. After a conversation with Kylan de Vries in fall, this request was set aside to first approve the curriculum and then revisit the resource question. The administration does not want this to be an orphan program, and one of the tasks of the group involved with revisiting the academic structure might suggest where the minor will live permanently. Provost Walsh mentioned that she is trying to remain open and fully supports the curriculum.

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

* + **New courses (Comm, Chem, ERS, GSWS, Music)**

**Motion & Vote:** Oliveri moved to approve the new courses, and Belcastro seconded.The motion passed unanimously.

1. **5:10p  Report from General Education Task Force – Andrew Gay, Brie Paddock**

*Note*

Gay screenshared the summary report included in the Senate folder for this meeting.

*Context for the Subcommittee Work*

Gay reminded everyone that at the 11/16 Senate meeting, the majority of Senate voted to visually approve the proposed capacities and that the subcommittees were formed at the request of Senate. Each subcommittee included nearly every faculty member who volunteered to work on that subcommittee, but a few exceptions occurred to maintain interdisciplinary balance for each subcommittee. Each subcommittee worked independently through 2/26 but had access to a task force member who acted as a resource and liaison to the task force; some subcommittees did not work with their liaison and others worked closely with their liaison.

The task force felt confident that everyone’s voices were heard, and issues of debate and/or unresolved questions were included in the worksheets returned to the task force and available in the Senate folder. The proficiencies from each subcommittee look very different from one another in terms of style and level of detail, and a next level of work will be to make these more congruent.

*Purposeful Living as the Glue*

The task force has been meeting and working weekly for a year and a half, and while the subcommittees were meeting, they continued their re-evaluation of each facet of the original model by turning their attention to the proposed first-year experience and e-portfolios. The task force has, so far, seen overwhelming research-based evidence that the first-year experience is a high-impact practice. Hence, the first-year experience will likely remain as part of the model the task force will bring to Senate. In addition, after a thorough review of the e-portfolio, the task force is convinced that an e-portfolio should remain, in some way, part of the model.

Gay emphasized that the portfolio is not intended to be a professional, job-placement tool, stating that whether it should be internally- or externally-facing is not the right question. The intent is for students to write their portfolios with an audience in mind, which could include employers, but as a reflection of how the capacities have been present throughout their experience. This includes their attainment of the capacities, including work created in their gen ed classes, as well as reflections regarding the presence of the capacities in other aspects of their lives, whether that be co-curricular involvement in clubs, employment on/off campus, non-profits, churches, etc.

The task force views the purposeful living capacity as the foundation of the e-Portfolio and the glue of the other 5 capacities, in many ways interpreting and helping students better understand the relevance and importance of the others. This was represented in a graphic Gay made, where purposeful living was represented as a pentagon and the remaining capacities worked together, each placed parallel to a particular side of the pentagon, increasing its overall size.

*Subcommittee Work*

Gay reviewed the results of each subcommittee, asking senators to look closely at the proficiencies for each. He stated that if purposeful living is the glue, then **equity, diversity, & inclusion** is the foundation. The communication capacity has been expanded to **communication & expression**. He encouraged senators to compare the suggested proficiencies for this capacity to the current University Studies communication learning outcomes, as the proficiencies suggested by the subcommittee are broader and more inclusive. The **creativity & innovation** capacity now has a fantastic definition and its proficiencies may need more detail. When first discussed at Senate, there was debate as to whether **inquiry & analysis** should remain a single capacity, and the task force encouraged this subcommittee to consider that question very closely and make an independent recommendation. They have recommended that this remain a single capacity. The **numerical literacy** capacity is a little more direct and may need more development. The capacities have evolved and have more clarity but show no dramatic changes. Gay expressed appreciation for the work done by each subcommittee.

*General Education Model*

The task force is considering a number of open questions and hopes to bring forward a model in mid-spring for debate and campus discussion. Currently, the task force is addressing the following through debate and discussion:

* Target Credits

The current target is 40-48 credits, but the task force might bring forward a model with a different number. The task force would welcome a Senate discussion and/or individual input that addresses this question.

* 1-to1 or Mapped Connections

The question is whether each capacity will have its own course or whether capacity connections will be mapped to more disciplinary courses. Some universities do both.

* Liberal Arts

The liberal arts is important, but there is discussion about how directed the liberal arts should be. Do we give students an optimum amount of exploration and let them decide what to take or do we create disciplinary categories and require that students take a certain number of credits from each of these categories? Feedback from subcommittees did not address this question.

* Curricular Pathways

The original model allowed students to take their gen ed courses within themed groupings that focused on “wicked problems”. This type of model seems to be popular among universities and impactful for students. The task force is very interested in this but it involves resource questions regarding the number of themes that could be supported.

* Portfolio

The portfolio is becoming a key component of the model but there is a question of how to assess the portfolio and how to deliver meaningful feedback to students. Student and faculty testimonials from other universities indicate that portfolios are great and successful experiences because students receive feedback on the whole portfolio in conversation with faculty. If a gen ed course creates portfolio artifacts, the faculty member of that course will not necessarily provide feedback on the entire portfolio. Does the feedback happen during advising or in a standalone portfolio class where students synthesize all of the work?

* Professional Development

Many of the subcommittees made professional development recommendations. Clay Austin and Provost Walsh support the development of the right kinds of opportunities for faculty.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked for more information about the wicked problems, and **Gay** clarified that it refers to difficult challenges currently facing society and for which the solutions will require creativity and innovation. For example, climate change is a wicked problem. The idea is to create themes that engage students with real world issues by connecting with, for example, their passion or sense of social responsibility. This type of model might help students connect to their gen ed in a way that is more meaningful than simply picking from classes that might be available at a particular time. This is very successful at other universities, but they tend to be larger. If we were to offer pathways, we would want to be careful that we could do it in a way that works and is meaningful.

**Anderson** referred to a discussion about overlap between capacities and asked when the work to address this and to further develop capacity proficiencies would occur. **Gay** responded that work on the capacities will happen in parallel to work on the model, and the task force will discuss this at the next meeting. The task force is reporting on the work of the subcommittees now so that faculty can review it earlier rather than later. They might consider evening out the capacities themselves or creating a subgroup for that purpose. **Anderson** referred to the importance of eliminating some of the overlap between capacities to avoid confusion, and **Gay** replied that while there may be meaningful overlaps, it will be important to eliminate confusion, particularly for assessment purposes. The task force will be working on this soon. The task force would like to bring Senate a final version of the capacities, their final proficiencies, and more than one model simultaneously After the last model was proposed, the task force received feedback that it would be better to put forward more than one model for all faculty to debate regarding which model achieves the learning goals of the capacities in the best way. At this point, without a clear message otherwise from Senate, the task force does not anticipate further debate on what the capacities are but rather how best to teach the capacities.

**Anderson** asked whether intensive writing would be discussed as part of the model. **Gay** replied that the task force has had a lot of discussion about writing and divided the question into parts - where does writing live in this model, how much writing is required, what does writing-intensive mean, and which courses will have to be writing-intensive? The task force has talked a lot with USEM faculty and one thing that is becoming clear is that transforming the gen ed model will not likely solve student writing challenges. Rather, it’s something that gen ed and programs must work together to address. Regardless of which gen ed model moves forward, the task force will recommend that individual programs carefully consider how they scaffold writing into their major, minor, and certificate requirements.

**Fedorek** expressed appreciation for the work done by the task force and everyone involved. **Gay** responded that there were 30-40 people who participated on the subcommittees, and expressed appreciation for everyone’s service.

**Yates** asked about the big-picture timeline, stating that everyone has agreed that we would like the new version of gen ed to begin a year from Fall 2021. He asked if part of the work in parallel could be the development of templates so that faculty could begin receiving professional development, developing courses, and building schedules. **Gay** said that the task force is very aware that a lot must be done in a timely manner, and there has been a discussion with Ayers about working with the University Studies Committee to help with template development. The biggest task at the moment is in making the capacities align as of one design. Working on the model is less challenging, as they spent 6 months developing the original version and are now revisiting and reconsidering older ideas with more developed proficiencies and guided by questions such as: *What did we miss the first time? How do we give faculty options? What did we push aside that might be worth another look*. Creating the templates will require more developed capacities and models. The hope is to bring capacities and models for discussion and debate as early as possible, work to create the templates, have a bigger discussion and debate, and vote on everything at once, giving faculty the ability to begin developing courses over the summer. This would be the timeline necessary to launch a year from Fall 2021. If faculty do not support it, the gen ed task force work would return to the drawing board, and deliberations would continue and the launch of the new gen ed would be delayed another year. **Yates** responded with appreciation for Gay’s candor and the work done by the task force, stating that it’s easy to be a critic and faculty are forming a better vision of how this could improve our general education. **Gay** replied that faculty who had expressed opposition now express appreciation.

**Yates** told everyone that because of the upcoming furlough, the online Faculty Senate calendar is not correct, but that there are 5 Faculty Senate meetings left this year and that Senate will want to be mindful and efficient.

1. **5:25p  Announcements/New Business**

**Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Rural Spaces (webinars)**

Longhurstserves on the executive council of the American Educational Research Association’s Rural Education Special Interest Group. With the help of Provost Walsh, they are sponsoring this series of webinars. Some is related to K12, a lot is related to higher ed, and there are fantastic scholars from around the country discussing their rural ed expertise. There have been two so far – one for launching the series and one on black rural education. There are 3 more scheduled and one on the horizon. Those on the docket are indigenous rural ed, Latinx rural ed, and queer rural ed. The webinars will take place at 1 pm on Fridays for the next few weeks. If you would like a flyer, please email Longhurst and she will send that to you.

**Faculty Senate Elections**

Anderson shared that Senate elections are beginning to roll out. Elections will begin with division seats and, when those are completed after spring break, elections will continue with at-large seats. Watch your email.

**Math Faculty Hire**

Yates has served as the chair of a search committee for a new math faculty member. The program has made an offer to a great candidate, Brandon Ashley, a PhD candidate from Utah State University, and Ashley has accepted the offer!

The meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm.