Faculty Senate Minutes

Monday, October 5, 2020

Zoom Meeting Room: , 4:00-5:30p

*Present:* Melissa Anderson,Amy Belcastro, Jeremiah Carlton, Enrique Chacón (rep. Marianne Golding), Paul Condon, Brian Fedorek, Paul French,Andrew Gay,Justin Harmon,Laurie Kurutz, Merrilyne Lundahl, Brendan McMahon, 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:*  Clay Austin, Lee Ayers, Sherry Ettlich, Sarah Grulikowski, Kristen Hocevar, Younghee Kim, Greg Perkinson, Mark Siders, Karen Stone, Dale Vidmar, Jody Waters, Neil Woolf, Rattaphon Wuthisatian

Meeting called to order at: 4:00 pm

1. **Approval of Minutes from 06/01**

Motion & Vote:

Fedorek moved to approve the minutes, and Oliveri seconded. None opposed. Chacón abstained. **Motion passed.**

1. **President’s Report – Linda Schott**

Report:

President Schott expressed hope that faculty had a restful summer and that classes have gone well. She kept her report brief to make more time for the panel presentations.

* Federal Grant:

SOU plans to apply for a federal grant for schools and universities victim to acts of violence or natural disaster. It is not yet clear what it will and will not cover.

* Preparing for the Impacts of the 2020 Election:

President Schott attended a webinar with other college/university presidents considering civil unrest that may follow the 2020 presidential election and how this unrest may lead to incidents on campus and in our community. We may create a task force that will keep its ears to the ground and eyes on social media in an effort to be prepared and think ahead as much as possible. We will partner with the city of Ashland and perhaps others.

* Plan for Winter Teaching:

President Schott will soon send a message out about course delivery for Winter term. The message will likely state that, at this point, it is likely that classes will be primarily remote for Winter. She would like faculty to have an opportunity to consider whether they would like to opt for in-person teaching based on their experience. Students will pre-register at the end of October.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked about the content of the message that will go to campus.

**Schott** replied that it will not be much different from the message shared above and that though she expects many faculty will continue teaching remotely, she would like to give faculty an opportunity to switch courses to in-person or hybrid. For example, Anna Oliveri is offering a hands-on lab, and it will be interesting to see how such cases might be working. The intent is to be flexible.

1. **Provost’s Report – Sue Walsh**

Report:

Provost Walsh stated that she wanted to be mindful of the presentations and would likewise keep her report brief. She said that the faculty have probably heard from her already through a long email message she sent a couple of weeks ago and opening remarks at an event last week. She expressed hope that the first couple of weeks of the term went well for faculty and requested that we direct any questions to her at Senate or later through email.

Discussion:

**Yates** suggested that the President and Provost might weigh in on later discussions.

**Walsh** indicated that they absolutely would where appropriate.

1. **Advisory Council Report – Chair-Elect Melissa Anderson**

Report:

AC met last week, and most of the things discussed are on the Senate agenda. AC also discussed the following items:

* Unfinished business items from last year, including the FPAR and Post-Tenure Review Task Force, which will be brought to Senate at a later date.
* Recommendations for a new evaluation process for our administrators. As it stands, the feedback is not very helpful and there is a low response rate. The Student Experience Survey Committee has agreed to work on recommendations to bring to Senate.
* Staff participation in evaluations and the possibility of creating a staff assembly.
* Bylaws that haven't been updated.

Discussion:

**Yates** stated that he may have identified a student that will take the place of Sarah (a student from last year) and can update bylaws and Senate webpages. Chad Thatcher has also offered to help, but a student worker is preferred.

1. **ASSOU President’s Report – Sarah Grulikowski**

Report:

Grulikowski stated that she was grateful to be at Senate and introduced herself as the new ASSOU president. ASSOU is just getting started for the year–still swearing in new senators–and many ASSOU students are very relationship focused. They will soon choose which issues to focus on for the year.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked if there were any initiatives that faculty can help with to encourage students to register to vote.

**Grulikowski** stated that ASSOU has yet to develop a formal initiative but that OSPIRG is an active resource to use for now – watch for their emails. She also mentioned that ASSOU is using instagram to advertise nonpartisan debate parties.

**Yates** stated that communications from students are often heard by students more effectively than communications from faculty.

1. **Proposal for new Distinguished Faculty Scholarship Award – Faculty Development Committee** (Discussion – possible vote in 2 weeks) - Kristen or Tiffany

Members of the FDC present: Kristen Hocevar, Tiffany Morey (chair)

Summary:

Hocevar stated that this award is modeled after the distinguished teaching and distinguished service awards. It was challenging to encompass all types of scholarship, but the FDC has broad representation and Hocevar believes they did a fairly good job. The committee wanted to ensure that the award would be open to faculty who have done work at other institutions before coming to SOU.

NOTE: Hocevar stated that the FDC would be willing to offer this award for the first time this year, but the timeline would have to be accelerated because the proposal for the award would be voted on at a later date and, in the proposal, the deadline for nominations would be today.

Discussion:

**Gay** noted that professional track faculty are eligible for this award and asked whether this would imply that our professional track faculty are expected to do scholarship even when they are not loaded for scholarship.

**Hocevar** replied that the committee talked to a handful of professional track faculty, and they agreed that they wanted the award to be non-exclusionary.

**Morey** added that though professional track faculty are not required to do scholarship, some still do scholarship, and this might be a good way for them to be acknowledged for their work.

**Anderson** asked whether it was a good idea to award scholarship faculty had done before coming to SOU.

**Hocevar** stated that the idea was that some people do some really amazing work elsewhere and this might be a way to recognize that.

**Anderson** indicated that awarding work done at other institutions would make the award different from the other two.

**Morey** shared that the FDC had many discussions on this issue and decided that it did not want the limitation of excluding scholarship done elsewhere.

**Anderson** asked that we think about this more. She pointed out that, with only 2 scholarship awards given each year, this could be competitive and it would be unfortunate to overlook a productive faculty member at SOU.

**Morey** indicated that when selecting awardees, the committee wanted the freedom to look at the scholarship done holistically and consider what was done, how long ago it was done, etc.

**Hocevar** added that there were multiple opinions about this.

**Yates** stated that he would prefer if the committee placed greater emphasis on work done while at SOU. He suggested that the FDC might want to bring an updated proposal or alternative version of the proposal to AC and the next Senate meeting that might address the concerns raised at Senate.

**Morey** stated that the FDC could act on Yates’ suggestion and would be meeting next week.

1. **Pandemic Snapshot Reports (Panel)**

Yates shared that the purpose of this panel is to provide a report summarizing the effects the pandemic has had on SOU. Speakers were asked to limit their remarks to 5 minutes to allow time for questions at the end.

* + **Budget/Finances – Greg Perkinson**

Report:

Perkinson used slides while delivering his report.

As of 8/11, SOU was about $2.9 million in the hole after CARES funding (~$2 million, not including the direct $1.7 million that went to students directly) and cost avoidance (saving ~$6 million from travel we did not do, etc.) softened the extra expenses incurred (less than $1 million) and the over $9.9 million in lost revenue over Spring and Summer.

After tightening our belts and sticking to our budget plans, SOU ended last year with 7.9% of operating revenue. In June, the Board approved $6.4 million in new cuts in order to maintain an 8% balance. After furloughs and cuts across the board, this has evolved to reduce the cuts first to $4.4 million and now to $1.9 million. Any additional reductions would put SOU at risk.

SOU is down about 10% in enrollment. In September, the State said that it would hole the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) harmless. This was key. Furloughs and CARES funding have helped.

The road to recovery will be painful. SOU will continue to freeze travel and avoid catering services. The more risky measures we could take would include continuing our hiring freeze, transforming processes, and near-term reorganization. One of the slides also suggested looking for new sources of revenue generation. We want to continue making cuts where we can but not in a way that would put the University at risk.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked about the impact of lost revenue from auxiliaries such as dorms – how vulnerable is SOU to future losses?

**Perkinson** shared that $4.5 of our $9.9 million in lost revenue was directly tied to dorms and dining. When the pandemic hit, SOU had about 800 students living in the dorms. This dropped to about 200 in Spring. We now have about 466 students; as it turns out, the new dorms can support social distancing but the older dorms cannot. Perkinson stated that it will be important to focus on the SOU housing experience as well as enrollment.

**Fedorek** asked what the near-term reorganization would look like.

**Perkinson** shared an example from Business Services, stating that its workflow is outdated and that there are more effective and efficient tools and processes that Business Services could use. He also stated the possibility of absorbing vacancies and creating vacancies through layoffs.

* + **Enrollment – Neil Woolf**

Report:

Woolf used slides while delivering his report. The data shown was as of today.

When compared to Fall 2019, in Fall 2020:

* admission applications were down slightly (Spring 20 had fewer HS graduates)
* SOU admitted more students (there were more complete, quality applications)
* more students confirmed (with a $300 downpayment) that they would enroll in Fall
* fewer students actually showed up - students are citing COVID / fires as the reason

SOU is down 11.4% in new students. RCC is down 28% in new students, which will likely impact our future transfer numbers. This is concerning, and we will be reaching out to other community colleges for marketing and recruitment.

Continuing students are down 4.4% and returning students are down 11.7%. Our total headcount is down 10.9%, and our total FTE is close, down 10.1%.

SOU is down disproportionately for out-of-state students. We’re seeing more localization of education with fewer students traveling. That said, we are down almost 13% in our resident students.

Students of color were down about 2%, but over the past week we have lost more, bringing this down to about 5% likely from the Hispanic students who have been hit hard, particularly by the fires. There are large drops in our students from Hawaii (down 25%) and Alaska (down 20%).

Discussion:

**Anderson** asked whether the drop in grad students included students in new SOU programs.

**Woolf** replied that the drop lumped together new postbac and grad students.

**Woolf** wanted to add the following information: Students who have downloaded the Navigate app seem to have shown greater persistence. In addition, Navigate has cut down average time to work through registration holds.

* + **Grades – Mark Siders**

Report:

Siders used slides while delivering his report.

It was joked that Siders is the Center for Instructional Research.

Siders shared that he heard many stories from his colleagues over the summer about the impact of the pandemic and Spring term changes on student grades and follow-through.

To see if the stories suggested larger trends, Siders compared student outcome measures (such as grades, drops, P/NP, DFWI) of Spring 2019 and Spring 2020.

The analysis:

* found that there was a larger preponderance of students opting for P/NP and that, for students who opted to be graded in classes, the grades were slightly higher in Spring 2020, suggesting that the grading was softer. He found the softer grading as a general trend when considering instructors who taught the same course in Spring 2019 and Spring 2020.
* did not find conclusive evidence of higher drop rates.
* did find evidence of higher DFWI rates in Spring 2020.
* found an increase in grade difference rates, indicating that, for students of a given GPA, their course grade tended to be higher in Spring 2020 than in Spring 2019
* found a higher course grade variation in Spring 2020, possibly from the larger number of students taking a course for P/NP

Discussion:

**Fedorek** asked why Siders did this study.

**Siders** clarified that he wanted to determine if there was quantitative evidence that would support the stories he heard from colleagues.

* + **Evaluation Accommodations – Kemble Yates**

Report:

**Yates** shared the following actions taken by Senate in spring. Senate:

* delayed the due date for the FPAR to 9/30.
* updated bylaws to permit faculty to delay / freeze tenure clock by a year.
* passed a resolution that gave faculty members the option of not including evaluations from Spring 2019 in any evaluation and P/T applications
* passed a motion to change student teaching evaluations so that they would provide less quantitative and more (useful) qualitative feedback. The intent is that the feedback will provide more insight as to how a faculty member might improve their teaching methods.
* encouraged faculty to include a commentary regarding the impacts of COVID (etc) on their teaching, scholarship, etc.

Yates then shared two additional pieces of information. First, we will continue offering P/NP as an option for our students through Fall. He expects that this will continue as long as we are in this health crisis. Second, over the summer APSOU and the administration agreed on 8 furlough days for faculty and improved measures for faculty safety.

* + **Student Perceptions – Jody Waters**

Report:

Waters used slides while delivering her report.

NSEE (National Survey of Student Engagement) was administered in Spring 2019. About 1 week after the survey closed, SOU administered another survey collecting information about student perceptions of Spring term.

NSEE is fairly widespread and generally collects hundreds of responses from institutions nationwide. This year SOU had a fairly good response rate of 548 students.

Students seemed to have slightly higher levels of overall satisfaction than in a previous year, and more students–particularly freshmen–indicated that they would return to SOU. A general trend is that SOU seems to perform well in satisfaction relative to our comparators.

When comparing results from Spring 2019 to Spring 2020, fewer first year students stated that they had considered leaving SOU (43% in 2019 vs 29% in 2020). There was a significant drop in students sharing difficulties in getting into the classes they wanted, with advising, or with transferring credits into SOU. Students seemed to feel as though they had good interactions with faculty but less interactions with other students.

In summary, the 2 surveys gave similar results. There were far fewer students considered leaving and student-faculty interactions seem to have improved, but there was a decrease in collaborative learning, discussions with diverse groups, etc. Seniors seemed to have been impacted more through fewer opportunities in internships, collaborative learning, and writing experiences.

Discussion:

**Fedorek** asked whether SOU has evidence that the first year intervention strategies we use (through EAB Navigate, etc) work.

**Waters** responded that we do not have data other than what we see. Most 1st year students received a strong message that Navigate is important, and we are still looking through the data.

* + **Teaching Strategies – Clay Austin**

Report:

Austin used slides while delivering his report.

This summer, CATL offered opportunities for professional development in 3 phases.

1. It connected with online vendors quickly, set up a series of webinars, and provided support for other things. All divisions were represented.
2. It brought back a more “beefed up” version eT/LT, focusing on student-student, student-instructor, student-content connections. The first eT/LT session began on the first day of summer, and the feedback was great. Its flexible format – readings and discussions through Moodle, an optional class session once a week – promoted strong engagement.
3. It hosted SOU’s recent Summer Symposium. There were many participants and very positive feedback. The success of the symposium was particularly significant considering the impact of the wildfires the week before.
4. **General Education Task Force Report – Andrew Gay**

Report:

Gay stated that the General Education Task Force worked over the summer to continue working on the new general education model and has since met with most divisions. The task force identified 4 recommended motions for Senate (found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GMrhgEg3ijKz792RwFDM_MSgCk6svzxoIiz4SoguEmI/edit?usp=sharing)).

The 1st recommendation asks to move to approve the model as presented. This recommendation will likely be divided into 3 parts – one for approving the capacities, one for approving the model, and one for approving the transfer pathways.

The 2nd recommendation is intended to prevent a large number of students from switching catalog years, which may have negative repercussions on their major/minor/certificate/etc plans, to ease their general education requirements.

Want our existing ustud to match in credit load.

The 3rd recommendation is intended to renew the General Education Task Force for another year to rework the model and/or oversee its implementation.

The 4th recommendation is for a motion to change the name and charge of the University Studies Committee to better align with the new general education model. Of note is the recommendation that BA/BS requirements become the purview of this committee.

Gay highlighed the following questions for debate:

* Should the capstone be defined in the catalog, with common elements among all capstones?
* Should most major programs offer BA/BS degrees?
* Should SOU consider offering AA/AS degrees?

Gay urged senators to reach out to their constituents to solicit feedback for the next Senate meeting.

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

**Yates** shared an unusual situation relating to the General Education Task Force that he will discuss at the next AC meeting. The situation – the task force is required to have a faculty representative from the library, but the library faculty are stretched thin. Dale Vidmar has served in this capacity in the past; however, he is now serving as the director of the library. Should we relax the rules so that Vidmar can meet this need?

Meeting adjourned at 5:30.