

MINUTES OF
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
May 12, 2020

The sixth Faculty Senate meeting of the 2019-2020 academic year was called to order by Associate Librarian Jill Dixon at 11:47 am via Zoom.

1. Campus Update

President Harvey Stenger addressed the group regarding the COVID-19 situation. As we work our way through the summer, things may be other than normal. We need to be working as a team to meet challenges and arrive in the fall semester fully intact and the great university we are by providing an outstanding education. We want to insure we are doing everything to reopen in the fall with safety and health as our highest priorities as well as student success being a high priority.

A month ago a small "return to normal" team was formed with representatives from the public health experts as well as area coordinators. Their role is to build scenarios, understand the landscape, see what other universities are doing, select scenarios, and implement.

A Research and Scholarly Activities group is being led by Vice President Sammakia. The group includes 11 faculty members. They will be developing a process/procedure to bring faculty back to campus and into their research labs and creative spaces. The goal is to allow everyone who wants to return to do so in a safe way. This will be announced at the end of this week.

Vice President for Student Affairs Brian Rose is leading a group to address campus living, financial oversight, and student well-being.

An Operations group being led by Vice President JoAnn Navarro will address concerns about custodial/cleaning, HVAC, reduced density in public spaces, employees returning to work, Physical Facilities operations, communication and signage, and campus security.

Academic Affairs, led by Provost Donald Nieman, has three groups 1) Vice Provost Donald Loewen to address returning to face-to-face instruction for undergrads, 2) Dean Hari Srihari is addressing graduate education, and 3) Vice Provost James Pitarresi is addressing the new normal in terms of technology. All groups are reaching out to others, making plans and narrowing down scenarios. In the next two weeks the plan for the fall will be announced. Things are moving quickly. Orientation for transfer students will be held in mid-June with new freshman orientation going into July. All will be done remotely. Students will be getting a personalized experience in selecting classes.

President Stenger explained that our state appropriation will be cut by 10 to 20%. Our state appropriation is \$48 million (10% cut would be \$4.8 million; 20% cut would be \$9.6 million). We received \$6.9 million from the Cares Act; one-half will go directly to students and the other half can be used by the University at our discretion. We gave our students a refund which equaled \$25 million, so this \$6.9 million does not cover all of that. We are now running on our reserves, and we will continually keep close contact with the Vice Presidents and Deans to be sure expenditures are kept at a minimum.

Admissions look very strong right now with good numbers of returning students. We are optimistic about graduate students staying here, but pessimistic about our international students.

Right now we are not talking about a hiring freeze. We are asking Vice Presidents and Deans to be working at 80% to 90% of their budgets. We need to be very creative. It is essential to continue to be the university that students want to attend. We need to come out of this in a very strong position.

Q: Prof. Fernando Guzman, Mathematics, asked what the plans were for summer courses.

A: We are offering a full slate of summer courses which will all be on-line. Registrations are up significantly.

Q: Prof. Leslie Gates, Sociology, asked if there will be exceptions for individuals with underlying conditions who have a concern about face-to-face instruction.

A: We are going to be asking those faculty who have health concerns about going into the classroom to report that. When returning to face-to-face instruction, we want to protect everyone.

Q: Prof. Blazo Kovacevic, Art, asked if the group working on research and scholarly activities can also consider the performing arts facilities.

A: Prof. Carl Lipo, Anthropology, is on this committee and is an advocate for creative activities. This committee will be including performance spaces, music rooms, etc. This committee will not be approving faculty to come to campus, just asking faculty to follow guidelines when they do come to campus to use their spaces for things they cannot do at home.

Q: Prof. Thomas Sinclair, Public Administration, knows that the summer will be very different, but faculty may need to be making plans/adjustments on how they deliver their courses in the fall and will need to work on this in the summer. What communication plans are in place to keep faculty informed so they can make adjustments in the way they form their courses?

A: We have been monitoring what other universities are doing and most are making announcements around June 15 or earlier on how to manage the classroom experience. A webinar is planned in about two weeks and President Stenger encouraged all faculty to come to that. We are looking at standards for social distancing in classrooms and working with Deans and departments to identify courses that need to be offered face-to-face. Large lecture classes may be offered on-line. Some students may not want to come back to campus so we are figuring out ways to offer classes for them. We need to reschedule classrooms for classes. CLT will be providing support all summer to help faculty explore new ways of offering courses in this environment, for instance, how to redesign syllabi and to familiarize faculty with technology. Faculty will need to devote some time over the summer to possibly redesigning their courses. Some colleagues may be able to share ideas.

Q: Prof. Tina Chronopoulos, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, said many rely on the library for research and we should treat the library as another laboratory. Also, there is a concern that online will creep into our lives with the expectation that we will continue to offer education online.

A: Dean Kendrick responded that the Library is something we are definitely focusing on. He is working with staff on what kinds of access the Library staff will feel comfortable with. We will be considering this very quickly. Right now there is no access to print collections but we hope to restore that access soon. The challenge is to have social distancing; we may need to take away 60% to 75% of seating. We need to figure out how to manage space and what the implications will be.

Provost Nieman responded that going online is being forced on us due to the coronavirus, but we don't believe this will push us in the direction of completely online learning. Our goal is to get back to face-to-face. We will be learning things that will enhance our in-person instruction that is our trademark.

Q: Prof. Jonathan Karp, Judaic Studies, asked how dormitory life will be managed/adjusted and what the impact on students returning to residential life will be.

A: Vice President Brian Rose responded with regard to the current thinking on dormitory life. We have many returning students so we know they are maintaining their interest to live on campus. Deposits for new students are on target. With reduced density, we may have to displace some students (this is one of the scenarios we are looking at). We need to accommodate everyone safely. The Public Health Planning Group is looking at what tests would be done and how many. Once we get students back, we will need to look at additional social distancing policies: masking, no floor events, how to manage bathroom use, cleaning protocols, and how to enforce. Dining hall changes will need to be done -- touchless pay systems, table reservation service. We will need to look at transportation and expect to see regulations on occupancy loads on the buses.

Q: Prof. Jennifer Gordon, Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Leadership, asked about summer session fees and if students would be expected to pay since classes will be online.

A: Vice President Rose responded that fees are reduced and some will not be charged.

Q: Prof. Kent Schull, History, asked what will help protect graduate students and their funding, since their progress has been retarded due to the virus.

A: It was noted that all those progress requirements have been lifted.

Q: Prof. Andrew Walkling, Theatre, asked for an update on the switch to a new learning management system.

A: Vice Provost Pitarresi responded that we have a purchase order out for a new system -- Desire to Learn -- but we will not be implementing this until fall 2021. We hope to have the system on campus in December 2020 and will be working on implementation during spring semester 2021. We hope to be trying it during the summer 2021 and expect it to be ready for full implementation in fall of 2021.

Q Prof. Jeffner Allen, Philosophy, asked about the safety of the physical campus since many buildings have narrow hallways and small restrooms. There are a lot of spaces besides classrooms that would need to be reworked.

A: The larger lecture classes will be taught on line so those students will not be in those buildings. We will be developing plans on how many staff come back to campus; we expect to see fewer people. We will take precautions especially when classes let out and start.

Q: Prof. Andrew Scholtz, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, asked if we will be hearing soon more precise parameters for hiring exceptions. We have been told in Harpur that summer instructors have to undergo the process and contingent hiring in process is currently on hold. Will we get clarity soon on the when and how of restarting those processes?

A: Provost Nieman responded that the summer hiring process is moving ahead.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the April 14, 2020 meeting were approved.

3. Election of 2020-2021 Faculty Senate officers

The Nominating Committee of the Faculty Senate presented the following slate of nominees:

- Vice Chair – Jonathan Krasno, Political Science
- Secretary – Andrew Scholtz, Classical and Near Eastern Studies

No additional nominations were received. The slate was approved with 60 in favor and 2 abstaining.

4. Curriculum

a. Pharmacy MS and PhD

This proposal has been approved by Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC). Prof. Lubna Chaudhry, Diversity Committee, noted that the proposal met their expectations. After no questions, it was approved by 63 in favor with 1 abstention.

b. Biochemistry and Chemical Biology

This proposal has been approved by FSEC. Prof. Lubna Chaudhry, Diversity Committee, asked for the Senate to conditionally approve this with the final approval by the Diversity Committee. She suggested that a deadline date be given and the committee would notify the FSEC once the Diversity Committee was satisfied with the changes.

Prof. Fernando Guzman noted that the Senate has approved curriculum conditionally in the past with the FSEC insuring that Diversity comments were included in the proposal.

Prof. Sara Reiter, School of Management, explained that it is not the purview of the Diversity Committee to approve (or not approve) Senate business; their role is to make comments, raise issues, etc.

Prof. Chaudhry noted that the Diversity Committee can meet with the program leaders and communicate with FSEC. Prof. Christof Grewer, Chemistry, said he would be very happy to meet with the Diversity Committee to address the questions raised.

Chair Dixon noted that we could vote on the program with the understanding that Prof. Grewer would make revisions to strengthen the program.

Prof. Lisa Tessman, Philosophy, noted that the Diversity Committee received this proposal late and is recommending a conditional yes vote since we are at the end of the academic year.

Prof. Andrew Scholtz asked if this proposal should be tabled until a later Senate meeting. Prof. Guzman and Chaudhry felt this did not need to be tabled.

The motion is to approve the program conditionally with input from the Diversity Committee working with the department on possible changes. After no discussion, it was approved with conditions by 51 in favor, 2 opposed, and 6 abstentions.

c. Micro-credential policy

This policy has been endorsed by FSEC. We do have micro-credentials now but there is no faculty governance approval process; faculty governance must be involved in the approval process. Micro-credentials can be for credit-bearing courses and will be approved in the same way that we follow for program approvals now. Non-credit bearing micro-credentials will be approved at the unit level and by the micro-credential office.

Prof. Lubna Chaudhry, Diversity Committee, noted that the committee finds the document non-controversial. They did note that during implementation, we will have to be careful that we cater to a large diverse audience. Prof. Reiter responded that a rubric is being developed which will include how to address diversity and will be incorporated into the process.

Prof. Leslie Lander, Computer Science, said some staff are very concerned about the heavy burden of work this will cause. Prof. Reiter noted that a department has the ability to develop and administer the program and if resources are not there, the department should not be developing a micro-credential. Prof. Lander responded that faculty in a department may want to have these, but the staff are the ones that feel this could be an additional burden.

After no discussion, it was approved by 47 in favor, 1 opposed, with 7 abstentions.

5. Reports

a. Prof. Barry Jones, chair of Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Prof. Jones thanked everyone on FSEC for their service this year. He reported that it has been a great honor to be able to serve in this role and to serve with such great people. At times like these, we are reminded that shared governance is incredibly important to give a voice to the faculty and a seat at the table. He noted that it was especially a pleasure to work closely with two outstanding Faculty Senate Chairs, Jon Karp and Jill Dixon, and all of the outstanding campus governance leaders over the past two years. He also thanked Laura O'Neil for everything she does for the Faculty Senate. Prof. Jones announced that Prof. Scott Craver has been elected as the next Chair of the FSEC.

The FSEC met 12 times over the course of the semester, with virtual meetings beginning with its March 17 meeting. Over the course of the semester, the FSEC met with President Stenger, Provost Nieman, and other administrators and faculty to discuss a variety of issues as follows:

- Prof. Patrick Madden and Prof. Weiyi Meng to discuss the MS in Information systems (MSIS).
- Dianne Gray, Director, Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to discuss the changing demographics and increasing population of students in need among other concerns.
- Dean of Students Randall Edouard to discuss the Town Gown Advisory Board (TGAB).
- Prof. Madhu Govindaraju, who has been appointed Vice Provost for International Education and Global Affairs effective June 1, to discuss the division and his new role.
- Chief of Police John Pelletier to discuss events from the previous semester on campus and other issues.
- Vice Provost Pitarresi, Vice Provost Loewen, and Provost Nieman to discuss online teaching and testing, pass/fail policies, and a tenure pause policy among other issues.
- President Stenger to discuss a wide range of issues focusing mainly on concerns related to COVID-19 and the campus moving to distance learning.
- Prof. Christof Grewer to discuss a proposed MS / PhD in Biochemistry and Chemical Biology.
- Vice Provost James Pitarresi and Andrea MacArgel to discuss a proposed Micro-Credential Policy.
- Prof. Yetrib Hathout to discuss a proposed MS/PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- Provost Donald Nieman, Dean Mario Ortiz, Associate Dean Gale Spencer, and Director Michael Buck to discuss a proposed Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.
- Dean Kendrick to discuss a proposed EIT Accessibility Policy.

In addition to its regular meetings, FSEC interviewed candidates for the position of Dean of the Watson College, Dean of Students, and Vice President for Advancement. Associate Librarian Jill Dixon, Prof. Thomas Sinclair and Prof. Barry Jones interviewed candidates for the position of Chief Diversity Officer.

Some key actions of the FSEC this semester were as follows:

- Appointing a co-chair and members to a new Carnegie Advisory Committee, which is a joint committee formed by Provost Nieman to advise on issues related to the Carnegie engagement classification.
- Drafting a new Final Exam policy (adopted by the Faculty Senate at its February 11 meeting).
- Creating a charge for a proposed ITS Research Computing Committee, which was created by action of the Faculty Senate at its February 11 meeting.
- Approving the MS in Information Systems (MSIS) (approved by the Faculty Senate at its February 11 meeting).

- Approving the MS / PhD in Biochemistry and Chemical Biology on the May 12 agenda.
- Approving the MS / PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences on the May 12 agenda,
- Considering a proposed Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.
- Appointing a co-chair (Prof. Sara Reiter) and members to a Micro-Credentials Task Force, which is a joint task force formed by Provost Nieman. The task force worked quickly to draft a new Micro-Credentials Policy, which the FSEC endorsed. The policy is being considered by the Senate at today's meeting.
- Endorsed a proposal from Dean Srihari to rename the Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science to the Thomas J. Watson College of Engineering and Applied Science. The change was approved by the Senate at its March 10 meeting.
- Endorsing University Faculty Senate Resolution #184-01-01 on the SUNY/CUNY Budget. The resolution was endorsed by the Senate at its March 10 meeting, which was attended by Gwen Kay, President of the SUNY University Faculty Senate.
- Endorsing the proposed EIT Accessibility Policy after meeting with Dean Curtis Kendrick.) The Senate is considering this today.
- Approving a proposal to add a sustainability classification for courses submitted by the Sustainable Communities TAE.

FSEC has also been very engaged with issues related to COVID-19 and the move to remote learning. In this regard, FSEC met with President Stenger, Provost Nieman, Vice Provost Loewen, and Vice Provost Pitarresi to discuss the issues and related policies. In particular, FSEC met with the Provost to discuss the March 25 tenure pause statement, which the committee endorsed. FSEC has also agreed to meet several times over the summer to continue its engagement with the administration regarding planning for the fall.

Senate chair Dixon and FSEC chair Jones have also been working closely with the administration on issues related to COVID-19. In particular, they both serve on the Binghamton University COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (BUCGMT), which was created by President Stenger and chaired by Vice President Navarro. It met daily from March 23 through April 4 and then switched to meeting three times a week from April 6 and is ongoing. In addition, Dixon and Jones attended weekly Senior Officers Group+ meetings weekly beginning March 14 through April 28 in addition to meeting more frequently with President Stenger and Provost Nieman throughout the crisis.

Jones and Provost Nieman recently met with the co-chairs of the Joint Task Force on Graduate Education, Prof. Sara Reiter and Dean Tarhule, along with other members of the Task Force to review a draft of the task force's report and its recommendations. The final report will be circulated when ready.

Dixon and Jones also received a copy of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Strategic Consultation Report. They had met with the reviewers last year.

The Faculty Senate created a temporary Joint Standing Committee on Transdisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Issues at its February 26, 2019 meeting. Provost Neiman set up the committee in May of 2019 and it has been working throughout the year. They expect to be ready to present a final report early in the fall 2020 semester.

Jones noted that he has learned a lot over the past two years, and has enjoyed his many conversations with Senators. It has been his honor to be able to advocate for the faculty in this role.

- b. Prof. Sara Reiter, University Faculty Senator
Report will be sent to Senators via email.

6. Miscellaneous

Chair Dixon informed Senate that there may be a need to have additional Senate meetings during the summer.

Hearing no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 pm.

Present: Jeffner Allen, Laura Anderson, Nathanael Andrade, Michael Armstrong, Hilary Becker, Aaron Beedle, Lina Begdache, Peter Borgesen, Sharon Bryant, Brian Callahan, Subimal Chatterjee, Lubna Chaudhry, Seokheun, Choi, Anne Clark, Leon Cosler, Scott Craver, William Culverhouse, Sidney Dement, Jill Dixon, Patrick Doyle, Nicole Fenty, Carmen Ferradas, Mark Fowler, Ann Fronczek, Leslie Gates, Neyda Gilman, Thomas Glave, Jennifer Gordon, Christof Grewer, Fernando Guzman, Brendan Hennessey, Norah Henry, Leslie Heywood, Robert Holahan, Aleshia Huber, Murali Jagannathan, James Jentsch, Sha Jin, Barry Jones, Blazo Kovacevic, Leslie Lander, Alistair Lees, Andrea MacArgel, Thomas McDonough, Donald Nieman, Tomonari Nishikawa, Sara Reiter, Anton Schick, Paul Schleuse, Andrew Scholtz, Kent Schull, David Schuster, Thomas Sinclair, Elizabeth Skaggs Harvey Stenger, Roberta Strippoli, Andrew Walkling, Bruce White, Stan Whittingham Hong Zhang, Melissa Zinkin

Absent: Saligrama Agnihotri, Seden Akcinaroglu, Nancy Appelbaum, Allan Arkush, John Baust, Robin Best, Lisa Blitz, Nicole Cameron, Ana Maria Candela, Paul Chiarot, Hwan-Sik Choi, Sung Chung, Eric Cotts, Leon Cui, Lois Einhorn, Anthony Ephirim-Donkor, Albrecht Inhoff, John Suk Young Kang, Thomas Kulp, Carl Lipo, Maria Lugones, Steven Lynn, Jean Pierre Mileur, Joshua Reno, John Santare, Timothy Singler, Natesha Smith, David Wilson, Lei Yu