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## Faculty Senate Minutes, September 8, 2020

Utah State University

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## **FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**

September 8, 2020

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

**Call to Order** – Timothy Taylor

Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2020

*Minutes approved as distributed.*

**University Business** - Noelle Cockett, President | Frank Galey, Provost

It has been about three or four months since the President last connected with the Faculty Senate. She stated that this has been the longest summer of her life as she prepared for fall semester. She reflected how during April and May the focus was finishing up spring semester after going remote and then the disappointment that came with the announcement of the NCAA cancellation of men and women's basketball, end of semester activities such as graduation and promotion and tenure. It was thought that by May the cases would drop off and USU would be able to move forward. It was suddenly realized that the university would need to change the focus to how to deliver fall semester courses. The students let the administration know that they wanted face-to-face with other students and faculty. As of today, there are 37% of the classes being delivered online. Only about 16-17% are face-to-face. Most of the in-person classes are those that are too difficult to move, such as labs. A number of committees and task forces have been set up to help deal with COVID. The President has learned that there is no middle ground when it comes to the virus and that there are still two very strong sides of the COVID issue. Occasionally the President has been told that she is moving the institution in the right direction. The most difficult part of the pandemic is not being able to meet with people and have conversations that we used to have in the hallways, walking across the quad or at events. Everyone is missing the more relaxed social and professional interactions that they are accustomed to. One of the groups that meets regularly is the Stabilization Task Force. Because of the desire to let people know what we're doing, and all the work that we've done, and the considerations that we're taking, the Deans and Vice Presidents now are all on the Stabilization Task Force and they have been asked to frequently and regularly update the department heads and their administrative council. Hopefully, some of that information is trickling down. The university thought that by doing a very active website and then sending out frequent emails to faculty, students, and staff, we would be able to keep people up to date on issues. It turns out that the faculty emails only have an open rate of about 60% so not everyone is either as interested in updates or looking to those emails to have updates as we once thought. We are doing more information distribution through the task forces. As needed, President Cockett is willing to do town halls, but these are only good for about a day and then more actions, more considerations, more situations arise, and we need to change course. Another thing that has been valuable for us is the emergency response preparedness. The emergency preparedness management team is meeting daily at 8:00 am. Then another group meets every day at 4:00 pm to respond to things that have happened during the day. The COVID care team is doing an amazing job dealing with the influx of calls and emails. They are the contact that faculty will get when the students come do have to stay off campus because they have been tested positive. Students have been going to faculty when they need accommodation, and this has thrown a kink in the faculty knowing exactly what they should do. An email will be coming out in the next 24 hours telling you that anyone needing special accommodations will need to fill out the COVID questionnaire. This will be the first communication from everyone on campus of a positive or exposure case. The COVID care team also gets this information so help with other accommodations or needs. Wastewater testing identified a number of residence halls that had COVID RNA. The university began taking immediate action. Test results have come back and those who are positive have been in self-isolation and roommates have been quarantined. This was a test for how well our preparations have gone. Case

containment and the COVID care team took immediate action. Off-campus student numbers are higher than those on campus. Students, faculty, and staff have responded to preventative practices very well. We were not sure how they would respond. Have noticed that there is a fatigue with mask wearing but reminders are being given. President Cockett has stopped predicting anything because things change so rapidly. The president is confident about what is happening and is extremely grateful to the students and faculty. Now have point of care testing. This is available at the student health and wellness center for those who have symptoms and those who need to be tested quickly. Realized that we need people to fill out the COVID questionnaire. The test takes about 15 minutes and will help identify those who need to go into self-isolation. We anticipate having the PCR test available on campus. This will be done at the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. They have received initial approval as a COVID 19 testing lab. This will be open, free of charge, for student, staff, and faculty. Results should be returned in approximately 24 hours. This will be done by a nasal swab that is self-administered. Blanding and Eastern residential halls will begin testing their wastewater. Wastewater testing is an early alert in locations that may be having a spike in the infection.

Provost Galey thanked everyone for all their efforts in the testing, remote learning, and everything else that has been involved with this pandemic. John Louviere, Robert Wagner, and the provost have pulled together some resources that can help faculty members who are teaching hybrid classes. There is a pool of funds to help hire hourly workers to help with this new way of teaching. Reach out to John Louviere if you have any questions or have a need for this. Heard from faculty members that lecturing for hours with a mask on has been exhausting. Recommend getting microphones that will help with teaching in person. There may be some loaner microphones and you can reach out to CIDI if you would like to get some. New leadership team in the School of Graduate Studies. Richard Cutler is the Interim Vice Provost and is working with Janis Boettinger to get things going. Circle back to COVID – need to load courses into Banner for the spring semester. A proposal is being moved forward to move the return to campus until and Martin Luther King Day. We will eliminate the spring break due to starting so late in the semester. This has been vetted with the Faculty Senate, USUSA and they feel that it is likely and a necessary evil. It was recommended that we provide some mental health help for students pushing straight through the semester. Need official word from the Calendar Committee to the Faculty Senate regarding the change before we can approve it.

### **Information**

EPC Monthly Report – September 3, 2020 - Paul Barr

Curriculum Committee approved a request to create fine online certificate programs in the Department of Computer Science in the College of Science.

Academic Standards Subcommittee did not meet – nothing to report.

General Education Subcommittee – nothing to report.

Been discussing learning objectives and how they will be evaluated for new course approvals.

### **Reports**

Empowering Teaching Excellence Annual Report – John Louviere | Travis Thurston

There were 400 attendees at the 2019 ETE Conference and 570 at this year's conference. There were also 55 faculty/staff presenters. CIDI provided summer 2020 consultations and 141 were scheduled.

(See report)

*Motion to approve the Empowering Teaching Excellence Annual Report made by Scott Hunsaker, Seconded by John Swinton. Report approved.*

### **Old Business**

Update on 2019-2020 Code Changes – Patrick Belmont

Patrick Belmont talked about faculty code and how it gets modified. Spoke about PRPC and their role in making/drafting code changes. PRPC brings the code changes to senate for a first reading and then a senate vote is made to send back to PRPC which then returns it to the senate for a second reading and approval. Last year was a big year for PRPC. They did a lot of work and sent through a lot of code. David Farrelly, PRPC Chair has stepped down and has been replaced by Nikki Kendrick who will be chairing the committee this year. Provided the code tracking spreadsheet for the senate to see the process.

**New Business**

Code Updates for 2020-2021 – Timothy Taylor | Frank Galey

Provost Galey has found that there are a number of places in the code that are either obsolete, redundant, or worse, contradictory. Provost has visited with the Faculty Senate presidency about a complete rewrite of the faculty code. This would entail changing code over to the new format as well as separating procedures from policy. The goal is to streamline and be able to refer to the 3XX code where they overlap. Clean up will include changes regarding USU administrative changes as well. Might be a good idea to pull together a small writing group and that can help get these updates/changes started. This team would include Nikki Kendrick or someone from PRPC, a representative from the provost's office as well as other faculty members and possibly some legal support.

**Adjourn: 4:16**