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FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

November 2, 2020

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Call to Order - Timothy Taylor

[Approval of Minutes](#) – October 5, 2020

Minutes approved as distributed.

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

Provost Galey – Have a committee chaired by Joe Ward with a number of faculty members that have been looking into what things we can do to further support our faculty members as we go through the rest of this year and then into next spring. One of the things is that the face-to-face instructors have had access to a dashboard in Canvas that will list the status of their students, whether they are isolated or quarantined. This was a request from the faculty members because they couldn't keep track of them. This seems to be working well. Committee also came up with suggestions on ways to identify some additional support for faculty in face-to-face situations. Additional grad student labor was suggested to help them manage the combination of Zoom meetings but also to help backup the laboratories. A big part of what we have been identifying goes to graduate students. Several may be aware that grad students are experiencing incredible stress. Held a town hall last week with the grad students and involved some mental health professionals. This was very well received by the grad students across the campus. They are feeling left out and feel as if they are not included in the communications. Working to make it clear where they can get mental health assistance and also encouraging them to stay in touch with their mentors. Faculty members need to reach out to them and let them know what is going on and that you are paying attention to them. The Graduate Council has recommended that the university drop the GRE requirement for grad student admissions. If an individual department wants to continue with the GRE you will need let the Graduate School know. This will work its way through the Grad Council and EPC Committee. USU is accepted into the third APLU as a large Ispire grant. What that does is sets up a network of colleges and universities that focus on faculty hiring and retention related to equity. Helps do a better job recruiting and retaining with a special focus on inclusive pedagogy. Not replacing anything we're doing just entering into a cohort with other universities. Listened to faculty and students regarding the elimination of spring break. Due to mental health reasons the faculty and students will need some time off to replace the spring break. The COVID action committee suggested that a couple of days off be added to March and April. This has gone through the Calendar Committee. Voted for March 12 and April 9. Both of those days are Fridays. Those with MWF would need to adjust syllabi for those two days. This change does not have any affect on our accreditation.

President Cockett – There is a FERPA issue if we provide COVID information to faculty members that aren't doing face-to-face. The too ill to complete assignments group is working with the COVID care group to work one-on-one with students and faculty regarding an alternative assignment schedule. The COVID care team gets in touch with students who test positive. They can contact the instructors regarding the student whether they are attending face-to-face or virtual. Continuing to do testing on the Logan campus and it is running great. Could go as high as 400 tests per day. Encouraging individuals to come in and get tested if that helps with peace of mind. Will have extra hours before Thanksgiving so those leaving campus can have test results before they leave. Bear River Health would like USU to do more testing beyond USU and staff. The universities testing is fabulous and is exceeding expectations. Working with them to see how numbers of testing can be increased. Right now, it is limited to those in Banner. Looking at including adult dependents on insurance policies. Would also consider testing those who need immediate responses. Would like to test individuals when they return back to campus after

the Thanksgiving holiday. If USU expands to the community they would need a contract and then be able to charge of the test and then would conduct tests on weekends. Expanding testing to the Eastern campus. Working with their local health department and hope to offer the same opportunity to Blanding. The university is not having issues with false negatives. The self-administered nasal swab seems to be working well.

Information

[EPC Monthly Report](#) – October 1, 2020 - Paul Barr

General Education approved eight designations.

Academic Standards did not meet – nothing to report.

Curriculum Committee – approved 131 course requests. R401s were approved.

Talked about the temporary grade option. Also discussed standardizing the justifications on the proposals. Discussed the 3XXX and 4XXX level classes in the first two years.

Carbon Emissions Reductions – Charles Darnell

Charles Darnell has left Facilities and has become the Associate Vice President for Energy Management and Sustainability and will be retiring at the end of December. He has done a tremendous amount of work on the Greenhouse Gas Reduction initiative since last year and USU is very appreciative of those efforts. On the 19th Patrick gave an update on the energy coalition. This is mainly for the Statewide Campuses who are Rocky Mountain Power dependent. Lost two very large coalition members, only USU, Weber State and Salt Lake Community College remained at that time. We had a very extensive RPF with close to 60 replies from 14 different renewal companies who are interested in doing projects in the State of Utah. These coalitions will help with buying power. Logan Light and Power provides approximately 50% of the power for the University. Next steps USU will ask for best and final offers from the five firms they are working with. All information will be taken to Dave Cowley to see if we should proceed with the negotiations. Enter into negotiations with the winner and this will happen no later than April 2021. Could be purchasing green power for the Statewide Campuses in the spring. LED retrofits are approximately 75% complete. Have also done Moab, Tooele and Vernal. Have current spent \$800,000 to date and we are ahead of schedule. Earmarked another \$500,000 to finish work on the campus. Working on HVAC to make sure we have adequate ventilation which is extremely important right now with COVID. Also receive a Blue Skies grant for solar power at the Moab Campus.

Reports

[Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee](#) Annual Report - Michael Lyons

The AFT deals with a range of grievance cases, mostly stemming from disciplinary issues and promotion and tenure issues. Usually we have around five faculty contact the committee each year. Of those five there are usually around two who don't meet the deadlines for submitting a grievance. One that came forward this year regarding gender discrimination. Because of the allegation of discrimination USU's legal counsel turned it over to the Office of Equity before the AFT could have a chance to hear the case. There was an appeal and the Office of Equity returned it back to the committee in February and then COVID hit. Scheduled a meeting with the committee and listened to the allegations. A report was then submitted to President Cockett for her review. Did have a few other minor matters come forward this year. Most of the important work comes from the denial of tenure or dismissal which almost always occurs in April. The timetable is set up in such a way that the grievance panels should meet during the summer and it is extremely difficult to set these up during that time. There needs to be some adjustment to the timetable and the language in the code.

Motion to approve the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee Annual Report made by Vicki Allen. Seconded by Benjamin George. Report approved.

[Athletics Council](#) Annual Report - Edward Heath

Ben George was the Athletics council chair and Denise Stewardson was the chair-elect. The council meetings four times a year. USU student athletes lead the Mountainwest in graduation rates. (see report)

Motion to approve the Athletics Council Annual Report made by Vicki Allen. Seconded by Phillip Waite. Report approved.

[Libraries Advisory Council](#) Annual Report - Christine Cooper Rompato

Christine was not available so this report will be brought back to the November 30 Faculty Senate meeting.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

Faculty Forum Discussions - Timothy Taylor

A healthy mechanism for shared governance is to allow faculty to voice opinions or concerns. It is a place to coherent and substantive discussions. We have a couple of mechanisms here at USU. Not a lot of faculty will take issues to the Budget and Faculty Welfare. The other mechanism is the faculty forum and this has been sold as a once per year time for all of faculty to get together in November. This is not helpful if something comes up after November. Historically there has been very little follow up and communication regarding the faculty forum. We also don't usually get very good participation. This forum comes from an era before technology. How do we move forward with engaging the faculty? Having some kind of written forum would be helpful and would provide documentation and rationale. This would lead to better communication. This is written in faculty code that the faculty forum should be held. Just wanted to start the discussion and decide how we can engage the faculty. It would be a good idea to establish a task force that will work on this and then report back to the Faculty Senate in December.

Motion to delay the forum until March or April of next year made by Scott Hunsaker. Seconded by Doug Ramsey. Postponed until Spring.

Changes of the Spring Calendar – Provost Galey

Losing two Fridays are a concern. This is a problem with lab courses and math and stats. This came as an initiative from students and faculty who were looking for a breather/break. Calendar committee has reviewed this proposal. This does reduce the number of instruction days but that will not cause any accreditation problems. The days will be Friday, March 12 and Friday, April 9. AIS is already looking at ways to cover the recitations in math. The group doesn't want to allow four-day weekends due to the COVID issues and travel. The idea is to provide two short breaks to help with mental health.

Motion to support the Calendar Committee change to the spring calendar made by Benjamin George. Seconded by Ralph Meyer. Calendar committee change approved. 27 in favor – 14 against. Motion carries to support the Calendar Committee.

Adjourn: 4:20 pm