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## Faculty Senate Minutes, February 1, 2021

Utah State University

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## **FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**

February 1, 2021

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

### **Call to Order** - Timothy Taylor

[Approval of Minutes](#) – January 11, 2021

*Motion to approve the minutes made by Don Busenbark. Seconded by Doug Ramsey. Minutes approved as distributed.*

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

President Cockett is doing a legislative higher ed presentation regarding USU's COVID-19 response and testing. It is amazing how many tests that have been done at the university. There have been 27,233 COVID-19 tests since September 21. The rapid Binax test numbers are at 12,672 and the PCR tests are at 13,631. The governor set up the rapid Binax test and the institution did about 7,000 around Thanksgiving and another 5,000 when students returned to campus after the holiday break. There were 141 positive students out of the 12,672 who were tested. The case containment group called every one of the 141 students and asked if they were truly asymptomatic or were experiencing flu like symptoms. Only 27 students were asymptomatic and the others had some sort of symptoms. Using overall positivity rate to determine how many test USU needs to do on a regular basis. Based on the number of student return to campus testing USU will test approximately 240 students per week. If the positive numbers increase the institution will have to move to a broader testing of students. It was expected that a higher infection rate would occur after the Thanksgiving holiday but that was not the case. USU's rate of positivity has been dropping, however, testing will continue to be offered. President Cockett stated that USU is not making much progress in getting the faculty, staff or USU personnel vaccinated. The governor and state legislature are looking at reducing the risk of death due to COVID in the 65+ older age group. They are focusing on getting vaccinations for those groups first. The Bear River Health Clinic is providing vaccinations at the Cache County Fairground and will continue to send email/information if an individual is in the 65+ age group. If individuals are eligible for the vaccine they should register with the health clinic. At the end of each day those vaccinations that haven't been used for 65+ individuals are being used for those who are younger. The president signed an executive order that put in place some interim policies for handling sexual assault at USU. This came about because of the Department of Justice (DOJ) review. The DOJ wanted USU to revise their policies in accordance with the last administration's changes. USU has pulled together requirements/information and have put an interim policy into place. However, since we have a new administration we are predicting that the Title IX requirements will change in the next few months. The interim will policy will be in place until the Biden administration comes forward with new or changed requirements. The State of Utah is doing surprisingly well with the budget and is not looking at budget cuts right now. There is quite a bit of one-time funding and some on-going funding. It is likely that the legislature will look at replenishing the rainy-day fund. Salary compensation has been discussed and the number they are currently looking at is 3%. USU is hoping to not have to come up with the 25% of that 3% increase. There will be more to come on the budget for the legislature. Everything that was funded last year was pulled after last year's legislative session. USU is going back this year with the whole funding list that was presented last year.

Provost Galey talked about the kickoff of the iChange network. This system helps to recruit and retain individuals from under represented groups. There is a taskforce currently working on this. Faculty will be hearing a lot about this effort in the near future. This effort does not supplant any other inclusion efforts currently being taken but the idea is to leverage those efforts with the iChange network. Advisory groups met and this will expand all faculty not just the STEM related fields. There is an opportunity for

faculty members to opt into iChange network information. This information was included in the email that went out to all faculty. The provost held a series of faculty workshops with each academic college. Thanked all faculty members who participated in the meetings. There were a lot of success stories and best practices that were shared during this time. John Louviere and his group rolled out some new tools to help with hybrid teaching. Starting conversations regarding fall classes and will be sending out emails this week. Student enrollment is flat and no one can really predict where the numbers will end up.

## Information

[EPC Monthly Report](#) – January 7, 2021 - Paul Barr

General Education Subcommittee – approved eight gen ed designations. Discussed the General Education Task Force and also the discussions that are ongoing at the USHE level. The CI/CL sequence was discussed with the goal of rubrics be presented for adoption to the committee.

Academic Standards Subcommittee – proposed amendment to the Student Code for Excused Absences was presented and accepted. The proposal cleared up definitions of “Allowable Reasons” and “Injury, Illness, Medical Conditions/Status.”

Curriculum Subcommittee – approved 54 course requests and four R401 program proposals. Fran Hopkin and Adam Gleed presented a proposal regarding Institutional Certificates of Proficiency. Topics such as program declaration, degree work tracking, graduation application, transcript designation and diploma awarding was discussed. The committee was asked to solicit feedback from their colleges and this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

[PRPC Subcommittee 400 Code Rewrite](#) - Nikki Kendrick

Tasks for the PRPC committee are to eliminate contradictions in code, remove redundant information, identify conflict between 300 and 400 level code, identify any substantive changes, clean-up outdated terminology and reformat to match other code.

[Title IX Policy and Procedure](#) - Hilary Renshaw

Interim policies was published last Thursday in accordance with the DOJ review. Updates/changes were made to 340, 339, 339A and 339B. These are not finalized with the DOJ but USU is currently working to get them approved. New federal Title IX regulations were implemented on August 14, 2020. USU updated its policies and procedures at that time. Any questions regarding the updates/changes can be sent to Hilary Renshaw or Alison Adams-Perlac. Changes also have been made to the sexual misconduct definitions. In order to access an informal resolution or formal investigation under Title IX, the incident must have occurred in an educational program or activity or create a hostile environment in an education program or activity. Further information can be found at USU's Sexual Respect Website.

## Reports

[Office of Research Annual Report](#) - Lisa Berreau

*Motion to approve the Office of Research Annual Report made by Joel Ellsworth. Seconded by Don Busenbark. Report approved.*

FY20 highlights – 1) reached a new high for on-campus research awards; 2) USU hosted 14<sup>th</sup> Utah Conference on undergraduate research; 3) researchers were asked to work and address the COVID-19 global pandemic and 4) USU responded to COVID-19 impacts on research. Revised direction for new faculty start-ups. Working with the library to support publishing for new faculty in their first three years.

[School of Graduate Studies Annual Report \(slideshow\)](#)- Richard Cutler

*Motion to approve the School of Graduate Studies Annual Report made by Benjamin George. Seconded by Don Busenbark. Report approved.*

School of Graduate Studies has experienced a year of many challenges. Some of the challenges were COVID-19 related as well as a near complete turnover in staff and leadership. There were communication issues with graduate students, faculty mentors and graduate program coordinators. Another bump in the road was the increase in graduate student health insurance costs. The School of Graduate Studies built a website with COVID 19 responses and information and also Sent out COVID surveys to all graduate students. Graduate Studies has allowed departments to determine what programs would require the GRE and other standardized tests. Overall graduate student enrollment for fall was down 3.2% and spring saw a 0.9% decrease. Will continue surveys to ascertain the mental

health of graduate students while working on improving communication between the School of Graduate Studies and the graduate students.

### **Old Business**

404.3.6 Code Changes [Full Code/Track Changes](#) (second reading) - Nikki Kendrick

This code change involves student involvement in faculty searches. The change that was made was phrasing on when students are notified on how they can provide feedback during a faculty search. Making sure that the students have time to rearrange their schedules in order to participate and provide feedback.

*Motion to move to the Executive Committee made by Boyd Edwards. Seconded Michael Pate. Moved to Executive Committee.*

Promotion and Tenure Survey - Boyd Edwards

Received 550 responses to the faculty survey. This response represents over half of all the faculty. The survey closes tonight. Once the survey is closed Boyd Edwards will download the data and send it to John Stevens who will analyze the numerical data. A team of three other faculty members will comb through the text-based answers. The data will be brought back to the Faculty Senate and after that the results will be reported.

### **New Business**

N/A

**Adjourn: 4:04 pm**