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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Minutes April 15, 2023

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April 15, 2024
3:30 – 5:00 pm
Old Main-Champ Hall

MINUTES

Present: John Ferguson, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business (Past-President)
Matt Bunnell, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
Carol Kochan, University Libraries
Michele Hillard, Executive Secretary
Yu Huang, College of Engineering
Don Busenbark, Statewide Campuses
Denise Stewardson, Extension
Elizabeth Cantwell, President
Maureen Hearn, Caine College of the Arts (President)
Yoon Lee, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services
Danielle Ross, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Sarah Null, S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources
Larry Smith, Provost
Grant Cardon, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (President-Elect)

Absent: N/A

Guests: Paul Barr, EPC Chair
Jason Brown
Casey Coombs
Jonathon Walters
Amber Williams
John Mortenson
Benjamin George

Call to Order - Maureen Hearn
Approval of Minutes – [March 18, 2024](#)
Minutes approved as distributed.

University Business - Elizabeth Cantwell, President | Larry Smith, Provost
Provost Smith:
Presidential Investiture: Thanks, extended to all involved in the event and those who attended.
Dean of Engineering Search: Four candidates will be visiting the campus.
Commencements: Starting Thursday night.

President Cantwell:

Legislative Preparation:

- Begin preparations for the upcoming legislative session.
- Consider whether to proactively develop a Gen Ed plan or wait for legislative action.
- Explore steps to characterize Gen Ed in a way that aligns with job market needs.

Gen Ed and Legislation:

- The USHE team has been engaged in discussions about general education for eight years.

- Debate on whether the legislature should influence curricular decisions.
- Importance of protecting academic freedom highlighted.

Financial Matters:

- Share the President's speech from the investiture.
- Financial assessment pending, including a determination of current financial shortfalls.
- Anticipation of a 1.5% budget cut effective next July.
- Need to explore options for managing this cut, including reviewing minor revenue sources like application fees.

Legislative Priorities:

- Focus on highlighting issues that matter to legislators and our institutional strengths.

Shared Governance:

- Annual assessment of shared governance health.
- Faculty Senate to bring forward actions based on the assessment.

Summer Information:

- Information to be provided to the committee over the summer.
- Monthly meetings to initiate and manage these efforts.

Action Items

Preparation for Legislative Session:

- Determine steps for developing a Gen Ed plan or decide to wait for legislative action.
- Assess job market needs related to Gen Ed.
- Formulate a strategy to address potential legislative input on curricula and protect academic freedom.

Financial Planning:

- Review and plan for the anticipated 1.5% budget cut.
- Evaluate minor revenue sources and other financial impacts.

Shared Governance:

- Implement an annual assessment of shared governance.
- Faculty Senate to propose actions based on the assessment.

Committee Engagement:

- Monthly meetings to be scheduled to advance these initiatives.

Faculty Senate Business - Maureen Hearn | John Ferguson | Grant Cardon

Letters of Commendation:

- Letters will be issued to individuals who contributed to the code rewrite.

Open Forum on Childcare:

- An open forum on childcare will be held starting at the Logan main campus and then extending to statewide campuses.
- The forum is scheduled for April 24.
- All faculty should have received an email about this event.
- A survey will be deployed on April 24 as well.

Shared Governance Committee:

- At the next Senate meeting, the committee for shared governance will be seated.
- A representative from each college is needed.
- Colleges should identify or volunteer as a representative.

IRB Committee Update – Ben George:

- The IRB (Institutional Review Board) survey received 191 responses.
- Concerns noted include the IRB's detail-oriented approach and perceived inconsistencies in decision-making.
- There is a perception that the IRB takes the most conservative interpretation of policies.
- Despite these concerns, the IRB staff have been described as responsive, timely, professional, and cordial.

- Positive improvements have been acknowledged, with the IRB on a good trajectory.

Action Items

- Ensure that the letters of commendation are distributed to the relevant individuals.
- Confirm that all faculty have received the Child Car information regarding the open forum and survey on April 24.
- Colleges should appoint a representative for the shared governance committee and notify the Senate.
- Review the IRB feedback and address concerns regarding the process and consistency of decisions.

Information

Educational Policies Committee – [April 4, 2024](#) - Paul Barr

No report of provided.

[Student Nutrition Access Center](#) - Casey Coombs

Motion to move the Student Nutrition Access Center to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Denise Stewardson. Seconded by John Ferguson. Moved to agenda.

Transition Overview:

- One-Year Anniversary: The Student Services program transitioned to the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences one year ago.
- Service Impact: Approximately 1,667 students were served during this period.

Current Status of SNAC (Student Nutrition Access Center):

- Student Impact: SNAC has fostered a community of "Aggies helping Aggies."
- Food Security Concerns: Over 60% of students surveyed reported very low food security.

Support Needs:

- Additional Support: There is a need for increased support to address food security issues.
 - Departmental Support: Consideration for additional support from within departments.
 - One-Time Donations: Explore options for one-time donations through the advancement office.

Action Items

- Departmental Support: Departments should assess how they might contribute to SNAC's needs.
- Advancement Office: Investigate potential for one-time donations to support SNAC.
- Develop strategies to address and improve food security for students served by SNAC.

Reports

[Budget and Faculty Welfare Annual Report](#) - Don Busenbark

Motion to move the Budget and Faculty Welfare Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Carol Kochan. Seconded by Grant Cardon. Moved to agenda.

Salary Increase Request:

- Asked for a 6% increase in salary and 1% for flex spending last year.

BFW Chair Update:

- Sandra Weingart will be the BFW Chair for 2024-2025, and Scott Jordan will be the chair elect.

Support for Salary Increases:

- Continue advocating for salary increases.

Promotion/Tenure Raises:

- Codify promotion and tenure raises.

Calendar Committee Annual Report – John Mortensen

Motion to move the Calendar Committee Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Matt Bunnell. Seconded by Yoon Lee. Moved to agenda.

2024-2025 Calendar Adjustment:

- Commencement Scheduling: Proposing a change for the 2024-2025 calendar due to commencement being scheduled for Wednesday evening.
- Eliminate Interim Day: Plan to remove the interim day between the last day of class and final exams. Students are comfortable with this change, as it still allows them one full day between the end of classes and their exams.
- Impact: This adjustment maintains the exam preparation period for students and simplifies the schedule.

2025-2026 Calendar:

- Change Implemented: The adjustment for the 2024-2025 calendar has been carried over and finalized for 2025-2026. Ensure that stakeholders are aware of this consistency and any benefits it might provide.

Fall Break Alignment:

- Logan and Cache School Districts: Consider aligning the fall break with these school districts. This could help in coordinating schedules for families with children in those districts and streamline planning.

2026 Employee Holidays:

- Predetermined Holidays: There are 11 fixed employee holidays for 2026.
- Flexible Days: The only flexible days are around New Year's and Christmas. Consider discussing potential options for these days and how they can be adjusted to best suit the needs of both employees and operational requirements.

Committee on Committees Annual Report – Maureen Hearn

Motion to move the Committee on Committees Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by John Ferguson. Seconded by Grant Cardon. Moved to agenda. See report.

Recruitment & Retention Annual Report - Heidi Kesler | Katie Jo North

Motion to move the Recruitment & Retention Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by John Ferguson. Seconded by Denise Stewardson. Moved to agenda.

Application and Enrollment Efforts

Application Fee Waiver:

- Impact: Waiving application fees has led to a significant increase in applications, reaching approximately 22,000, the highest number ever recorded.
- Strategy: Consider continuing or expanding this initiative, as it has proven successful in boosting applications.

Yield Efforts and Campaign:

- Focus: With more applications, the next step is enhancing yield efforts to convert applicants into enrolled students.
- Enrollment Deposit: Emphasize the importance of the enrollment deposit as a commitment tool. This can help in solidifying the decision of admitted students.
- Current Enrollment:
 - First-Time Students: USU has over 2,800 first-time students enrolled within the first two days, which is a promising start.

Financial Aid and Communication

FAFSA Delays:

- Issue: There are delays with FAFSA processing.
 - Resolution: Aim to resolve this by early next week, which should positively impact enrollment and financial aid numbers.
- Communication Efforts:

- Outreach: Sent 1.5 million emails to students, indicating a robust communication strategy.
- Goal: Continue maintaining strong communication channels to keep students informed and engaged.

Retention and Completion Rates

Retention Rates:

- Current Rate: The most recent retention rate is 74.1%.
- Historical Context: This is slightly down but showing signs of returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- Retention Efforts: Teaching quality is identified as the top factor in improving retention.
- Completion Rates:
 - Six-Year Completion Rate: At 55.4%, this is higher than the average six-year rate, indicating good long-term student success.

Teaching and Curriculum Development

Enhancing Teaching:

- Focus: Consider implementing practices that foster effective habits of mind in general education courses.
- Faculty Involvement: Offer professional development or resources for faculty to integrate these habits into their curriculum, which could positively impact both retention and completion rates.

Action Steps

- Continue Monitoring: Keep an eye on the FAFSA situation and adjust plans as needed.
- Evaluate Campaigns: Review the effectiveness of the email and outreach campaigns to ensure they're reaching and engaging prospective students.
- Support Faculty: Develop strategies or workshops to help faculty enhance teaching practices and student engagement.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

Aggies Access Adoption Program for Textbooks - Amber Williams

Motion to move the Aggies Access Adoption Program to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by John Ferguson. Seconded by Carol Kochan. Moved to agenda.

Faculty Concerns:

- Ensure that faculty members are fully informed about the changes and the rationale behind them. Host a Q&A session or provide detailed written communications to address their concerns.
- Provide clear guidelines and support materials to help faculty understand how these changes will impact their courses and how they can assist students.

Student Communication:

- Clearly communicate to students that their maximum out-of-pocket expense for books will be \$250. Emphasize that this cap is designed to make costs predictable and manageable.
- Inform students that they have the option to opt out of the program and purchase books a la carte. Ensure they know how and by when they need to make this decision.

Book Posting and Access:

- Since books were posted on Canvas on August 2, make sure students are aware of this and understand how to access their book information.
- Clarify the process for opting out and ensure that it is straightforward. Provide step-by-step instructions and support resources.

Statewide Student Support:

- Confirm that USU will cover the cost for statewide students to receive their books. Communicate this benefit clearly to ensure that all eligible students are aware and can take advantage of it.

Undergraduate Focus and Future Plans:

- Note that the program currently applies only to undergraduate students.
- If possible, aim to reduce the maximum out-of-pocket cost to \$200 to include graduate students in the program. Keep stakeholders informed about the progress towards this goal and any updates.

IT and ServiceNow Integration:

- Ensure that IT is effectively creating and managing the ServiceNow request system for processing book-related needs. Provide a point of contact for troubleshooting and support.

Next Steps

- Encourage senators to gather information and address faculty and student questions proactively. They can act as liaisons to help mitigate anxiety and facilitate a smooth transition.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan that includes FAQs, direct messaging to students and faculty, and regular updates on the program's status and any changes.
- Implement a system for collecting feedback from both students and faculty about the new program. This can help in making necessary adjustments and improving the overall implementation.

Faculty Senate President Elect - Maureen Hearn

- Todd Griffith

Committee on Committees Chair Elect - Maureen Hearn

- Ryan Knowles

Honorary Degrees and Award Nominees - Maureen Hearn

- James Morton
- Cree Taylor
- Mikhail Maxfield
- Mair Murray
- John Ferguson
- Kelly Fadel
- Mona Buhusi

Format & Responsibilities - 2024-2025 Faculty Senate Meetings - Maureen Hearn

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Membership - Maureen Hearn

(College of Veterinary Medicine - Extension – Presidential Appointee – College of Natural Resources)

Adjourn: 5:00 pm