

Senate Council
August 16, 2021

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3:00 pm on Monday, August 16, 2021 in 103 Main Building, although some members and guests attended via video conference. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise.

Senate Council Chair Aaron Cramer (EN) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:00 pm. He asked for those present to introduce themselves and indicate their affiliation.

1. Minutes from May 24, 2021 and Announcements

The Chair reported that some clerical edits were received for the set of minutes from May 24. There being **no objections**, the minutes from May 24, 2021 were **approved** as amended by **unanimous consent**.

The Chair reported a series of actions he took on behalf of the SC and University Senate (Senate).

- Approved a nonstandard calendar request (one-time) for NRE 320, to accommodate scheduling issues that are keeping a handful of students from participating in the regular course for Robinson Forest or Costa Rica.
- Waived the *Senate Rules (SRs)* related to the calculation of the GPA for degree honors for the JD 2021 cohort. The Rosenberg College of Law requested that three students in a dual degree program be evaluated with respect to the earned hours required for their particular JD, rather than the traditional 90 hours JD requirement. When Covid-19 resulted in all of the Spring 2020 Law courses being graded on a pass/fail basis, three dual degree students ended up with slightly fewer graded hours than they would need to qualify for Latin Honors on the traditional metric, despite having GPAs that qualify them for this recognition.
- Approved a clerical change to Law's 2021-22 calendar (incorrect year listed in two places).
- Approved a clerical change to 2021 Summer Session. The Graduate School's entry for "August 11 - Wednesday -- Last day for candidates for an August 2021 degree to submit final revised thesis/dissertation (EDT) for acceptance by the Graduate School for those students who first submitted July 29" should have referred to August 4, not July 29.
- Approved a clerical change to Fall 2021 calendar. The calendar showed both Friday and Saturday (December 17/18) listed as commencement days, but the fall commencement is only one day (Friday, December 17).

The Chair offered additional announcements.

The SC met with President Capilouto on August 5. The Chair has had limited interaction with the President otherwise this summer; perhaps a less engaged, more restful summer was a good outcome.

For the Fall 2021 semester only and only for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and after discussions with Senate Council, the Chair delegated authority for temporary DL curricular approvals to the local educational unit administrator on behalf of the unit faculty in late June. The department chair is to work with the instructor using the criteria used in the Senate's ordinary DL approval process to ensure that these are addressed. This delegation permitted the change of course modalities as needed for the continuing pandemic. While the Chair pushed strongly for instructors to be given full and fair

consideration, the Office of the Provost has stated that “Changing the modality of a course that already has students enrolled will not be permitted, except in rare, exceptional cases.” While it has been stated that instructors are being given full and fair consideration, it is true that few faculty seem to know that this process exists. There were also reports of the ADA office (Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity) asking for teacher-course evaluations (TCE) as part of the process of making decisions about whether an instructor’s disability is to be accommodated. The Chair raised this issue with the Provost’s office, and TCE scores will no longer be used in this way by the ADA office. In the newsletter this week, the Chair intends to clarify the Senate’s position and ensure that instructors understand where the responsibility lies when modality concerns are not addressed.

The Chair sent forward nominees for five strategic planning committees (Students First - Jennifer Osterhage, Taking Care of Our People - Allison Wright, Inspiring Ingenuity - Kathy Swan, Greater Trust, Transparency and Accountability - Eric Blalock, and Many People, One Community - Kevin Pearson). The Chair intends for these representatives to join the SC meeting next week to discuss the committees’ work and to discuss the work with SC.

The Chair was asked for nominees to serve on a search committee for a new senior associate provost. The Chair sent forward two nominations (himself and one other) and the other individual was selected.

The Chair has been working with Provost DiPaola on how to ensure that the Chair, SC, and Senate are appropriately involved in decision-making, not just informed, or in some cases informed after the fact. In meetings with the Provost, the Chair continued to reiterate to the Provost that courses such as UK 101 that do not currently live in academic units or have any meaningful faculty oversight represent an accreditation risk. Regarding the SACSCOC QEP, there have not been any updates from the Provost’s office. The QEP is supposed to arise from ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes and have the broad-based support of institutional constituencies. There was a listening tour in spring although the present silence does not bode well for broad-based support. The Chair received a notice over the summer that access to student records, including transcripts, would be terminated starting in September. Any access would be granted based on having completed FERPA training and having a need to access the transcript. The Chair has inquired who would make the determination whether faculty members had a need to access this information and has explained that faculty regularly conduct many activities on the advising/mentoring spectrum as part of their duties. He has yet to hear an answer that ensures that faculty will have the access required to perform their duties.

When the cyber intrusion in the College of Education was reported a couple of weeks ago (approximately 350,000 records compromised), the information technology resources in the college were moved to central Information Technology Services. This move continues a trend of centralizing control of important support resources and decoupling these resources from the academic units to whom they must be accountable to support the teaching, research, and service mission of the institution.

The Chair asked SC members if there were any questions about the announcements. Katie Cardarelli (senior associate provost for faculty affairs and professional development) explained the process by which faculty may request to teach an in-person course online. She explained that the Equal Opportunity Office will no longer review teacher-course evaluations but will instead interact with the department chair. Multiple SC members expressed concern about senior administration’s new requirement that a faculty member to justify their need to access a transcript, noting that faculty advise many students in many ways, and have always had the freedom to review the transcript of any student

who comes to them for guidance. The Chair noted that he had asked who will decide whether a faculty member has access to a student's transcript and the grounds on which a request would be approved or denied, but he had not received any answers.

SC members also expressed concern about the perception that faculty who wished to change their course modality would be prohibited from doing so. Blonder expressed concern that if universally accessed support systems close again, many faculty would be unable to teach in person. The Chair noted that faculty have traditionally been able to shift a course online briefly (being away for a conference, emergency childcare issue, etc.). In response to a question from Grossman, the Chair noted that for official purposes, the University recognized that a course could be taught up to 50% online and still be categorized as being in-person. Grossman then stated that faculty have always had the ability to move a course's modality for brief periods, so if there was a concern about a positive COVID test and the need to quarantine, faculty were well within their rights to teach online for short periods to accommodate any challenges, including COVID-related issues. Provost DiPaola cautioned SC members that the University wants the Fall 2021 semester to look as much as possible like a pre-pandemic semester. Any informal, brief modality changes should be similar to practices before the pandemic. Hawse stated that students would be amenable to temporary shifts in course modalities if those shifts ultimately help ensure a robust residential experience. There were additional comments, including sentiments that as employees of the University, faculty should receive the same health and safety considerations as students.

2. Provost Bob DiPaola

Interim Provost Bob DiPaola commented on a variety of topics, including the strategic planning process, UK's COVID guidelines for campus, the search committee for a new senior associate provost, and START team activities.

Provost DiPaola then asked SC members to consider changes to the SC-approved statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion. He explained that Legal Counsel had suggested some changes, in part to ensure that the official entity to whom complaints are submitted (Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity) is clear in the passage.

The Chair acknowledged that the Provost had asked earlier in the day if the SC could review the language and noted that SC had the freedom to review the language now, or at the next meeting. Swanson **moved** to approve the proposed revisions to the DEI language and Grossman **seconded**. Collett asked about the rationale for removing references to college diversity officers and Bias Incident Support Services. Provost DiPaola said that it was his understanding that Legal Counsel thought it was necessary to change the language to ensure all students know which office to contact in the case of a concern.

A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed and one abstained.

After the Provost suggested forwarding some information to a particular SC member, the Chair noted that such information should be shared with him, so he could distribute it to all members.

3. GRE Waivers for Graduate Programs for 2021-22

Martha Peterson (acting associate provost for graduate and professional education and acting dean of the Graduate School) explained the request. Grossman **moved** that the SC waive for one year, on behalf of the Senate, the Senate Rule on GREs to allow the Graduate Council to delegate to the Graduate School dean the ability to approve program faculty requests to drop the GRE for admissions for the

upcoming admissions cycle [enrolling in Fall 2022] for COVID-related reasons. Hawse **seconded**. After brief discussion, a **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

There were a few brief comments about the use of the GRE in general and whether scores are predictive of academic success. The Chair commented that if the Graduate Council desired, it could submit a proposal to change graduate admissions overall, to remove the GRE requirement.

4. Committee Nominee

a. Summative Review of College of Public Health Dean Donna Arnett

SC members discussed possible nominees. There was general consensus regarding the three names that were discussed.

Due to some scheduling concerns, the Chair suggested moving forward to the COVID update and there were no objections.

8. COVID-19 Fall 2021 Update - DeShana Collett, Leslie Vincent, Shannon Oltmann

Collett explained that their group was not provided with opportunities to deliberate on what information should be included in the Fall Playbook, but they were asked for input on how the information was presented. She noted that there were many good discussions and that a few times someone needed to go back and verify that language in the Fall Playbook was consistent with *Senate Rules*.

Vincent added that there was a lot of discussion to clarify things and describe what was meant. She said that many meetings towards the end pertained to excused absences and the Senate's 20% rule. The issue of masking was a hot topic until the University mandated masks indoors, although the conversation then shifted to how to execute that requirement in the classroom. Vincent said that it was a very productive group and she appreciated the dialogue. A lot of different perspectives were shared, which was necessary for creating an effective document.

Oltmann concurred with Collett's and Vincent's comments. She noted that it was interesting that the committee had no power to change policy, but rather was asked to decide how policies would be implemented or describe. She added that the three faculty representatives probably spoke more than the others in representing the concerns of their respective constituencies; Oltmann appreciated the robust discussions.

5. Naming of Second Reinstatement Committee

The Chair explained the Second Reinstatement Committee and described the typical composition (chair, vice chair, and SGA president). Grossman **moved** to compose the Second Reinstatement Committee in the same way for 2021-22 and Vincent **seconded**. Those named were all present to agree to the appointment and there were no objections, so the Chair indicated that the composition was **approved** by **unanimous consent**.

6. Appointment of University Senate Parliamentarian

The Chair explained that the most recent parliamentarian was elected to serve in the Senate, making it more difficult to serve as both a senator and a parliamentarian. SC members offered suggestions and he indicated he would put the item back on the agenda for the next SC meeting as Old Business.

7. Excused Absences Due to Quarantine

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SC members agreed that the previous motion regarding quarantining being an excused absence needed to be reestablished. Vincent **moved** that the SC interpret the Senate Rules such that moving forward, students be excused from required in-person interactions if the student has been directed to self-quarantine by the University (including its app), a medical professional, public health professional, or government official. Hall **seconded**. There was discussion about having the Senate approve the proposed change. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

9. Senate Committee Compositions

The Chair reviewed tentative committee compositions with SC members. He noted that there multiple instances of committee ex officio members whose titles or units no longer existed. He explained that some outdated ex officio references could be matched to an existing position/unit, but not all. A few corrections were requested. After brief discussion, Grossman **moved** to approve the committee compositions and chairs as proposed and delegate to the Chair any remaining actions needed to finalize Senate committee compositions. Duncan **seconded**. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

The Chair reminded SC members about outdated ex officios for Senate committees. After brief discussion and at Grossman's request, the Chair asked Collett [chair, Senate's Rules and Elections Committee (SREC)] if she was comfortable asking the SREC to review specific position titles/units and making suggestions about substitutions or entities/titles that have no obvious current equivalent. Collett concurred and there were no objections to that plan. There being no objections, the Chair asked Collett to guide the SREC through this process.

10. Items from the Floor (Time Permitting)

There were a few comments about the format of the *Senate Rules*.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 pm with no objections.

Respectfully submitted by Aaron Cramer,
Senate Council Chair

SC members present: Blonder, Cantrell, Collett, Cramer, DeCorte, Duncan, Grossman, Oltmann, Swanson, Vangilder, and Vincent.

Invited guests present: Gail Brion, Anna Bosch, Roger Brown, Katie Cardarelli, Anna Chalfant, Joanie Ett-Mims, Davy Jones, Janice Kuperstein, GT Lineberry, and Martha Peterson.

Prepared by Sheila Brothers on Tuesday, August 17, 2021.