

University Senate

Monday, October 11, 2021

The University Senate met in regular session at 3:00 pm on Monday, October 11, 2021 via video conference. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken with the video conference “raise hand” feature. Specific voting information can be requested from the Office of the Senate Council.

Senate Council Chair Aaron Cramer (EN) called the University Senate (Senate) meeting to order at 3:00 pm. He welcomed those present and informed them that the session was being recorded for notetaking purposes. He asked everyone to use the chat box to sign in for attendance but noted that the chat function is generally used for attendance and would not be monitored during the meeting. He asked everyone to mute themselves.

The Chair provided guidance on how to participate in the discussion and how to vote. He welcomed senators and reminded them that Senate follows Robert’s Rules of Order. He asked that senators be civil and good citizens. He also asked everyone to participate in the meetings and share information with colleagues in their home units.

The Chair reminded senators to state their name and college affiliation before speaking.

1. Minutes from September 13 and Announcements

The Chair reported that were clerical edits to the minutes from the September 13 Senate meeting. There being **no objections**, the minutes from September stand **approved** as amended by unanimous consent.

The Chair announced former Senate Council Office staff member, Joanie Ett-Mims, had accepted a new position in the Rosenberg College of Law.

The Chair informed Senate members that President Capilouto met with the Senate Council (SC) on October 7.

The Chair noted the Student Government Association (SGA) passed a resolution in late September calling for a vaccine mandate.

The Chair informed Senate members that activities related to SC elections were underway and that Senate members could expect communication in November from Roger Brown (chair of Elections Subcommittee). The Chair noted only elected faculty members are eligible to be nominated or vote. The Chair reminded Senate members that the SC chair would be elected from the SC’s composition by SC members.

The Chair notified Senate members there was a student query regarding a lack of non-military uniformed services policy in the *Senate Rules*. The Chair noted he would ask the Senate Admissions and Academic Standards Committee (SAASC) to consider expanding military services language to uniformed services.

The Chair informed Senate members there was a lack of clarity surrounding the related topics: dual degrees, University Scholar Programs (USPs), “plus” programs, double counting credits, and concurrent enrollment in graduate programs. The Chair commented he asked the Senate Academic Programs Committee (SAPC) to review these overlapping issues and requested the committee provide recommendations to the SC and the Senate.

The Chair explained concerns about the Wethington Awards pertaining to research funding allocations. The Chair noted he intended to send these concerns to the Senate Research and Graduate Education Committee (SRGEC).

The Chair mentioned an announcement to campus made last week about Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement G.T. Lineberry stepping down from that position. The Chair commented SC members were asked to provide nominees to serve of the search committee for this position.

The Chair informed Senate members he met with Associate Provost Katherine McCormick about SACSCOC reaffirmation activities. The Chair noted confirmation from the President's meeting with SC members that the QEP process would be open. The Chair informed Senate members that a SACSCOC executive leadership committee meeting was scheduled for late October.

The Chair reminded Senate members of curricular proposal deadlines for 2021-22 for proposals seeking a Fall 2022 effective date.

2. Officer Reports

a. Chair

The Chair noted that the *Senate Rules* give the Chair and SC authority to take some actions on behalf of Senate as long as they are reported to Senate. The following took place:

- The SC approved changes to Spring 2022 commencement dates
 - Changed to three ceremonies on Friday and one on Saturday
- SC members discussed Senate meeting materials, such as audio and visual recordings and presentation materials
 - SC members did not recommend changes to the current, long-standing practice to not share these materials
- SC members appointed an ad hoc committee to address courses without formal faculty oversight
 - Committee will propose a process or structure to ensure faculty oversight of these courses by the beginning of November
- Issue of senators not being allowed to use college listservs to communicate with college faculty was discussed with the Provost
 - The Chair and the Provost planned to discuss this and related issues with deans soon
- The SC received opinions from the General Counsel's office pertaining to the Senate's requirements with respect to the Open Meetings Act
- The SC deliberated on and sent forward nominees for the Vice President of Philanthropy search
- The SC approved the University calendar for the 2022-23 academic year and the tentative calendar for the 2024-25 academic year
 - Revised files correcting errors noted by SC members would be posted for final Senate approval upon receipt
 - Calendars for professional colleges were scheduled to be on the SC agenda later in October
- GRE waivers for programs were discussed with the Graduate Council (GC) to determine if Senate approval was required
 - GC indicated the start of new process to transmit approved waivers to the SC office for placement on a web transmittal for final Senate approval
- The Chair meets regularly with Staff Senate Chair Olivia Ellis and SGA President Michael Hawse
- The SC met on September 29 to again discuss the draft strategic plan
 - Feedback was sent to the President and the Provost

- The SC previously delegated curricular decision about temporary distance learning (DL) approvals for Fall 2021, to department chairs on behalf of department faculty
 - The SC extended this delegation to the Winter 2021 and Spring 2022 terms

b. Vice Chair

Vice Chair DeShana Collett reported she did not have any items to report.

c. Parliamentarian

Parliamentarian Clayton Thyne reminded Senate members to ask questions for anything they required clarification on.

Referring to an item in the Chair's report, Cagle (AS) and others asked the Provost to clarify the approval process for temporary DL approval. The Chair explained the Senate can give approval for a course to be listed as DL, but not require a course to be listed as DL. The Chair introduced Senior Associate Provost Katie Cardarelli to address further clarification regarding the involvement of the Provost's office in the approval process. Cardarelli explained the Provost's office would only proceed with the Provost approval process for courses requesting the modality change if students had already registered for the course.

d. Trustees

Trustee Hollie Swanson informed Senate members of the upcoming Board of Trustees retreat and thanked Senate members for their feedback regarding the strategic plan.

3. Old Business

The Chair introduced former Senate Academic Facilities Committee (SAFC) Chair Kevin Donahue to present the 2020-21 SAFC annual report. Donahue explained the report, highlighting the facilities changes due to the pandemic, the facilities management group priorities, and capital project management. There were a handful of questions and comments from senators.

4. Degree Recipients

The Chair introduced Morris Grubbs (Graduate School assistant dean) to present the honorary degree recipient. There was a brief discussion about the recipient. Senate members discussed a question about the recipient's past work. The Chair then said that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation the Senate approve, for submission through the President to the Board of Trustees, the honoree as the recipient of an honorary degree. There was no further debate. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with 26 opposed and 8 abstained.

5. Committee Reports

The Chair introduced Senate Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (SACDI) Chair Cindy Jong to present the 2020-21 SACDI report to the Senate. Jong mentioned three recommendations from the report, however senators focused on the first issue, regarding non-native English speakers. Below are comments representative of that discussion.

- Proposed language to encourage and support testing accommodations for non-native English speakers to be added to the syllabus
- Considerations regarding increased diversity among the Senate
- Considerations regarding the challenges for retention and promotion of faculty of color and women of color in particular

The Chair noted the report had been presented to the SC the week prior and that SC members wanted to pass the report along to the Senate for consideration. A robust discussion took place. Senate members discussed best practices for equitable accommodations and student success.

6. Senate Meeting Modalities

The Chair asked Senate members for input about Senate meeting modalities and voting methodologies. The Chair informed Senate members that Turning Technologies software, the previously used function for voting, was no longer supported. Senate members discussed numerous items, including:

- Scheduling favorability for Zoom, particularly for faculty who could not be on campus in person
- Possibility of hybrid modality for meetings
- Use of “iClicker” technology
- Mitigated risk of Covid-19 exposure by holding meetings via Zoom
- Impact of different modalities on quality of discussion in Senate meetings
- Challenges of a hybrid modality

The Chair informed Senate members that an informal straw poll after the meeting would be distributed to Senate members to gauge Senate members’ preferences on modality.

7. Items from the Floor (Time Permitting)

Time did not permit for items from the floor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 PM with **no objections**.

Respectfully submitted by Aaron Cramer,
Senate Council Chair

Absences: Ajay Mehra, Alice Turkington, Alison Gustafson, Allen Allday, Allison Wright*, Alyssa Eckman, Amina Anwar, Angie Martin, Ashley McPherson, Caleb Frush, Caroline Slicer, Chipper Griffith, Chris Delcher, Christine Harper, Claire-Marie Hall, Colleen Swartz, Craig Collins, Doug Michael, Doug Way, Eli Capilouto, George Wright, Jay Miller, Jeff Okeson, Jennifer Greer, Julia Stevens, Julian Heilig, Justin Lane, Kathryn Saatman*, Kim Wilson, Kirsten Turner, Lisa Cassis, Logan Bechanan, Mark Birdwhistell, Mary Davis, Mary Vosevich, Michael Kennedy*, Mike Richey, Mitzi Vernon, Morgan Wilson, Nancy Cox, Olivia Ellis, Patrick Haycraft, R. Kiplan (Kip) Guy, Robert Coleman, Rudolph Bucheit, Sam Wyse, Scott Lephart, Simon Sheather, Tom Harris

*denotes explained absence

Invited guests present: Sheila Brothers, Kevin Donohue, Morris Grubbs, Cindy Jong

Prepared by Katie Silver on Monday, November 1, 2021