

University Senate

Monday, November 8, 2021

The University Senate met in regular session at 3:00 pm on Monday, November 8, 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 (SC).

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 informed Senate members that attendance would be captured via a Zoom report and noted that the chat function would no longer be available. He asked everyone to mute themselves when not speaking.

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 October 11 and Announcements

The Chair reported that edits were received for the minutes from October 11, 2021. There being **no objections**, the amended minutes from October 11, 2021 were **approved by unanimous consent**.

The Chair made announcements to Senators about the following items:

The Chair informed Senate members that applications were received for the vacant position in the SC office, and interviews were expected to start next week.

The Chair announced that the election of SC members ended Friday; the Chair expressed deep gratitude for all senators who participated in any way.

- Members with SC terms ending December 31, 2021 included DeShana Collett (HS), Aaron Cramer (EN), and Gregory Hall (GS) (*Collett and Cramer to remain as members and officers until officer term date end*)
- Senators elected to three-year Senate Council terms beginning January 1, 2022 were Lauren Cagle (AS), Kaveh Tagavi (EN), and Akiko Takenaka (AS)

The Chair informed Senate members that the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) report was typically given to Senate in the fall; there were no changes made to program CIPs outside of Senate review in 2020-21, hence no report.

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 informed senators that he was invited by the Provost to meet with the deans to discuss shared governance. He commented that the discussion was very enjoyable. The Chair invited Provost DiPaola to share information with senators. The Provost provided updates regarding the College of Arts and Sciences and Graduate School dean searches, the search for an associate provost for faculty advancement, the strategic plan, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on

Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation activities and the quality enhancement program (QEP) required by SACSCOC. The Provost provided updates about COVID-19 feedback discussions, noting that he and the President met with the SC and elected student representatives.

The Chair noted that the *Senate Rules (SRs)* give the Chair and SC authority to take some actions on behalf of Senate as long as they are reported to Senate. The Chair approved a one-time, non-COVID request for DL delivery in Spring 2022 for CDE 824 and CSD 745. For both courses, the unit was unable to find a local instructor to teach a specific course.

The Chair reported that there was no specific guidance in the *SRs* for about which committee to review proposals to suspend/close a program; relevant committee chairs agreed the Senate's Academic Organization and Structure Committee (SAOSC) was the appropriate committee.

The Chair informed SC members the December degree list would be distributed to senators this week, providing an opportunity to add students prior to the Senate formally considering the list in December.

The Chair informed senators there was a misalignment in the Senate and Board of Trustees meeting dates in May, noting he planned to ask SC to approve the May 2022 and August 2022 degree lists on behalf of the Senate. The Chair noted he would send the degree list to senators prior to SC's action to ensure Senate participation.

The Chair reported that the SC office was looking into new polling software for voting in Senate meetings.

b. Vice Chair

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

c. Parliamentarian

Parliamentarian Clayton Thyne reported he did not have any items to report today.

d. Trustees

Trustee Lee Blonder (ME) informed Senate members of the annual Board of Trustees retreat that took place on October 14th and 15th in the Gatton Student Center. Blonder described the discussions that took place surrounding the strategic plan and the executive committee meeting and full meeting that took place. Trustee Hollie Swanson (ME) informed Senate members that the final report of the College of Arts and Sciences audit had been posted. The Chair thanked Trustees Blonder and Swanson.

3. Old Business

a. Ombud's Reports for 2019-20 and 2020-21: Past Ombud Kaveh Tagavi

The Chair introduced past Ombud Kaveh Tagavi (EN) to provide the Ombud's reports for academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21. Tagavi describe the reports to Senate members and invited Senate members to ask questions. Peffer (BE) asked whether falsification of vaccination records would become an academic offense, noting that the matter was currently deliberated by the Office of Student Conduct and did not currently fall under the Ombud's purview. Tagavi noted that the issue was controversial in nature and was previously under control of the Ombud's office but was no longer under the Ombud's purview.

b. Senate Meeting Modalities

The Chair announced that the results of the straw poll taken after the last Senate meeting indicated Zoom as the first choice for favored modality among senators for Senate meetings. The Chair informed Senate members that the SC office was pursuing more detailed information about software from Poll

Everywhere to facilitate voting. The Chair asked if there was any discussion and there was none. The Chair announced the SC office would continue to pursue this avenue.

4. Committee Reports

a. Senate's Distance Learning and eLearning Committee (SCDLeL) – Roger Brown, Chair

i. Definition of Online Program and Status of Programs Previously Approved for Online Delivery

The Chair introduced Roger Brown (chair of SCDLeL) (AG) to present information about the new form(s) adopted by SC for program faculty seeking approval to offer a program online. The SCDLeL also recommended the Senate to adopt the proposed definition of an online program. Brown explained the proposed definition. The Chair asked if there were any questions and there were a variety of questions. The Chair asked if there was any debate. A robust discussion took place.

The **motion** on the floor was for the Senate to adopt the proposed definition of an online program. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was required. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed and two abstained.

b. Senate's Advisory Committee on Privilege and Tenure – Michael Healy, Chair

i. 2020-21 Report

The Chair introduced Michael Healy (chair of Senate's Advisory Committee on Privilege and Tenure, (SACPT)) to provide a report. Healy informed Senate members of the considerations and recommendations made by the committee for the 2020-21 year.

The Chair asked if there were any general questions from Senate members. Collett asked if Healy could speak to whether the President's deliberations generally aligned with the recommendations provided by the Committee. Healy responded that, in general, there was no requirement in the *SRs* for the President to report back about decisions and noted that the committee generally did not receive a response.

5. Items from The Floor (Time Permitting)

The Chair asked Senate members for any items from the floor.

Senate members discussed the Provost's current involvement in the temporary approval process for changes to course modality due to reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns discussed by Senate members included the following:

- Course modality decisions were under the purview of the faculty member and the unit
- The Provost's exercised control over course modality decisions had caused some confusion among faculty
- The Provost's involvement in the process removed autonomy for faculty to make decisions about course modality and circumvented faculty consideration
- The authority under which the Provost was exercising course modality decision-making was unclear
- There was no appeal process for the Provost's decisions about course modality
- The lack of boundaries set by the process
- Whether decision-making regarding course modality would return to the faculty or remain with the Provost
- The authority exercised by the Provost about course modality decisions was contradictory to the Governing Regulations

A robust discussion took place. The Chair informed Senate members there would be further conversation, noting he would commit to regular communication with Senate members about the subject. The Provost expressed his appreciation for the feedback provided by Senate members and invited further discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 PM with **no objections**.

Respectfully submitted by Aaron Cramer,
Senate Council Chair

Absences: Ajay Mehra, Alan DeSantis, Alison Gustafson, Allie Pazdzior, Allison Wright, Amina Anwar, Angie Martin, Brittany Smalls*, Caleb Frush, Caroline Slicer, Chipper Griffith, Christine Harper, Colleen Swartz, Craig Collins, Eli Capilouto, George Wright, Jack Kirn, James Lump, Jay Miller, Jeff Okeson, Julian Heilig, Kenneth Calvert, Kirsten Turner, Laura Bryan*, Lisa Cassis, Logan Bechanan, Mark Birdwhistell, Mary Davis, Mary Vosevich, Mike Richey, Mitzi Vernon, Morgan Wilson, Patrick Haycraft, R. Kiplan (Kip) Guy, Robert Coleman, Rudolph Bucheit, Sam Wyse, Sandra Bastin, Scott Lephart, Tom Harris

*denotes explained absence

Invited guests present: Sheila Brothers and Michael Healy

Prepared by Katie Silver on Wednesday, December 1, 2021