Senate Council

Monday, February 7, 2022

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3:00 PM on Monday, February 7, 2022, in 103 Main Building, although a video conference link was also available. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands and/or electronic voting software unless indicated otherwise.

Senate Council Chair Aaron Cramer (EN) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:00 PM. The Chair welcomed those present. He informed everyone that the session was being recorded for notetaking purposes and noted that it was an open meeting. He asked that the SC members participating via Zoom to type their name and affiliation into the chat box and added that the chat function is generally only used for attendance and not monitored. He asked that all attendees, online and in person, state their name and affiliation prior to speaking, to ensure everyone knew who was speaking.

The Chair informed SC members that SC office staff conducted a thorough test of the audio equipment in 103 Main Building earlier that day. He asked those attending via Zoom to indicate by using the "clapping hands" react in Zoom if they could not hear members speaking in-person at any point.

1. Minutes from January 31 and Announcements

The Chair reported that minutes from January 31 were not yet ready due to weather disruptions the prior week.

The Chair informed SC members that the Human Development Institute (HDI) was preparing a proposal to establish a comprehensive transition and postsecondary (CTP) program to address underrepresentation of students with intellectual disabilities. The outcome of the proposed program would be a "meaningful credential," which would require Senate approval. The Chair explained Kathy Sheppard-Jones (executive director of HDI) would be preparing a summary of the proposed program, which the Chair would distribute to SC members upon his receipt of the summary. The Chair noted that Sheppard-Jones would also be coming to the SC for questions and feedback prior to the submission of the proposal.

The Chair explained that SC would be using the Poll Everywhere software today in order to trial the software before using at the next Senate meeting. The Chair noted that official votes would still be taken by way of hand raise for this meeting. The Chair explained how to interact with Poll Everyone, noting that SC members could vote by way of online browser, text, or app.

2. Update from Provost DiPaola

The Chair invited Acting Provost Robert DiPaola to provide a general update to SC members. The Provost thanked the Chair and SC members. The Provost updated SC members on searches that were currently ongoing, noting the importance appropriate candidate pool sizes and proper vetting. The Provost provided updates about the following pertaining to searches:

- The search committee for the Associate Provost on Faculty Advancement was ongoing and the search committee was reviewing applications. The Provost noted there would be an update soon.
- The search for the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences was ongoing. The Provost explained the search firm had been aggressive in ensuring they received an adequate pool of applicants.
- The roster for the search committee for the Dean of the Graduate School was distributed recently. The Provost noted he would be charging the committee this week.
- The Provost explained that every committee was charged with finding a large enough pool of candidates, to ensure there were three acceptable candidates by the time the search became public.

- The Dean of College of Nursing Janie Heath announced her retirement and search committee nominations to identify a new dean would be solicited soon.
- The Chellgren Chair and Chellgren Center Director search committee would be formed soon.
- Nominations had been received for the Acting Director of UK Online Education. The Provost noted he would touch base with the Chair and announce the Acting Director of UK Online Education by the end of the week.

The Provost provided a brief update pertaining to the QEP. He explained that due diligence was being conducted to determine how best to position the input received about the five topics before giving them to President Capilouto. The Provost noted this would be finalized in the coming weeks.

The Provost invited Senior Associate Provost for Administration and Academic Affairs Kathryn Cardarelli to update SC members about the CPE Graduate Profile Academy.

Cardarelli explained there were 12 institutions around Kentucky participating in the CPE Graduate Profile Academy and that each three-person team representing each institution had been asked to design a campus impact project for 10 essential skills. Cardarelli noted that prior to a project, an environmental scan was necessary of current curricular and co-curricular content. Cardarelli explained the Provost's office was currently seeking a PhD student in the College of Education to assist in conducting an environmental scan. She commented that right now she was thinking about how to engage SC members for the impact project.

The Chair asked if there were any questions or feedback on the Provost's report. SC members requested the following information:

- Information regarding the current legislative session (the Provost noted their office was up to date and paying close attention and suggested specific questions be directed towards the Office of Government Relations, who was representing the University in Frankfort)
- The name of the CPE initiative to share with potential PhD students from the College of Education (Cardarelli clarified that CPE Graduate Profile Academy was the correct name)
- If the University would consider declaring cloth masks unacceptable for students (the Provost commented that it was clear from an evidence-based perspective that N95 and KN95 masks were superior and noted the current approach was to encourage such masks)
- How the Provost would navigate the potential for power differentials among search committee members, during the formation of search committees (the Provost noted this was a good point that he would continue to monitor and would charge committees appropriately)
- Vaccine reporting data on the dashboard to reflect fully vaccinated individuals (the Provost commented that he would follow up, noting the new definitions from the CDC as well for "up to date" vaccination status)

The Chair noted there was concern regarding publicity the prior week about a video that was circulated involving students and individuals in the University's free speech zone. The Chair explained there was concern about the University's public response to the matter. The Provost commented that he would follow up and did not have any more information than the Chair did. Cagle noted that she was asked to bring up the topic as well by faculty and colleagues. Hawse commented that from a student perspective, he had been in meetings with the Office of Student Success that week. The Chair noted that any information to address faculty concern would be appreciated. Hawse explained that the conversations had been productive and that he believed the University was behind the students, though the messaging was flawed. Hawse explained they were trying to ensure student rights were protected and confirm that the University was in the right place.

3. Degree Recipients
   a. Spring 2022 Social Work Graduates at Ft. Sam Houston

The Chair reminded SC members that the College of Social Work operated a program at Fort Sam Houston where the military trains members as social workers. The Chair explained that because of the timing for their graduation event in April, the graduates on the degree list were considered earlier.

Grossman **moved** that elected faculty members of SC approve UK's Fort Sam Houston May 2022 degree list, for submission through the President to the Board of Trustees. Oltmann **seconded**. There was no debate. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

4. Committee Reports
   a. Undergraduate Council – Corrine Williams, Chair
      i. *Update on Graduate Composition and Communication Requirement (GCCR)*

The Chair invited Williams to provide an update on the GCCR. Williams provided a brief introduction to SC members about the GCCR and introduced Sarah Kercsmar (HS) to provide a presentation from the GCCR subcommittee. Kercsmar explained the GCCR subcommittee was charged in Spring 2021 to evaluate the current state of the GCCR, collect survey data campus-wide, and make recommendations about possible updates to the GCCR. Kercsmar described the benefits and challenges found from the survey and presented the following recommendations:

- Removing the requirement for a "C" letter grade or better on all GCCR assignments
- Revising the requirement to be simpler: must include two modes of communication and be most relevant to the discipline/profession
- Providing programs autonomy to place GCCR where it makes the most sense in respective curriculums and to encourage programs to consider if placement of GCCR earlier in the curriculum (rather than in senior year) would be helpful in academic writing throughout the program of study
- Providing the Undergraduate Council (UGC) authority to determine whether a course meets the GCCR requirements or not

Williams explained that in the past, a separate GCCR committee existed but that there was not a good resource on campus now for inquiries pertaining to GCCR. Williams noted that a sustainable resource for such inquiries would be beneficial.

The Chair thanked Williams and Kercsmar and asked a clarifying question about the GCCR subcommittee under UGC. Williams explained that officially, the GCCR subcommittee was a subcommittee under UGC, but historically acted as a separate committee with separate members from the UGC. A robust discussion took place. Other questions and thoughts from SC members included:

- If it was required for the GCCR to occur in the senior year (Williams clarified that it was not officially a rule, but had become a strong opinion and common practice)
- The possibility of changing the letter grade requirement on GCCR requirements to a D rather than removing it altogether
- The benefit of recommending programs place the requirement earlier in curriculum to better equip students for coursework later in their curriculum
- The benefit of considering the course grade rather than the assignment grade to fulfill the GCCR requirement
- Capturing the spirit of GCCR across multiple disciplines and programs and some of the challenges that may be associated with implementation

- The importance of teaching students how to communicate well

Williams noted that feedback would help result in a Senate Rules change to help empower departments to focus on best practices for communication in specific disciplines. Both Cagle and Oltmann offered assistance to discuss established practices in their areas. Vice Chair DeShana Collett clarified that the last time the permanent subcommittee on the GCCR convened was in 2018. The Chair commented that a recommendation might be for the UGC to take on the GCCR subcommittee permanently. The Chair thanked Williams and Kercsmsar.

5. Proposed Nonstandard Calendar for NRE 320

The Chair invited Larry Grabau (AG) to explain the proposed nonstandard calendar for NRE 320. Grabau explained that the course, offered by the Natural Resources and Environmental program, was offered in Costa Rica for 15 full days of instruction and that the circumstance was related to an early summer 2022 offering. Grabau noted that 15 consecutive days, beginning a week early on May 9 and ending on May 23, would be more favorable and avoid running into University holidays. The Chair asked if there were questions and noted the start date did not conflict with finals week. SC members offered the following questions and feedback:

- Suggestion to allow one day off per weekend to avoid excused absences for possible religious observances
- Whether students were amenable to the change (Grabau clarified there was some pressure from students to clarify dates, and that students were amenable to 15 consecutive days the last time this change was approved by SC)

Oltmann **moved** to approve the proposed nonstandard calendar for NRE 320. Cantrell **seconded**. There was no debate. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed and one abstained.

6. Nominee for Strategic Scheduling Committee

The Chair informed SC members there was a proposal among Provost's office, the Registrar's office, and college associate deans for undergraduate education to establish a strategic scheduling committee to examine historical course scheduling, make recommendations, etc., largely related to classrooms. The Chair noted the proposal includes a Senate representative, who will serve as a liaison with Senate.

The Chair explained he was looking for a list of nominees to contact to serve as the Senate's representative. SC members provided three names to the Chair. The Chair noted he would contact the nominees and transmit the name to the Provost and to SC members when the representative was identified.

7. Tentative Senate Agenda for February 14, 2022

The Chair explained he had discussed the President attending a Spring 2022 Senate meeting, noting that March was likely when the President would attend.

Hawse **moved** to approve the tentative Senate agenda for February 14, 2022. Cantrell **seconded**. There was no debate. There being **no objections**, the tentative Senate agenda for February 14, 2022 was **approved** by way of unanimous consent.

8. Discussion Regarding Academic Policies on Absences

The Chair informed SC members that the weather events of last week made it clear that there may be an opportunity to clarify or update academic policies related to absences. The Chair noted that widespread availability and use of distance-learning teaching techniques and electronic means of interaction may make it beneficial to examine current policies and determine whether they should be adjusted.

The Chair explained that specific goals of the discussion included enumeration of the specific issues that should be considered and identification of a suitable means of addressing said issues.

The Chair opened the floor for the discussion. A robust discussion took place. SC members discussed the following:

- The confusion cause for students about class cancellation and whether instructors could change modality for in-person courses due to weather disruptions
- The benefit of clarification at the beginning of the semester in the syllabus for how an instructor would proceed and allowing flexibility for faculty, but with the expectation that the clarification should be made at the beginning of the semester
- Whether synchronous courses should be allowed to be held if the University cancelled classes
- Confusion for students taking multiple courses, some that may have been moved online and some not when classes were cancelled
- Leaving the decision to individual instructors may cause more confusion for students
- Some students may not have access to attending an online course during a weather event
- The difference between closing the University and closing campus, and the impact of delay timing on courses that occur partially during a delay
- That it would be unfair to do anything aside from cancel classes, including online asynchronous, if the University or campus closed
- Did the authority exist for a professor to change course modality after the President announced a class cancellation
- The ability for class cancellations to be remedied by asynchronous recordings
- The impact of such decisions on exams
- College meetings taking place during campus closures via Zoom
- Concern for synchronous hybrid courses and the need for clarity in policy
- A limitation for the number of times an in-person class could be cancelled before modality could be changed

The Chair noted that there did not appear to be a clear consensus, but the discussion had been useful and suggested forming a committee structure to answer these questions. The Chair suggested SC members use the listserv to continue the discussion

9. Items from the Floor (Time Permitting)

Time did not permit for items from the floor. The Chair suggested SC members use the listserv to discuss any items from the floor that may require deliberation.

The Chair asked SC members for their unanimous consent to use the Poll Everywhere software to record an official vote to adjourn the meeting. There were **no objections**.

Vincent **moved** to adjourn the meeting. Grossman **seconded**. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM**.**

Respectfully submitted by Aaron Cramer,
Senate Council Chair

SC Members Present: Blonder, Cagle, Cantrell, Charnigo, Collett, Cramer, DeCorte, Duncan, Grossman, Hawse, Oltmann, Swanson, Tagavi, Takenaka, Vincent

Invited Guests Present: Sheila Brothers, Robert DiPaola, Larry Grabau, Sarah Kercsmar, Corrine Williams

Prepared by Katie Silver on Friday, February 11, 2022