

# Senate Council

Monday, September 23, 2022

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3:00 PM on Monday, April 18, 2022, in 103 Main Building, although a video conference link was also available for members. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken by hand unless otherwise specified. Specific voting information can be requested from the Office of the Senate Council (SC).

Senate Council Chair DeShana Collett (HS) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:00 PM. The Chair welcomed those present. She informed everyone that the session was being recorded for notetaking purposes and noted that it was an open meeting. She 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 asked SC members to be ready to vote via Poll Everywhere and noted that the SC office staff recommend voting through Poll Everywhere in a web browser if possible. The Chair reminded SC members that regarding the ability to speak, members must raise their hand to be called upon.

The Chair announced new SC members Olivia Davis (BE), Daisy Mee (student, EN), Kiarah Raglin (student, SW), and Andrew Laws (SGA president) and asked SC members to introduce themselves. The Chair informed SC members that former SC members Lauren Cagle (AS) and Shannon Oltmann (CI) recently resigned their terms, noting that Davis would replace Cagle according to the replacement process described by the *Senate Rules*.

## 1. 2022-23 Orientation for Senate Council Members

The Chair explained some of the new practices and expectations for the upcoming academic year. She said that Senate committees and councils would be expected to do brief orientations for all members at their first meeting, noting that this expectation was the result of discussion about committee and council functionality at the SC retreat on May 13, 2022.

The Chair provided an orientation to SC members, which contained the following information:

- SC meetings take place on Mondays at 3pm in 103 Main Building through the beginning of May
  - SC does not meet when Senate meetings took place
- The SC office requests items for meetings to be received no later than 5 pm on the Wednesday prior to the meeting
- Agendas are posted and SC members notified on the Thursday prior to the Monday meeting
- SC members are expected to attend in person, though a Zoom link would remain available for SC members if needed
  - SC members discussed modality in detail and at length during the SC retreat in May and felt strongly that personal convenience should not generally be used to justify attending Senate Council meetings remotely
- The SC is the executive body of the Senate
- *Senate Rules 1.3.1.1 ("Purposes and Functions of the Senate Council")* charges the SC broadly with certain actions, including the following:
  - Studying and reporting to the Senate on any matter of concern to the Senate
  - Recommending action to the Senate on items such as curricular proposals, structural proposals, degree lists, and University Academic Calendar
  - Advising the President of the University on committee appointments and all matters relative to the welfare of the University
  - Advising the Provost on appointment of search committees

- Planning agendas for Senate meetings
- Appointing Senate standing committees and identifying committee chairs
- Soliciting nominations for area committees and other types of academic advisory committees
- Acting on behalf of the Senate as needed and reporting such action to the Senate
- SC members are expected to:
  - read and respond to emails in a timely manner
  - inform the SC office of any absence from a SC meeting
  - SC members are expected to read the agenda and read proposals included in the agenda.
  - send comments on agenda items in advance to the Chair in the event of an absence
  - remember that debate is about expressing an opinion, not about changing someone's mind.
  - help the Chair ensure all members have equal opportunity to participate in discussion and debate. If time is short or an issue is contentious, members will have two opportunities to speak (maximum of two minutes each) but those who have not spoken will be allowed to speak before any member can speak a second time.
  - help the Chair follow the agenda and stay on topic.
  - if on Zoom, have access to a quality headset with a mic.

The Chair reminded SC members about expectations for debate and discussion and recommended that SC members familiarized themselves with the taxonomy of the *Senate Rules*, which were available on the Senate website. The Chair asked that SC members who were attending via Zoom have access to a quality audio setup, such as a headset with a microphone.

The Chair noted that SC discussed many issues at the SC retreat. She recommended SC members read the May 13 minutes carefully.

The Chair provided a brief demonstration to using Poll Everywhere, the digital voting application used by the SC and Senate.

## 2. Minutes from May 13 and Announcements

The Chair reported that no edits were received for the minutes from the May 13 SC retreat. SC Vice Chair Leslie Vincent (BE) **moved** to **approve** the minutes from the May 13 SC retreat. Akiko Takenaka (AS) **seconded**. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

The Chair noted that some *Administrative Regulations* changes were expected to be on a SC agenda in the near future.

The Chair informed SC members that she requested and received several invitations for meetings upon her arrival in the office from the President's cabinet and Provost's staff. The Chair noted that while most engagements had been accepting and positive, one administrator was hesitant to meet monthly and suggested meeting quarterly instead.

The Chair provided guidance to SC members about approvals to temporary distance learning (DL) to be added to a course, noting that the SC office had established new standards for temporary DL requests. The Chair commented that she continues to encourage college leadership to return to using the Senate's normal approval practices but would consider temporary approval if the unit had submitted a proposal through Curriculog to make a permanent change. Failing a pending proposal, the request must consider the aspects below.

- Documentation of faculty approval, i.e. meeting minutes
- Description of how many students affected and if request is to accommodate student or instructor or both

- If the course is a required course or an elective for an existing program; and
- Description of any other solutions the unit has undertaken to address the issue

The Chair informed SC members that on behalf of SC and Senate, she approved the addition of repeatability to be added to EDS 612, noting that the proposal was submitted, but the incorrect form was inadvertently used. The Chair also informed SC members on behalf of SC and Senate, she approved a temporary addition of DL to be added to LAW 882 and LAW 930 for the Fall 2022 semester, noting that the Rosenberg College of Law was aware it was expected to gather feedback and votes from the college faculty about the appropriateness of the addition for the fall semester and submit the information to the SC office.

The Chair announced that the Senate website was intended to be updated over the summer, but SC office staff were still waiting for a technical migration to occur before they could do so.

The Chair noted that she was working on identifying a chair for the Undergraduate Council.

In response to sentiments expressed by SC members at the SC retreat, the Chair informed SC members that the SC office had developed several guides to be distributed to committee and academic council members, which would contain the following:

- General information about committee and council processes and procedures
- Flow charts to visually describe the approval steps for course and program proposals
- Standardized report templates for committees to transmit proposals to Senate
- Standardized report templates for committees to document activity
- Information about consent agendas and how the activity reports would be used

The Chair noted that a senator handbook was still in progress.

The Chair informed SC members that the Board of Trustees did not plan to meet in May 2023, meaning that the May 2023 degree list would be reviewed at the April 27 and April 28 meetings. The Chair commented that the Office of the Registrar confirmed that SC would have the degree list by the SC meeting on April 3, so that Senate could review the degree list on April 10.

### 3. Update on Dean Searches – Provost DiPaola

The Chair invited Provost Robert DiPaola to provide an update to SC members regarding dean searches.

The Provost explained the search processes for and provided updates about the searches for the following positions:

- The College of Nursing Dean
  - The Provost informed SC members that finalist candidates were preparing for second campus visits
- The Graduate School Dean
  - The Provost explained the posting for the Graduate School Dean was extended to September 15
- The Associate Vice President and Provost for Diverse Faculty Success
  - The Provost noted that he was working with Dr. Katrice Albert (vice president for institutional diversity) to ensure an adequate pool of qualified candidates
- The College of Medicine Dean
  - The Provost informed SC members that the College of Medicine Dean search was scheduled to launch in the fall, noting the reappointment to Dr. Chipper Griffith as Acting Dean of the College of Medicine

- The College of Public Health Dean
  - The Provost informed SC members that Dr. Heather Bush was appointed Acting Dean for the College of Public Health
- The College of Design Dean
  - The Provost explained that Dr. Ned Crankshaw was appointed Acting Dean for the College of Design
- The Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement
  - The Provost noted that Dr. Sue Nokes was appointed as Acting Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement

The Provost also reminded SC members that Dean Ana Franco-Watkins was the new dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. Trustee Hollie Swanson (ME) asked about the diversity of the applicant pool for the search positions that the Provost mentioned. The Provost noted that there had been fairly diverse groups of candidates although some searches were extended. The Provost informed SC members that he would look forward to SC's help throughout the year and to expect opportunities for SC as a whole to interact individually with search committee candidates.

#### 4. Ad Hoc Committee Charges

The Chair explained that the proposed ad hoc committees and their charges were directly related to SC's discussion at the SC retreat about Senate committee workload and the need to add committees that better address the scope of the Senate's current responsibilities. She noted that the desired outcome was for SC to come to a consensus on a proposed charge and composition for each of the three ad hoc committees described in the proposal. The Chair explained that the charges should be succinct but sufficiently broad to allow the committees some flexibility as they began their work.

##### a. Calendar Committee

The Chair explained the proposed calendar committee charge to SC members and requested feedback regarding the charge and composition. SC members discussed the following:

- The appropriateness of an ad hoc committee type as opposed to a standing advisory committee
- Charging the committee with all concerns related to University Academic Calendar, including changes, closures, academic holidays, waivers of the *Senate Rules* for academic holidays, and reviewing the Academic Calendar each year
- Composing the committee of faculty and representatives from the SGA, Provost's staff, Registrar's office, and, if the office desired, the President's office
- Whether staff should be included (the Chair clarified that the Academic Calendar would not impact staff, noting the difference between University holidays and academic holidays)

##### b. Nominating Committee

The Chair explained the proposed nominating committee charge to SC members and requested feedback regarding the charge and composition.

Former SC Chair and Faculty Trustee Aaron Cramer (EN) suggested that an SGA representation need not be included in this committee, noting that nominations were typically solicited from the SGA separately. SGA President Andrew Laws concurred with Cramer's suggestion.

##### c. Faculty Affairs Committee

The Chair explained the proposed faculty affairs committee charge to SC members and requested feedback regarding the charge and composition. SC members discussed the following:

- Topics that the committee could consider, such as teacher course evaluations, faculty culture, and broad issues
- Faculty vitality, institutional success, and ensuring the capacity for faculty to thrive

Bob Grossman (AS) noted that ad hoc committees dissolved once their charge was completed and suggested that the proposed ad hoc committees would be more suitably proposed as standing committees. Grossman **moved** to propose the committees as standing committees. Susan Cantrell (ED) **seconded**. There was no debate. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

## 5. Rule Waivers for Academic Holidays

In the interest of time, the Chair asked if there were any objections to consider agenda item 6, “University Senate Meetings” next. There were **no objections**.

## 6. University Senate Meetings

The Chair explained that agenda item 6 involved the modality of Senate meetings and reminded SC members that SC was largely responsible decisions about Senate meetings. The Chair noted that the modality of Senate meetings was within the SC’s purview to make decisions about. The Chair explained that the purpose of today’s discussion was to revisit the prior decision to hold Senate meetings via Zoom, as the President had recently expressed interest in the Senate meeting in person and offered assistance with location arrangements.

The Chair reviewed results of a survey distributed to Senate members in October 2021 to determine Senate meeting modality preferences outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. SC reviewed the results in November 2021 and agreed with little discussion to hold future Senate meetings via Zoom.

The Provost commented that the President was willing to host a reception following the September 12, 2022 Senate meeting if Senate met in person or in a hybrid format. Cantrell asked if the President provided a rationale for wanting the Senate to meet in person. The Chair explained that President wanted Senate to try meeting in a hybrid format like the Staff Senate and Board of Trustees did. SC members discussed the following:

- Increased effectiveness with only Zoom due to the large size of the Senate
- The challenges associated with managing a hybrid meeting and disruptions to Senate business that a hybrid meeting could cause
- Audio and visual issues associated with hybrid meetings
- Accessibility offered by Zoom
- Holding meetings via Zoom allowed the Senate to accommodate more faculty, including those located at remote campuses
- People may be resistant to attending such a large in person meeting
- Senators who have made plans based on prior announcements that the Senate meetings would be over Zoom
- The Senate already rendered a decision on what modality it preferred
- Offering a hybrid option but strongly encouraging in-person attendance
- Being more accessible to those who find it difficult to walk across campus
- Keeping Senate meetings on Zoom and asking Senate after the first meeting
- Being mindful of balance for colleges with multiple senators
- Requirements for open meetings laws

The Provost stated that his office would ensure that the technology is available for an in-person meeting. Cramer reminded SC members that the poll distributed to Senate members in October 2021 asked senators to consider their preference for modality if the pandemic was over and those results favored holding Senate

meetings via Zoom. Cramer noted that he hoped the President would hold ex-officio members of the Senate responsible for attending should the Senate meet in person. Vincent noted the importance of having a head count to ensure the best space was selected for a hybrid meeting. Cramer suggested considering the political cost to SC members from senators for changing the meeting modality, versus the expected improvement in the SC's relationship with the President if the meeting were moved to hybrid modality.

Cantrell **moved** that the Senate meet in hybrid format for the first Senate meeting on September 12. Cramer **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was any debate. Swanson commented that the hybrid meeting could be offered to senators as an "additional opportunity" since senators had already been told Senate meetings would be held via Zoom. Grossman suggested making masks available at the meeting. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with one opposed and one abstained.

The Chair noted that a survey would be distributed to senators after the September meeting to solicit feedback for modality preference going forward.

## 7. Naming of Second Reinstatement Committee

The Chair explained the need for SC to vote on the composition of the Second Reinstatement Committee (SRIC) for 2022-2023, noting the committee's composition from the *Senate Rules 1.4.2.9 ("Second Reinstatement Committee")*. The Chair informed SC members that a case was reviewed recently by the SC Chair, SC Vice Chair, and SGA President and explained that the committee's membership traditionally consisted of those three members. The Chair asked if there was a motion to accept the composition.

Swanson **moved** to accept the composition of the SRIC to contain the SC Chair, SC Vice Chair, and SGA President. Grossman **seconded**. Cramer commented on the possibility of an amendment to permanently appoint the composition of the SRIC rather than doing it yearly. The Chair asked if there was any further debate and there was none. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

## 8. Items from the Floor

The Chair asked if there were any items from the floor. Cramer **moved** to amend the *Senate Rules 1.4.2.9 ("Second Reinstatement Committee")* to formally describe the membership of the SRIC as the SC Chair, SC Vice Chair, and SGA President. Vincent **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was any debate and there was none. A **vote** was taken, and the motion **passed** with none opposed or abstained.

Vincent moved to adjourn the meeting and Grossman seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:01 PM with **no objections**.

Respectfully submitted by,  
DeShana Collett

Prepared by Katie Silver on Wednesday, August 24, 2022

SC Members Present: Cantrell, Collett, Charnigo, Cramer, Davis, Duncan, Grossman, Laws, Mee, Swanson, Takenaka, Vincent

Invited Guests Present: Sheila Brothers, Robert DiPaola