

**Academic Assembly**  
 May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
 2:05 – 3:35pm, Zoom Meeting

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Frank Shih, Nalini Iyer, Ted Fortier, Kirsten Thompson, Gregory Silverman, Marc Cohen, Shane Martin, Mark Taylor, Kate Koppelman, Terri Clark, Margit McGuire, Michelle Clements, Kathleen La Voy, Yancy Dominick, Joseph Langenhan, Sven Arvidson, Angie Jenkins, Peters La (?), Ben Howe, Bob Boehler, Roshanak Roshandel, Jeanette Rodriguez, Jen Marrone, Clara Cordova, Sarah Shultz, Patricia Buschel, Katie Oliveras, Russell Powell, Teodora Shuman, Marc McLeod, Felipe Anaya, Agnieszka Miguel, Nova Robinson, Sonia Barrios-Tinoco, Mimi Cheng, Dylan Medina, Sarah Bee, Allison Meyer, Erica Rauff, Mark Marsolek, Dylan Helliwell, Lindsay Whitlow, Patrick Murphy, Nicole Harrison, Russ Powell, Bob Dullea (AcA voting members underlined)

Minutes taken by Lindsey Nakatani

**I. Review 04-27-20 Minutes**

**2:05 – 2:07**

- a. AcA President shared recent statistics surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, displaying the plateauing of COVID-19 cases in Washington, Oregon, and California.
- b. **Motion:** AcA moves to approve the meeting minutes from 4/27/20. Seconded. **VOTE:** APPROVE: 12, ABSTENTIONS: 2, OPPOSED: 0.
  - i. **Motion is passed** – 4/27/20 Meeting Minutes Approved.

**II. Provost Update - Shane Martin & Bob Dullea**

**2:07 – 2:20**

- a. The Provost expresses his continued wishes for everyone's health and safety. The Provost also offers his deep appreciation and gratitude to the faculty for their continued hard work during these difficult times. The Provost is thankful for this meeting time and the space to discuss the important matters on today's agenda. The Board of Trustees (BOT) has concluded its most recent set of meetings, at which time a 4-month budget framework was approved. The BOT will be holding a special meeting in July 2020, to review enrollment numbers for Fall 2020 and to make further budget decisions. There are, presently, too many unknown factors to finalize next year's budget or to take any further measures without knowing additional enrollment details. Seattle University (SU), along with most universities in the U.S., has extended its enrollment deadline from May 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup>. As of Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, there were 550 students who had made their initial enrollment deposit, an additional 500 who have notified SU of their intent to make an enrollment deposit and a further 600 students who will be notifying SU of their enrollment decision by June 1st. SU is planning for some type of reopening the campus in the fall while strictly adhering to all public health guidelines.
- b. *What was the deposited student number last year?* This time last year, there were over 900 students who had made initial deposits.

**III. Motion on Student Survey**

**2:20 – 2:30**

- a. **Discussion/Comments:** The Provost has come to understand the deep and ranging concerns of the faculty regarding the recent survey. The Provost has made it a priority to be more involved in future survey processes. The Provost agrees with the Academic Assembly's (AcA) motion and supports the motion's main resolution that surveys and evaluations should only be circulated after consultation and involvement of the faculty through shared governance processes.
- b. **Student Survey Motion** – as originally drafted by the AcA membership.
  - i. Whereas, surveying student experience with online instruction is valuable in developing robust pedagogical approaches; whereas, faculty are the main points of contact for students in online learning environments; whereas, traditional student evaluation mechanisms are proven to be inherently biased instruments, in particular for women and faculty of color; whereas, our current teaching and learning environment requires extra care, thoughtfulness, and collaboration, therefore be it resolved that any

requests for feedback from students intended to be delivered through or in response to ongoing classes (including Evaluation Kit) be developed with faculty consultation (using available shared governance mechanisms); resolved that the content and process of any such surveys or evaluations be approved by AcA; resolved that faculty included in both surveys, evaluations, and consultation be made aware of how the gathered data will be used and who will have access to it.

- c. **Motion:** AcA moves to approve the above Student Survey motion. Seconded. **VOTE:** APPROVE: 14, ABSTENTIONS: 0, OPPOSED: 0.

i. **Motion is passed** – The AcA’s motion on Student Surveys is approved.

#### IV. Human Resources (HR) Update - Michelle Clements

2:30 – 2:45

- a. SU has furloughed 79 staff members as of Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. HR is currently asking key groups on campus to consider temporary salary reductions. Annual merit raises have been deferred and the university’s hiring freeze is continued until further notice. Furloughing factors included: (1) The effects of the campus closure and no students being on campus, (2) the pre-COVID financial concerns of the university, as well as new financial concerns caused by COVID-19 and (3) the inability of some staff to work from home.
- b. 75% of SU’s operating budget is pay-in benefits. SU initially carried temporary paid leave benefits for staff who were unable to work from home, for three months into the pandemic crisis. The normal furlough process is based upon a budget perspective, i.e. every college/division is given a budget target to meet in financial cut backs. In this situation, the furlough process was heavily based upon considering those staff who became “under employed” due to the current circumstances. Great care and concern were given to the impact upon the individuals furloughed. SU will be taking on 100% of furloughed staff’s medical premiums and they will be eligible for the enhanced unemployment benefits under the CARES Act. Furloughed staff have a return start date of August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. A myriad of inequities was discovered during the furlough research process. There are some staff who do not have ability or support to work from home, some staff who cannot work because they have lost their support systems for dependent care and some staff who fall into higher risk health categories.
- c. *Why weren’t staff representatives consulted before the furloughs? Were college/school leaders involved in the decision-making process?* Furloughs are a delicate and sensitive matter. They require a large amount of data gathering and review. HR began researching which staff members were applying for the most supplemental leave, which staff members’ workloads had been heavily affected by the campus closure, etc. HR does meet regularly with the University Legal Counsel and the counsel was informed of HR’s furlough research. Although, to maintain staff members’ confidentiality, no specific, individual information was provided. *There could have been more consultation on the markers and standards for determining who is under-employed.* Due to the extremely time-sensitive nature of this process, details could not be shared in a timely manner. During its research and determinations, HR put a heavy emphasis upon those employees who would benefit financially from receiving unemployment benefits from both WA state and the federal government. HR has since, been approached by a few employees requesting to be furloughed due to their workloads being significantly impacted by the current crisis.
- d. *Why were the Deans, but not the department chairs, consulted during this process?* In a few cases, the college/school leadership’s information or understanding of the necessity of certain employees’ roles was not fully informed. As a result, some furloughs were rescinded due to these oversights. Furloughs can be reversed or shortened depending upon changing needs and demands.
- e. *What does “under-employed” mean? How is this term qualified?* The metric “under-employed” is defined as an employee whose workload has fallen below half of the normal 37.5-hour work week.
- f. *Could HR provide more details on which employee categories have been most affected by the furloughs?* The largest impacts have been to facilities staff, recreation center staff, conference and event services, reprographics, some library staff, resident life staff and some administrative staff. HR worked closely with the leaders in these departments to determine where there had been a significant drop in demand.

- g. *The faculty Ombudsperson has been furloughed. Can the leadership explain a little more about how this decision was made?* The faculty Ombudsperson's role is vital to the university and this furlough in no way means that the position is being removed. The review of the office's operations, it was determined that the role usually only operates at full capacity during the AY when faculty are present on campus. There is not as much work for this position over the summer quarter since most faculty are not on campus. The position is employed part-time. The university has been planning on enhancing the role of the ombudsperson at SU. Leadership is working towards providing ombudsperson support for staff and moving towards having the ombudsperson report to the Vice President's Office. Dr. Natasha Martin (Chief Diversity Officer) has volunteered to serve as an interim ombudsperson during the furlough period. Dr. Lang (Faculty Ombudsperson) has been working with Dr. Natasha Martin help prepare her for her interim ombudsperson's service. Dr. Natasha Martin has extensive training in diversity and inclusion and has been a faculty member of the Law School for many years at SU. Her extensive training in confrontation de-escalation and conflict resolution makes her an excellent candidate to serve as interim ombudsperson.
- h. *Is there a more detailed timeline for considering further furloughs and what factors would bar an individual from returning to work?* HR has gathered the personal contact information of all furloughed staff, in case they are required to return to work sooner than the originally set return date of August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. With the COVID-19 pandemic remaining variable and unpredictable, further furloughs in the fall are a possibility but a specific timeline for decisions around furloughs has not been established.
- i. *Voluntary Salary Reduction:* Full-time faculty have routinely asked during similar times of need and uncertainty, what they can do to help the university. The salary reduction is completely voluntary and is an opportunity for the faculty to assist the university in its time of need. *Where would the money from these voluntary salary reductions go?* Funds from this action would be indexed against the \$7 Million gap left by the spring quarter.
- j. *There are such vast salary differences could salary reductions have been based upon a scaled relationship?* That model was considered at one time, but ultimately HR opted for a broader group for participation.
- k. *Is there a conflict of interest with Dr. Natasha Martin's appointment as interim ombudsperson and her being a member of the Cabinet? The ombudsperson's position is supposed to be a confidential and neutral resource for SU's faculty. The financial value of the ombudsperson's furlough seems relatively small compared to the symbolic role the ombudsperson plays at the university, especially during these times of uncertainty and anxiety. Ombudsperson is resource that the SU faculty heavily relies on.*
- l. **Faculty Ombudsperson Motion** – as originally drafted by the AcA membership.
  - i. Whereas: The Ombudsperson is a vital position created by Academic Assembly in 2013 to provide independent, confidential, impartial, and informal resources for all faculty members; whereas: The Ombudsperson has been a particular resource to faculty who have faced specific challenges, especially those impacting women and faculty of color; be it resolved: The Academic Assembly affirms that the Ombudsperson position is a vital faculty support system in a time of unprecedented crisis for the university community and for faculty and urges the Cabinet to reconsider the decision to furlough this position.
- m. **Motion:** AcA moves to approve the above Faculty Ombudsperson motion. Seconded. **VOTE:** APPROVE: 12, OPPOSED: 2, ABSTENTIONS: 1.
  - i. **Motion is passed** – The AcA's motion on the Faculty Ombudsperson is approved.

## V. Academic Continuity and Fall 2020 Plans - Shane Martin & Bob Dullea

2:45 – 3:14

- a. Fr. Sundborg's communication was sent out earlier this afternoon, communicating SU's intentions to plan for reopening campus in the Fall 2020. University leadership is discussing and planning for about 3-5 models for SU campus reopening in the fall. SU will be following all directives from local and state health officials and will be prioritizing the safety and well-being of its faculty, staff and students above all else.

- b. Any potential reopening models would include changes to normal campus life, including: a hybrid of in-person classes and a large range of virtual classes, restrictions on residence hall life, a pairing down of large class sizes, etc. Bob Dullea (Vice Provost) has been asked to create a task force to work on conceptualizing these different models. The Vice Provost is reaching out to individuals to help populate this task force. The task force will first identify a set of scenarios of possible public health policies and restrictions and will then map each scenario to a set of guiding principles to help drive decisions. These guiding principles will include:
- i. Prioritizing safety and health
  - ii. Exploring combinations of in-person and virtual education
  - iii. Developing recommendations in alignment with public policy, science and data
  - iv. Moving forward in a way that recognizes how individual responses will vary upon an individual's circumstances
  - v. Coordinating closely with other working groups and task forces
  - vi. Forward thinking to new and better ways of educating
  - vii. Learning lessons from the last few weeks
  - viii. Moving towards a new normal rather than returning to the old norm
- c. *Who has been asked to serve on this task force?* Jeff Philpott (Director, University Core Curriculum), Kim Thompson (Senior Director, Disability Services), David Powers (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences), Kirsten Thompson (Director, Film Studies), Ben Howe (Interim Director, Matteo Ricci Institute), Sarah Watstein (Dean, Lemieux Library), Bob Dullea (Vice Provost), Natasha Martin (Chief Diversity Officer). The task force is still looking for additional members from Science and Engineering, a member with expertise in online instruction and a representative from the registrar's office.
- d. *Faculty would ask that the university leadership please inform the faculty at-large about their work and the intent of this task force. Faculty, divisions, schools and colleges might have ideas, proposals or models for re-opening the campus.* The university leadership is very open to this idea and would encourage crowd-sourcing creative thinking for potential strategies. Greater community involvement mechanism suggestions: open forums, a task force e-mail, create/draft a survey? Colleges could be asked specifically to propose ideas. For example, Science and Engineering has been brainstorming ways to continue laboratory instruction either virtually or under social distancing directives.
- e. *Process seems very "top-down". Why weren't the faculty at large, or the AcA, asked to nominate candidates for this task force? Were these members hand-picked? And if so, why?* The leadership was given a very constrictive timeline in which to form a group and start work on this initiative. Leadership is balancing respecting the current circumstances while also considering the need to discuss potentially devising options before the June 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment deadline. Frank Shih (AcA President) has been added to the task force.
- f. *Beyond the single nursing faculty member, why are there no other public health experts on this task force?* Dr. Tara Hicks (Director, Student Health Center) has been appointed to the President's planning committee. Her expertise and the expertise of her network is informing this process.
- g. The task force's charge is to help to develop and find initial infrastructure options. Specific divisions and programs will have to be consulted to formulate plans based upon individual needs. Faculty are concerned that they will be made to come back and teach before they are ready. This is not the intent for SU faculty. Instructional flexibility will be maintained for faculty who are more comfortable teaching in a virtual or hybrid environment. SU will have to weigh the wants and needs of students and faculty against the social distancing restrictions on facilities, etc.
- h. It is important to keep in mind that the principle of "academic freedom" means something very different for part-time/NTT faculty. It is vital that NTT/part-time faculty are as protected as the TT faculty.
- i. Support should also be extended to students who wish to voice concerns. If faculty choose to teach online in the fall, the messaging from MarCom and Student Development needs to be supportive of those decisions. Faculty who choose not to teach face to face cannot be seen as outliers.

**VI. AAORP & PRC - Terri Clark & Bob Dullea****3:14 – 3:30**

- a. The Academic Affairs Operations and Portfolio Review (AAORP) was a previously launched initiative, put on hold in the interim years between the service of Provost Crawford and Provost Martin. The need for this review was also prioritized in the Strategic Directions. This review is a key function of the Strategic Planning Council's continued work and a priority item for the BOT. The aim of the discussion today is to establish a shared understanding of the scope of the work, given that the process has not been designed yet, and to establish the role of faculty leadership in this process.
- b. The AAORP initiative has melded with the current Academic Program Portfolio Review (APPR). The AcA has been provided a summary of the conversations between the Program Review Committee (PRC), Kathleen La Voy (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs) and the Vice Provost regarding the APPR process. The PRC is dedicated to being fully transparent with the faculty about the APPR process. The PRC would appreciate the AcA's input into this process. The PRC currently has 9 members. Every year, 3 members rotate at the end of their 3-year terms. The work of the AAORP is much more comprehensive than the normal work of the PRC. The PRC would appreciate the service of additional faculty members with expertise in program review to assist with this incredibly important and vital university initiative. Faculty are encouraged to give feedback to the PRC and to volunteer for the AAORP task force.
- c. *There is some confusion regarding the two committees being discussed. Are there two committee names for the same committee?* Yes, there is a historical committee name and a current committee name. The first phase of the APPR work would be to complete background work, fact-checking, and basic recommendations by SQ 2020. The first tranche of work would begin right away and culminate next February in time for the BOT meeting in February 2020. This work will require faculty to work over the summer, and into next fall. The university will do all that it can to compensate this work and support faculty who would like to participate.
- d. *There is confusion about the relationship between the APPR and the AAORP?* The APPR is specifically curriculum based and does not include discussion of larger operational issues.
- e. *Would under-performing programs be reviewed first and then be moved to a higher-level of governance for the operational consideration portion?* Initial determinations would be targeted at programs that are under-enrolled, unsustainable or financially inviable. During the APPR process, programs will be examined through the lens of multiple factors, including enrollment and financial factors. *Where will financial data come from?* Data will be gathered primarily from Colleague.
- f. *What do operational considerations entail?* Operations include addressing academic outcomes, considering where the university's money is achieving the maximum impact, how resources are allocated, where resources are most effective, etc. If both the APPR and the AAORP work descriptions include financial considerations, then the two processes are not different. This brings up the question of the PRC's role in financial deliberations surrounding program viability, a question that has been asked by the AcA before. The AcA membership agrees that the current work of the APPR aligns with the previously paused work of the AAORP. This is not a regular program review, this is a comprehensive, university-wide, programmatic review.
- g. *Will the APPR address inefficiencies across the university? And will the APPR, given the current financial circumstances, examine duplications and initiate a re-set of what programs are offered at the university?* Yes, the work of the committee will include all these aspects. This work has been identified as critical work in the strategic planning of the university. According to manual calculations from last year; in the previous 10 years, SU approved the creation of 64 new programs and only suspended 20 programs. So, the questions must be asked: Does SU provide the right array of programs? Do SU programs speak to the contemporary, societal needs of students? Is SU properly preparing its students for contemporary society? It is vital that this issue be examined intentionally and that this critical work be completed, especially under the current circumstances and uncertainties.

**VII. Open Discussion****3:30 – 3:35**

- a. The Chair of the BOT has contacted the AcA president to express the BOT's gratitude to the faculty. A general letter of thanks from the BOT will be distributed by the AcA, to the faculty. The AcA president will ask that BOT

members wishing to thank specific faculty, reach out to the individual schools and colleges for contact information.

- b. The AcA currently has time schedule for Monday May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, with SU CFO, Wilson Garone. Does the AcA membership feel that this meeting is necessary? Majority feels additional meeting is not necessary. The May 11<sup>th</sup>, meeting is canceled. The AcA will meet again on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.