

**Ohio University Faculty Senate**  
**Meeting Notes for Monday, July 6, 2020**  
**Via Teams for Senators and**  
**Livestream for General Access, 7:00-9:00pm**

**I. Executive Vice-President & Provost Elizabeth Sayrs (tentative due to possible bandwidth issues)**

**II. Executive Committee - Robin Muhammad**

- Deans Evaluation Coordinating Committee (Ad Hoc): Membership & Charge
- **Sense of the Senate Resolution** Demanding the Reinstatement of All Instructional Faculty, Administrative Employees, and Classified Employees Whose Employment Was Terminated in AY 2019-2020 – First Reading
- **Resolution** Amending the Faculty Handbook on Student Dress and Appearance Requirements vis-à-vis Mask-Wearing – First Reading
- **Resolution** Recommending Health and Safety Practices for Fall 2020 – First Reading
- **Resolution** to Allow Affected Faculty to Choose from the Four Retirement Plans or Remain with their Current Provider

**III. New Business**

**IV. Adjournment**

Meeting called to order on Teams at 7:05

Senators in attendance: Bates, Blau, Brown, Casebolt, Chen, Cirolì, Cluse-Tolar, Cronin, Doty, Duvert, Dyer, Franz, Gurien, Haile, Healy, Helfrich, Hendrickson, Hess, Hibbitt, Hiler, House, Hurley, Ingram, Karney, Klein, Koestler, Kuruppalli, Lowery, Marchenkov, Matlack, McKean, McMills, McMurray-Schwartz, Miller, Muhammad, Owens, Palmer, Pritchard, Pueschel, Reader, Ridpath, Riefler, Rosado Feger, Sandal, Sarver, Shaw, Sindelar, Welsler, White, Williams K., Williams S., Wolf, Wyatt, You, Young

Welcome from Chair Muhammad

### **Report by Provost Sayers:**

#### **Topic 1, Budget Study Group status update**

- 110 self-nominations were submitted and are under evaluation. Those not selected will be kept on a wait list for future opportunities.
- Selected individuals represent all colleges and all campus senates
- Meetings expected to begin next week.
- Goals are to increase transparency, provide insight into budget processes, and improve communication about budget matters.
- Provost thanks all who submitted a nomination.

#### **Topic 2: Fall Planning**

- All events on campus are cancelled until August 1
- Travel restrictions continue
- The Provost's office has received approximately 500 requests for teaching modality accommodations due to COVID-19 concerns.
- Requests are being reviewed, with faculty members contacted if any further information is needed.
- Timeline:
  - Review submitted requests by Jul 10
  - Update courses/teaching assignments/schedule by July 15
  - Provide new schedule to colleges by July 27
  - Communicate new schedules to students by Aug 3
- Fall Plan Implementation Updates
  - We are identifying gaps as recommendations from various work groups come together and interact.
    - Example: combining the work of Academic Scenario Planning, Classroom Space/Facilities, Public Health, and Student Life has highlighted that previous estimates of effective classroom capacity are higher than is actually possible, and some rooms may be as low as 15-20% of standard capacity. This has an implication for room utilizations, classroom scheduling, and class sizes. Previous guidance recommendation that classes of 70+ students transition to fully online may be revised down to 30+.
  - Currently reviewing priorities for events and campus spaces.
  - The lab-intensive curriculum group is looking at options for laboratory spaces and sharing learning/best practices between faculty.
  - Other task force recommendations are being routed through the university's processes for adjusting policy, for example: masks/facial coverings, social compact, and class attendance policies.

- The available information right now is very fluid, so the implementation plan must remain flexible.
- The state of Ohio recently issued county-by-county ratings based on case counts and case spikes. These ratings range from 1 to 4 with 1 being the least affected and Level 4 resulting in a “Stay at Home” situation.
- On June 30 the CDC released interim guidance against “entry testing” (ie— testing all students upon arrival).

### **Topic 3: Anti-racism on campus**

- Silence in the face on injustice is unacceptable, we must speak out.
- Speech is not enough, we need actions and accountability.
- Units across campus are organizing events for the university community (example: Lunch & Learn series hosted by the Patton College).
- Student success goals are to narrow the gaps in retention for Pell-eligible and minority students.
- OU has identified 4 areas for action:
  - Recruitment/Retention of Students, including expanding training for admissions personnel and faculty.
  - Recruitment/Retention of Faculty, including addressing such issues as bias in teaching evaluations.
  - Developing curriculum
  - Supporting research and intellectual contributions, including research on diverse subjects and the evaluation of research journal impact.
- Faculty are an integral element of these action areas and the Provost’s office wants to work with faculty members to co-create goals in these areas. All are invited to participate in his conversation.

### **Q&A**

- Q1: What are the plans for cleaning/sanitizing classroom spaces?
  - Ans: With the caveat that this is not her area of expertise, the Provost described that CDC guidelines would be followed: classrooms cleaned daily, with supplies in each room for students and faculty to clean their individual work spaces if they wish.
- Q2: Regarding anti-racism, can we fully fund the Opportunity Hire Program?
  - The University is looking at a variety of initiatives for recruiting diverse faculty, including this program, also cluster hires, and “4<sup>th</sup> candidate” strategy.
  - Currently the university is tied with Ohio State in the USC Race/Equity score, but that is only because our numbers are so low...just over 5% of students and just under 5% of faculty self-identify as a person of color.
- Q3: What is the plan and procedures for an individual on campus who gets sick?
  - For students in dorms, there will be 300 quarantine beds.

- All members of the OU community will self-monitor for symptoms. A person who does not feel well should contact a medical professional to determine whether they need to be tested, if so they will be referred for testing, and they will isolate until they know results, if positive the information will be referred to the public health department for contact tracing.
- Q4: What considerations have been made for building ventilation systems, in light of the possibility that there may be airborne transmission?
  - Provost defers to Facilities Management who have the expertise. Current known approaches: open systems to intake air from outside vs recirculation, improved air filters.

The Provost welcomes continued engagement and involvement of all university faculty. The situation is fluid and we continue to work with the information as it arises.

#### **Upcoming Changes to BlackBoard—Chris Ament, Eszti Major-Rohrer**

- Changes are minor, but they will be visible, so faculty should be aware.
- The changes address navigation within BlackBoard and the look/feel of the user interface.
- Changes are being implemented to address known issues raised when interviewing users. These changes are implemented by BlackBoard.
- Course setup from the faculty end has not changed, including course organization, tools, gradebook.
- Third party integration from McGrawHill and Pearson are active. Others are being worked on.
- Changes:
  - Course links will be displayed grouped by term.
  - The interface has a cleaner, less-cluttered look.
  - A Profile page has been added that allows the user to select language, etc
  - An Activity Stream is implemented that has links for assessments, graded items, announcements, etc
- The Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee will be getting a preview of changes to provide feedback to OIT. If you would like to join this group, email [emrohrer@ohio.edu](mailto:emrohrer@ohio.edu).

#### **Executive Committee - Robin Muhammad**

- The Deans Evaluation Committee has been formed and needs members, please contact Chair Muhammad if you are interested.

#### **Sense of the Senate Resolution Demanding the Reinstatement of All Instructional Faculty, Administrative Employees, and Classified Employees Whose Employment Was Terminated in AY 2019-2020 – First Reading**

- Senator asked whether this is a symbolic gesture.

- Ans: work group recommendations assumed flat staffing, not reductions.  
Implementation of the plan hinges on having the people to do it.
- Senator commented that many department employees have been eliminated, and right now there have been no class assignments for faculty. At this rate, faculty will have 3 weeks to prepare courses that they might not have taught before. How can we provide all the courses without personnel?
- Senator commented that in addition to courses, faculty are asked to implement the new General Education program. Fewer employees means more work for those who remain. We have already had the abrupt transition to online teaching in spring. We are looking at new modalities for Fall. Can we do all that we need to do, and more importantly, can we maintain the quality of our courses? Administration should consider deferring the budget cut until after the pandemic.
- Resolution will be reviewed and comments incorporated for presenting at the next meeting.

### **Resolution Amending the Faculty Handbook on Student Dress and Appearance Requirements vis-à-vis Mask-Wearing – First Reading**

- The handbook language is revised to include the ability to require masks/facial coverings. (Friendly amendments offered to revise “masks” and to wear the covering properly, over nose and mouth.)
- Questions presented about enforcement. Would it be up to faculty? Staff? OUPD?
  - Concerns raised about selective enforcement (some areas less strict than others) and biased enforcement (some students more targeted than others).
  - Senator noted that OUPD has 19 officers and this would not be an appropriate task for the department.
  - Senator commented that this needs to be a campus wide initiative with uniform and consistent enforcement across all levels.
  - Enforcement needs to also focus on proper wearing, including covering nose and mouth.
- Senator raised the point that this policy needs to apply across all campuses.
- In Athens, implementation and enforcement might be enhanced by coordinating with the City of Athens and City Council, which is said to be considering an ordinance requiring masks/face coverings.
- Some students may have medical exemptions, how do we handle those?
  - Faceshields might be a workaround for those who can't wear the mask.
- Senator asked if students would be expected to supply their own masks, if so, they should get notice soon so they can be procured prior to arrival. Else, local suppliers will be sold out.
  - The PPE work group is looking at supplies but it will eventually be the responsibility of individuals.

- Senator commented that a number of students will be arriving from areas that already have mask ordinances (a growing number of jurisdictions) and would already have a supply.
- Motion made to suspend the rules and move to 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Vote: Doty/Sandal
  - Opposed: 2, Abstain: 0 MOTION PASSES
- Vote on resolution:
  - Opposed: 2 Abstain: 2 RESOLUTION PASSES

### **Resolution Recommending Health and Safety Practices for Fall 2020 – First Reading**

- Resolution proposes that the return to campus in the Fall 2020 continue the online framework for teaching, learning, and research that proved successful in the Spring 2020.
- Senator asked if this resolution is necessary, given that the Provost has provided a mechanism for faculty to request online teaching or other accommodations.
  - Senator replied a request is not a permission, it is not a guarantee that it will be approved.
  - Some courses have been requested to be Face-to-face.
  - Senator commented that although they are normally on the side of individualism, this is a public health emergency and we are not seeing the public taking this situation seriously, which creates the danger of increased public spread.
  - Senator commented, is the Provost guidance enough?
- Resolution will be presented for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

### **Resolution to Allow Affected Faculty to Choose from the Four Retirement Plans or Remain with their Current Provider**

- Resolution concerns the upcoming change to ARP providers, eliminating some options and leaving four approved providers: TIAA, Voya, AIG and AXA. This change will be effective on Nov 1. Accounts currently in other providers can be retained, but any new contributions must be directed to one of the four approved suppliers.
- Senator commented there is a true concern that there has been no communication to faculty about this change. Faculty members have established relationships with their financial advisors and crafted investment strategies around their personal needs. These plans would be disrupted by this change.
- Resolution requests a sunset provision, however, University officials have already denied that request.
- These changes were made to comply with regulations.
- Andy Fodor, a faculty member who was on the committee requested the chance to speak. He explained that the committee was charged with finding the best solution within the constraints given. Some providers did not submit a proposal, and were therefore automatically disqualified. The four providers selected should result in lower fees, more investment choices, and the ability to continue to use local financial advisors.

- Senator clarified to Dr. Fodor that the concern is not a referendum on the outcome, but on the decision process, which left employees in the dark with little notice to prepare. Existing mechanisms of faculty representation were completely bypassed.
- Motion to suspend the rules and move to second reading and vote: Sandal/Ridpath
  - Abstain 4
  - Opposed 1
  - Motion passes
- Motion to vote: Ridpath/Bates
  - Abstain 3
  - Oppose 1
  - RESOLUTION PASSES

#### Closing

Chair Muhammad notified senators that there will likely be another special meeting in August. Faculty members who have any questions about Fall Planning or any other issues should contact their senators.

Mote to Adjourn: Rosado Feger/Doty

Meeting Adjourned 9:16