Faculty Senate Meeting

APPROVED

Monday, April 6th, 2020
Microsoft Teams
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to order

II. Approval of Minutes – Nicholas McMillan
   A. Minutes were approved by email.
   B. Yes- 24
   C. No- 0
   D. Abstention- 1

III. President’s comments and announcements - Chris Markwood
   A. It has been quite the month since our last update. I don’t know where to begin. I’ll try to walk through some of where we are and where we’re headed.
   B. Shelter in Place Order
      1. We have complied with that and in addition, the system has made the decision that all institutions will be online for the summer as well as for the rest of the semester and May. As a result of that we have issued refunds to the tune of about 3.5 million dollars to students. We have organized and executed a move out from the residence halls. There are about 80 students left. We have had a request from USG Emergency Management to house a student from another institution and we have done so. We have identified essential employees. If a member needs to come into the office to grab something you can do so by all means, just let the police know. Shuttle service has become on demand for the few students we have in the residence halls. Library is all online. The health center remains open as does counseling services. We are planning to announce commencement plans this week. We have sought feedback from students after we announced that we wouldn’t be able to do a traditional May ceremony. We are going to roll out plans to confirm those degrees at the regular time in May but also a time for them to come back together and have that celebration. Hopefully in the beginning of next academic year or in August but we are monitoring. We are sometimes unappreciative of the USG because of the rules being handed to us but this experience and having a strong university system and 26 institutions having the same decisions and executing them at the same time has made this situation much better. I think we are fortunate to be in a strong system that we are in right now. At least once a week we have a conference with the Chancellor. I just want everyone to know that we are making these decisions in concert with the system. We are working as well with our foundation properties. Entities such as Your Pie and Fountain City are
renters of those properties. We are working on policies to really help those organizations during these times.

C. Chip- When you say incident commander if you think about the idea of emergency response, this title is something I picked up a month or two ago. We have been meeting every morning; the incident command team. We work off of NIMS (National Incident Management System) Helps with any type of disaster, which helps us work with local, state, and national officials to speak the same language and share resources. We have Chief Lott, safety officer. Greg Hudgison, Public Information Officer. We have two administrative officials, one who has been working with the USG and another who has been working with the Georgia Department of Health and CDC. There are several assistant commanders. The biggest responsibility is that we’re cataloging all the associated costs with what we’re going through. You may see us asking you to track any costs that can be traced back to the corona virus whether that’s you had to buy a white board to conduct class at home, etc. Steve Morris is cataloging everything we see. Our attorney on campus is in charge of the planning section making sure that we’re staying within USG policies. There’s been a lot of directives coming from the federal government and his job is to tap the breaks every now and then to make sure that we are following policy guidelines at the institution level. Kelly Wilson is in charge of Operations. Our team has been meeting since around March 15 on a daily basis and having a regular call in. We’ve been taking the weekend off as far as the daily call but we’ve been working diligently all weekend long. We’re going into the current normal. From the standpoint of emergency management we are easing out a little big but we are following orders from the governor.

Dr. Markwood- Thank you to the faculty, staff, and students who have by and large handled this the absolute best that they could. The positive attitudes, for many of you this was a very heavy lift. Your disciplines don’t align as easily with online learning as some others do. I know it has not been easy so I just want to tell you I appreciate you and how much I am thankful for you.

IV. Provost’s comments and announcements – Deborah Bordelon
   A. I also want to start off by saying thank you for the effort that it has taken to get everything going. We have a lot of positive responses. When there were things that we wanted to address everyone was eager to jump in. I want to give a special thank you to COOL. Thank you all very much for all you are doing. It is greatly appreciated and I know that the students really appreciate it.
   B. I sent out the FAQ and they are now posted on the corona virus website. Real quickly some of them are
      1. Guidelines for final exams- we talk about the week that we adjusted from May 11 to the 14 and the request to make those exams asynchronous. The reason for that is because for many of you and many of our students
they are in households where it may be difficult to find time to meet synchronously due to the needs of others within the household. Asynchronous would allow students to complete those exams in the time period without changing the time that they are usually on the computer. It relieves stress and pressure from whether or not they would be allowed to get on. WE are asking that the exams not last any longer than 1 hour and 50 minutes. Also if you have students who need accommodations for their test please reach out to COOL.

2. Final grades- exam week is May 11- 14th. Originally we had May 16th for the final exams. If at all possible you can get those grades in that would be great. If you need additional time we can extend it to 12pm on May 18.

3. Pass/ Fail grades- The System has been adamant on this. We are awarding letter grades and not moving to a pass/ fail system.

4. Course evaluations- I met with Megan and she had gotten feedback from the committee. At first we thought we may be able to redesign the course evaluation tool but because of the short time period it is not possible to redesign it. We know this is an extraordinary situation and moving everything to an online format, we know that we want instruction to continue but we want to make sure we recognize the difficulty in doing so. These evaluations will not count in the tenure promotion or annual evaluation process. I want to make sure that that is clear.

5. Tenure and promotion- can you pause the tenure and promotion clock. We cannot have a blanket pausing the clock. However, we know that research has been disruptive as well as other things. If you need to pause the clock you can work with your chairs and deans on the timeline. WE will work with those on a case by case basis. We would like you to submit a request which is explained in the FAQ. It needs to go through the process so please make sure to submit it to your chair.

C. I do want to emphasize that if there are other questions that come up, I would be more than happy to answer those. Please don’t hesitate to send those questions to me and we can keep adding to those FAQ’s on the corona virus website. We are preparing for Maymester and summer being online. The registrar had to take the summer registration offline for a couple of days to update. We should shave everything in place to move forward for Maymester and Summer. We may need to add some additional courses for summer courses. I’ve asked everyone to reach out to me before removing courses because of the nature of the courses. Don’t hesitate to make proposals to your chair or dean.

D. Questions:

1. Brandt Smith- I’ve been online and phone all day trying to figure out what’s happening with the VA as far as paying for courses and how this is going to work. This influences a fairly large portion of our student body. Does anybody have any information as to whether the VA will continue to pay for courses?
a) Deborah Bordelon- What we can do is figure out some information. I do believe that they are still paying for courses. If you’re getting mixed messages that is something that we definitely need to get information out to students.

2. Nicholas McMillan- Is the delay voluntary for the tenure process?
   a) Deborah Bordelon- yes it is. If you would like a pause submit the form and if not then just carry on.

3. Ryan Lynch- I think it’s worth noting that Stephanie Spear just sent an email to everyone saying that summer registration is open again.

4. Ryan Lynch- I wondered if right now while we still have Megan with us if we could ask her to expand a bit on what she thinks will happen with student evaluations.
   a) Megan- Basically we got some emails inquiring whether or not we could adjust the current evaluation. Given the short amount of time it appeared that that probably wasn’t feasible. There is an option for a not-applicable option for students to use. So if they feel like they can’t answer the question adequately then they will have that choice. We looked at the option to be able to customize questions. Some faculty have expressed concerns about this. Sometimes labs aren’t set up for an online environment. Having said that, the way to offset some negative feedback is to customize some questions. We will be emailing out a word document that gives you some guidelines as well as a video to walk you through the process. That way you can customize questions specific to your discipline. The committee did generate two questions that we will offer to faculty if they decided they want to use them. One is “changes to a remote learning environment have been very challenging to me as a student.” This would help faculty correlate some negative feedback. The second question is “despite the unprecedented circumstances the course instructor provided the support and accommodations to the best of his or her abilities to make the transition to remote learning as easy as possible for students.” I think this gets to the heart of what we’re asking. We have a meeting tomorrow to hash out the next steps and what needs to occur.

5. Clint- If anything this experience has taught me that I never want to teach online again unless there’s an epidemic which I hope to avoid. But I am interested to see what my students have to say about it. I will open it back up to further questions.

6. Rosa Williams- A couple of faculty have asked whether having this evaluation is an undue burden on the faculty given the current situation. And a concern is that despite assurances that someone somewhere will use these evaluations to evaluate faculty in an unnecessary manner.
a) Megan- We did kick around not even disseminating the evaluation. But like I said it has already been out for those who have shorter terms. To change this at this point would be challenging because it wouldn’t be uniform. We came up with the opportunity for the faculty members to decide whether or not to use those for promotion and tenure. If there is 30% or less of your class then you do not have to include that. IN addition if you have a course with 5 or less students then you do not have to either. It is up to the faculty if they want to include those or not.

b) Dr. Markwood- We want to make sure that faculty are not jeopardized because of something that is out of their control. So you have my assurance that these will not be used for tenure promotion or for annual review. Student evaluations should never be the sole source of evaluation of faculty members effectiveness. I think a lot of the data out there states that it’s closely correlated to the grade that a student receives in the class.

c) Deboarah Bordelon- To the point that there is something in writing, on my website we can put up some memo or letter stating that events that occurred in spring of 2020 would not be considered in the process. That memo would be there and you could download and put in the file. But you have our assurances. We need to make sure that faculty are not penalized due to things that are happening. To Clint’s point, it might be useful to get information that might be informative.

d) Ryan Lynch- some concern is I think the instrument is completely useless, the data it’s going to collect is useless. We’re not going to have our teaching fairly evaluated. I think it would be unfair to treat this semester as some sort of referendum on whether online learning is better or face to face learning is better. There was an article in the Chronicle that stated that this is the perfect opportunity to gather data which I think is an awful take. I think that this would be an opportunity for students to vent or take out their own frustration. I think four or five years down the road, I only see how something like this could be used against us rather than provide any benefit to our instruction going forward. And my fear is that 4-5 years from now, what does this look like for us to have these evaluations?

e) Brandt Smith- I would like to add my voice to this. These are unprecedented in our time. I think the information would be very valuable to the individual instructors especially to those who have not taught online before. We know that there is no replacement for the direct interaction between faculty and students. There is no online school that can ever do what we do. Ever. Period. I’ve been
talking to my students and they do not like the online method. However, they have been very appreciative of what we’ve been doing as instructors and a university. I have faith in this. I have faith in our colleagues. I will endorse everything that Ryan just said. But I think that we should hear what they have to say. This should be an informative thing for us.

f) Clint Barineau- one of the concerns seems to be over that somewhere down the road that this conversation may be lost. Can there be a note that course evaluations from SP2020 will not be used for T&P?

g) Deboarh Bordelon- I see no problem with that

h) Ryan Lynch- No I don’t think it will. What it really comes down to for me is how can either me or my colleagues be fairly assessed given 8 days to prepare to teach online compared to colleagues who teach online regularly.

i) Markus Weidler- I agree with Brandt. I am not a pessimist by nature but there is no reason to believe that we couldn’t have anything like this again. I think that this may not be unique in the long run. I’m not sure whether this is the right moment to have a fundamental conversation online versus face to face. As long as there is an assurance that this does not have to be included by faculty and will not be a part of their T&P I take comfort in that. I think if we can learn something from this I think something positive will come of this.

j) Nicholas McMillan- I think there’s a lot of conversation of what if these reviews are negative, but what if they are positive? If we do get really good feedback are we able to include those in our binder when others are choosing not to.

k) Megan- It’s the option. It’s up to you as the faculty member and they are really good and you want to include them. To Ryan’s point not to be penalized by them. I think we heard from Dr. Markwood and Dr. Bordelon that they are both behind that. And I can also put out a couple of the key components for everyone to review. The faculty handbook gives some good examples of other ways to showcase your teaching. It’s not an extensive list but may give some good brainstorming ideas.

l) Florence Wakoko- I like the conversation about evaluations. I support the idea of not using these evaluations. But I would like to share this and get some thoughts. We have in the past provided financial support grants for faculty to build courses for online instructions. At the same time faculty have built courses without getting these grants. The faculty have also created and taught online classes without grant and without getting any consideration/
accommodations like we are trying to agree on here. So how would this affect those faculty? It’s very difficult that faculty must adhere or be held accountable for the rubrick because of these disruptions. But what about these faculty who have not received training or grants out of necessity?

m) Clint Barineau- Could you clarify the question?

   (1) Florence- Do you think there is a problem or not that we give accommodations to these faculty this time due to extenuating circumstances that we are not giving accommodations to faculty you have been teaching online without the proper training whose evaluations have not been good?

   (2) Chris Markwood- I guess I would be concerned that we have faculty who are teaching online without receiving training. I think that’s something we need to look into.

   (3) Florence- My point is that they may have had training from QM but what I’m talking about is because of the demand that students pose for a course to be created and offered. That course has been offered under the same circumstances. If they get bad evaluations do they also get accommodations for that as we are doing for the Covid?

   (4) Deborah Bordelon- Let’s talk offline and get some more clarifications on that. It’s not just the student evaluations, it’s how you reflect on those evaluations. Let’s chat after and I can get some more information to better address your concerns.

n) Randy Garver- In response to the survey, we do have classes online for this semester. For faculty who are doing this for the first time they may not ever teach online again, but they may have a class online this summer term now. It is for them to look at it and see what went well or they could approve for classes this semester.

o) Megan- If you do have concerns if you could please send them to your representative on the student evaluation committee that would be very helpful.

p) Chris Markwood- if you have a question after this feel free to email or text me. I’ll do my best to get some answers to you. We’re trying very hard to get the communications aspect of this correct. Virtually everything we send out to campus has to be approved by system. Please assess what you are hearing and reading and want things in a different way or different format let us know so we can get the right information to you presented the right way.

V. Executive Officer’s comments and announcements – Clint Barineau
VI. Old Business
   A. Cougarview Course Materials Policy - Tim Howard
      1. Back in December I was with the senate to have a first discussion with the
         senate for a proposal that would require certain documents required to be
         put in cougarview. Check audio 1:29:00. The policy was sent on to the
         TaLE committee. I’ve heard a lot of very thoughtful conversations and I
         appreciate everyone’s engagement in it. What I have is a revised
         proposal. I’d like to run through the concerns I’ve heard.

            a) Course Schedule- people were concerned and said that they don’t
               plan courses on a day to day basis and this would be an added
               burden. They don’t want to be penalized if they have to adjust their
               schedule. I hear you. It was never meant to be prescriptive. I’ve
               made changes.

            b) Assignments- Some people were saying they do a lot of daily work
               and don’t plan that ahead of time. It was never the intention to be
               so rigid that faculty couldn’t respond to the needs of their classes.
               The intent was that if there were major assignments such as a
               term paper that there was a written guidance for it available. I
               don’t think anybody intended that every single thing every single
               day has to be scripted out.

            c) Gradebook- This is probably the area where there is the most
               room for discussion and training. I can tell you that COOL is very
               willing to provide training and have stepped up in the last few
               weeks in a number of ways. They’ve done heroic work and will be
               more than happy to work with people. Gradebook training is
               something they are putting in the crosshairs right now for the
               training that they are providing.

            d) Support- Concerns regarding getting support and making it easier
               for faculty to do these things and simplifying the process. One
               thing COOL is doing is building an accessible syllabus template.
               We can look at administrative support to help build the template.

      2. Some things I’ve heard didn’t seem to be directly policy related but
         definitely things that we can pay attention to.

            a) The first change you’ll see is the inclusion of a definition of a
               Learning Management System. A couple years from now we might
               not be using Cougarview. Whatever the adapted platform is the
               one we will want to be using.

            b) The official statement should be the one that is approved and the
               title 9 statement is worked out very carefully.

            c) Course schedule emphasizes that it is tentative and doesn’t have
               to be class meeting by class meeting. In the committee we talked
               about those teaching online might go more by modules and that
               would fit as well.
d) We changed assignments to major assignments. I don’t know anybody who is interested in policing this at the section level.

3. Let me emphasize that there is this exception paragraph that there is going to be cases where this form is not conducive to what the course is designed for and how the course is delivered. If the faculty member feels that they have a case for that then they will communicate that to their chair.

4. Questions:
   a) Brandt Smith- Thank you for all the time on this. Going forward since there are so many faculty that are going to be teaching online, are they still going to need to go through the off-site training to teach online?
      (1) Tim- that’s a good question. Frankly we haven’t been talking about that lately. I’d like to take that comment back and give it some more discussion for the longer term. But it is a good framework to work from when we have the time to plan which most people did not have this semester when they found themselves going online. We may have to make exceptions for the summer. I can’t speak to the policy on that. We need people teaching online and I don’t know that there is the opportunity to complete that training right now. WE have a number of excelling faculty in the distance learning committee and a great team at the COOL office ready to help out.
      (2) Brandt Smith- COOL has been helpful where they could. This is a shakeup to our systema and I really appreciate everything that you’re doing and what everybody else is doing.
      (3) Tim Howard - Thanks. I appreciate your work. And I appreciate the COOL and TaLE committee and everyone who gave feedback regarding this.
   b) Mark McCarthy- I recall receiving a signed version of this not too long ago. Was there a version of this that was sent out?
      (1) Deborah Bordelon- That was an interim policy based on the feedback that you’re seeing right now. Given the situation we needed to move forward with the interim policy. We needed to act quickly to get everyone on board and provide some guidance. System also was looking into D2L and CougarVIEW and by having the interim policy we were able to move forward while understanding that we would be able to use the feedback.
(2) Alicia Bryan- Thank you for that. Realistically, what is the time frame that we have for the revision of this interim policy before it gets sent out for review.

(3) Clint- I think the interim does give us some more time. I guess my question for the group is that we feel like we’re at a point where we feel like we can take a formal vote on it? Or do we want to take some more time and look at it a little more. Are there other points of discussion that we need to bring up here?

(4) Alicia Bryan- So the vote would be to accept the interim policy to become a permanent policy correct?

(5) Clint- Correct. If we feel like it needs to face revisions I’m sure that we could go back and try to have those discussions as needed. My first question is do we want to have a motion to move forward or chew on it for a bit longer?

(6) Ryan Lynch- I only really see one significant issue. I think that the way “major assignments” are written in the policy is not very descriptive. Even if i were normally going to be having assignments in hard copy do these need to be electronic? But in hearing your presentation, it is more an instruction model, correct? It isn’t necessary that the artifacts themselves need to be put into CougarVIEW?

(a) Tim- The assignment descriptions are what is to be put in CougarVIEW. It would be more than a list of those assignments. A description of major assignments.

(b) Ryan Lynch- Would you consider that a friendly amendment to the policy with the possibility that we could still vote today.

(c) Brant Smith- We can’t give blanket approval. We need to have something in front of us that is finished. Is this coming from USG or CSU, regardless it can’t be voted on today.

(d) Tim- The policy originated on campus through discussions that have been going on for about two years. What you heard earlier about the system involvement was when the emergency provisional policy had to be developed and it was going through the process that Chip described earlier.

(e) Deboar Bordelon- In essence it is a CSU policy that we have been working on for about two years regarding continuity of instruction. In regards to if
we had a hurricane and had to close or had a faculty member leave mid semester how would we continue instruction. The only part of USG is that they want to make sure we have a continuity policy. It’s not a USG policy, it is a CSU policy.

(f) Brandt Smith- Thank you very much, I withdraw my concerns.

(g) Chris Markwood- To build on what the provost was saying. When the decision was made by the USG to move to online learning they began auditing the CougarVIEW system and reporting that they weren’t seeing anything active in these classes.

(h) Mark McCarthy- I think Tim you have addressed most of my concerns. I’m not sure about this opening sentence. I would suggest we change the opening sentence to say “In the event of..” and a second point is that I don’t know that we need the his/her and instead change it to an instructor.

(i) Deborah Bordelon- In the interim policy we did make some changes and just strengthened it to say in the event of a destruction of instruction.

(j) Clint- Obviously we had a lot to cover today, our agenda was flushed out even before the pandemic. I know there are a number of committees waiting to give reports. If we can’t get to them today we will make sure they get right away in our May meeting.

(k) Alicia Bryan- A lot of the content that is inside the policy is actually included in the syllabus, will they look at the syllabus or varying modules where that information was located?

(l) Chris Markwood- It’s my understanding they were looking to see that they were being used. That something was being done and movement to online learning was occurring.

(m) Deborah Bordelon- They were not going into the syllabus. They were looking to see that something was being done and the course was being populated. If a faculty just puts everything under announcements it doesn’t show up in the course shell.

(n) Clint- Because we do have an interim document in place that does address concerns, I’m going to
suggest that we table this week. So that we have a chance to review.

(o) Ryan- I was going to say that I personally disagree. I think it's important in a situation like this that we act a bit more nimbly. I feel like my concerns have been addressed.

(p) Clint- I'm open to whatever the group at large is okay with. If we feel like we are ready for a vote then I am open to a motion.

(q) Mark- Move to vote.

(r) Ryan- Second the vote.

(s) Clint- Any discussion on what is currently on the screen?

(t) Nicholas McMillan- We'll be voting on this to make it a permanent policy?

(u) Ryan-This will basically mean that the faculty are giving the President and Provost their support on this policy.

(v) Ryan- I would suggest that we do a roll call vote

(w) Clint- I would make a suggestion as well. I was in a meeting where the vote was they asked for nays and abstentions.

(x) Phil Bryant- Couldn't you do a poll?

(y) Ryan Lynch- Not everybody has a chat. I think we need to do a roll call vote.

(z) Nicholas- I could set up another google form.

(aa) Clint- I'm going to suggest that this is ready for a vote and we take that vote via email. So I would ask Nicholas if he would mind setting up an email and send that out. And Tim if you could send us a copy of this most recent copy.

VII. New Business

A. International Education Committee - Erinn Bentley

1. We have two charges. One was to update our bylaws and those were in the February meeting. Our second charge was to oversee a wide range of international programs. In the fall we had 7 students who participated in semester long study abroad programs. We hosted Dr. Martin Bruell as a visiting scholar. We hosted international students here and were able to support them. IN spring semester we successfully ran J-Term programs in which we had 11 students. We are in the process of reimbursing students who have paid fees to participate in spring, spring break, and summer programs. We have successfully brought home 6 out of 7 students overseas. One against all of our recommendations has chosen to stay in
Oxford. All IEC events have been canceled for the remainder of the semester. We hope in the fall we can get back to regular business and programming.

a) Alicia Bryan- You mentioned recruitment in your report. Earlier in the year there were instances with financial aid and coursework. Can you elaborate on that and how we can assist you with those and make sure they correspond to something in their degree plan.

(1) This past year now that we are closely following federal aid guidelines we ran into issues that students wanted to take a study abroad course that wasn’t a part of their course. I think we learned how to better advise students and how to work with their advisors for example if they want to do their study abroad program we could advise them to take a j-term and spring break course. We have been working with faculty members to offer as many courses as possible that way we can reach students at different points in their degree process. Also, just getting the word out to students to be very thoughtful when scheduling their courses.

B. Women’s Advisory Committee - Molly Claassen
C. Advising Committee Report & ByLaws - Nehal Shukla
D. Readmission Appeals Committee - Steven Graver
E. Distance Learning Committee - Mark McCarthy
F. Information Technology Utilization Committee - Hyrum Carroll
G. Faculty Handbook Proposals - Dan Van Kley

VIII. Other Items
   A. Meeting Adjourned: 5:03