THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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November 30, 2015

Members excused: L. Davis, M. Katti, McKeith, U. Muller, W. Skuban, J. Taylor, J. Therkelson

Members absent: P. Cornelio, J. Giglio, C.K. Leung, M. Raheem, S. Sherchan

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Ayotte at 4:04pm in HML 2206.

1. Approval of the agenda

MSC moving item #7 (resolution in support of AB 798) up to position #5 and reordering the rest of the agenda accordingly.

MSC approving the agenda as amended

1. Approval of the Minutes of November 23, 2015

An amendment was made to the minutes.

MSC approving the Minutes of November 23, 2015 as amended.

1. Communications and announcements
2. President Castro

Noted that the strategic planning process is moving forward quickly. Just this morning the committee “scrubbed” language on the themes associated with each broad priority. Also, in response to a lot of community input, they added a new priority - community engagement. By January the new strategic plan should be finished.

Noted that we are moving ahead with the search for a new Vice President for Administration. He hopes that we will have a search committee ready to go in January, and it will be chaired by Provost Zelezny. He noted that we are also finishing up the search for a new executive director of government relations, with three people coming to campus for interviews in December.

1. Provost Zelezny

Dr. Saul Jimenez-Sandoval was introduced to the Academic Senate as the new Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities.

1. Vice Provost Nef

The WASC committee reviewed the report from the review team and found about a dozen errors. They will communicate these to WASC.

Senator Slagter (Women’s Studies) asked about moving back the final grade submission date. VP Nef said he would get back to us on this.

1. Chair Ayotte

AVP Sanchez (Faculty Affairs) will be sending out the overload course release application form very soon, but it has a very tight deadline (December 8) because there is an extensive review process applications must subsequently go through.

1. New business

There was no new business for the Academic Senate.

1. Resolution in Support of AB798 Affordable Textbook Act. First reading.

Senator Langer (Madden Library) introduced Vang Vang (Madden Library) to explain the need for the resolution. Legislation, which passed the State Legislature earlier in the year, makes funding available to the CSU system to help faculty learn about using low-cost textbooks and open-source materials in their classrooms. Each campus must apply to the CSU for this money, and part of this application requires the academic senate at that campus to pass this resolution. Once the campus receives the funding, faculty can apply for stipends.

Senator Fulop (Linguistics) asked for more information on how much money the bill provided. The answer is $5 million for the CSU, the community colleges, and the University of California. Stipends are most likely to be $500 each in professional development money. All faculty can apply for a stipend, and the library will be setting up workshops on how to find and use open-source materials.

Senator Slagter (Women’s Studies) asked if the library has been purchasing textbooks for the rental program, including online textbooks. Yes, they are still doing this, though Ms. Vang noted that sometimes they are very expensive.

Senator Ram (University-wide) asked if this was part of a push to get rid of physical textbooks entirely, noting that some students prefer physical textbooks. Ms. Vang answered that this was about giving faculty and students more options when it comes to textbooks and open-source materials.

Senator Hall (Physics) asked whether the move was really towards low-cost or free materials, or just about having online textbooks, which are not necessarily cheaper than physical ones. Ms. Vang answered that it was about finding low-cost options for students.

Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) asked if other CSU academic senates have passed resolutions like this. Ms. Vang did not know for certain, but felt that they were most likely going through the same process as Fresno State.

Senator Karr (Music) noted that there are other problems besides the cost of textbooks. The Music Department has been trying to put lots of audio and visual archive material online through the library for students, but apparently only seven students can access it at any given time. Perhaps some funds under this bill could go to improving this system. He also noted that fair use rules are getting increasingly complicated and restrictive.

Senator Bryant (Political Science) asked if the funds are just for faculty training, or if they could be used for students to help defray the cost of textbook purchases, or even for the cost of printing articles. Ms. Vang noted that many students do like printing their articles rather than reading them online and perhaps some money could be used to help them. Ultimately Fresno State has to present a plan to the Chancellor on how to use the money.

Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) expressed concern over this application process, feeling that the need for money is forcing the Academic Senate to pass a resolution.

Senator Ram (University-wide) asked if the legislation itself required individual campus senates to pass the resolution. Yes, it does, apparently at the request of the Chancellor’s Office.

MSC waiving first reading (1-nay)

MSC approving the resolution (2-abstentions)

1. APM 206 Policies and Procedures on Technology Mediated Courses and Programs. Second reading.

Senator Ram (University-wide) offered an amendment to add a requirement for department level approval of hybrid and on-line courses.

MSC approving the amendment

Senator Ram (University-wide) offered an amendment to let faculty members convert their courses to Web-Facilitated Courses without needing to get any approval.

Senator Durette (Art and Design) offered a secondary amendment, which died for lack of a second.

Senator Williams (Agricultural Business) opposed the amendment because it allows course conversions without any department approval at all. Senator Slagter (Women’s Studies) argued that the definition of Web-Facilitated Course means this is only a very minor change anyway. Senator Williams said he was unconvinced. Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) asked if adding in approval by the department chair would satisfy him. There was no answer to this question.

Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) equated course conversion to changing textbooks from the course, noting that no faculty member needs to get approval to change textbooks. It is not really a curricular-level change.

Senator Bryant (Political Science) noted that we often do the conversion just by telling the bookstore what to buy, so it is a small decision.

Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) argued that conversion is not a kind of course approval, but simply a change in technology. The overall policy, she argued, would actually increase faculty control of the curriculum by requiring faculty committees to approve larger, more substantive changes.

Senator Botwin (Psychology) offered some alternative language as a friendly amendment.

Senator Akhavan (Educational Research and Administration) noted that any course with 30% or more online is a hybrid course.

Senator Hall (Physics) felt that the definitions in this section were now different from those in section III, A.

Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) offered another small friendly amendment, and argued that the real concern is maintaining faculty control of course conversions where over 30% of the course is online.

Senator Fulop (Linguistics) argued that term “course content” is wrong and that we are really talking about “course credit hours.” In other words, talking about 0% to 29% is about course credit hours, not about content of courses.

Senator Ram (University-wide) noted that all of the definitions being used in this document are from the Sloan Foundation, with a link to its document embedded in proposed APM 206.

Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) argued in support of Senator Fulop’s argument about this being a debate over course credit hours rather than content.

Senator Botwin (Psychology) noted that the term “course credit hours” itself replaced the old term “seat time” years ago.

Senator Garcia (Nursing) noted that this debate was getting very confusing. He also noted that most of his colleagues use Blackboard extensively for their courses for posting course materials, so we really are talking about course content.

Senator Mullooly (Anthropology) noted that under this amendment a department chair would never know if a faculty member changed his/her course to 29% online and, consequently, did not even have to come to class on Fridays.

Senator Chapman (Modern and Classical Languages) explained that she still could not tell the difference between “content” and “delivery,” but there is a big difference between “content” and “instruction” and it is a problem if faculty are using conversion to Web-Facilitated Courses as a way to take Fridays off.

Senator Henson (English) spoke against the amendment, and then argued that APM 206 should be referred back to the Senate Academic Policy and Planning Committee for more work on clarifying the definitions.

Senator Ram (University-wide) pointed out that while there was some confusion regarding definitions, the Sloan Foundation document, on which APM 206 is based, is fairly clear in its definitions. She felt an up or down vote on her amendment was still warranted.

Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) spoke against the amendment, arguing that there was still too much ambiguity regarding the term “content”.

Senator Akhavan (Educational Research and Administration) spoke against the amendment, arguing that there were good online instructional reference materials that AP&P could use to improve the document.

Senator Botwin (Psychology) spoke in favor of the amendment and argued that it should be sent to AP&P after approving Senator Ram’s amendment.

Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) spoke against the amendment, expressing concern that department chairs did not have to approve of these course conversions.

MSC calling the question and ending debate (1-nay and 1-abstention).

The amendment lost with 11-ayes and 22-nays.

MSC approving the re-referral of APM 206 back to AP&P. The committee is instructed to clarify all of the definitions, and the committee should also consider the needs of department chairs to know where their faculty are. AP&P Chair Mullooly said that he expected the committee to rely heavily on the Sloan Foundation document for clarifying the definitions. Senator Benavides (Statewide Senate) argued that somebody from the Academic Instructional Technology Subcommittee should be invited to attend the meeting of AP&P where this is taken up.

1. COIA Second reading.

MSC tabling this amendment until the next meeting of the Academic Senate.

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:18pm.

The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be on February 1, 2016, at 4:00pm in HML 2206.

Submitted by Approved by

Thomas Holyoke Kevin Ayotte

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate