MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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Office of the Academic Senate

Ext. 8-2743

# September 10, 2020

Members Present: Hopson-Walker, Low, Moore, Nguyen, Vitali

Absent: Alexandrou, Baum, Rivera, ASI rep

Members Excused:

**Meeting called to order by Chair David Low at 9:08 am.**

1. Minutes – MSC to approve minutes of 9/3/20.
   1. Moore moves, Vitali seconds, no opposed or abstaining
2. Agenda – MSC to approve agenda of 9/10/20.
   1. Moore moves, Nguyen seconds, no opposed or abstaining
3. Communications and Announcements
   1. Committee member updates.
   2. Following our meeting on 9/3, Chair Low contacted Prof. Holyoke to 1) express the committee’s support of amending the syllabus template to include dept. chair contact information, and 2) share our thinking re: instructor behavior/professional conduct being added to Student Ratings of Instruction. Prof. Holyoke will bring our report (i.e. our recommendation NOT to add this dimension to SRI) back to the executive committee.
4. New Business
   1. Academic Senate will meet for the first time on Monday 9/14.
5. Old/Continuing Business
   1. Course Classifications/Class Size
      1. For discussion:
         1. There’s a need for flexibility as student enrollments fluctuate.
         2. Courses are classified with a ‘[normal’ class size](http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/scheduling/documents/CourseClassificationSystem%201.3.18.pdf). It’s not a hard cap.
         3. Some departments have voted to raise the ‘normal’ size of classes. Changes were predicated on questions like “what is past practice?” and “what are our current enrollment needs?”
         4. **How should the university effectively communicate to faculty that ‘normal class size’ is not a hard cap?**
            1. The information should be applied consistently.
            2. Department chairs need guidance on how much wiggle room is appropriate so that 1) class size is not increasing by too large a number or percent and 2) vulnerable faculty are not pressured into agreeing to increase their class size.
      2. Synopsis of committee’s discussion points:
         1. There should be a firm window (+/- a certain percentage or number) that is agreed upon and that should not be exceeded. Chairs and departments should have some discretion on setting this number, but faculty need a voice beyond threatening to file a grievance. **Personnel Committee could consider developing a guiding document for chairs to follow, covering items such as:**
            1. Course codes should be provided to faculty for all courses taught.
            2. Faculty must be consulted about changes in roster size. This should be a department-wide conversation, not a ‘divide-and-conquer’ strategy that pressures individual instructors into consenting to raising their caps.
            3. TA-ships could be made available for courses with expanded rosters.
            4. Course reclassifications should be initiated by department faculty, not by chairs.
         2. In physical teaching situations, fire marshals must certify that the teaching space can safely hold the number of students who are enrolled. Rooms cannot go beyond capacity.
         3. In online teaching situations, pedagogy should still be the driver of enrollment decisions.
         4. **Further consultation with Marsha Baum required.**
   2. APM 322 – Policy on Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness
      1. Committee’s thoughts re: Asking the Student Ratings Subcommittee to modify the instructions students receive, explicitly inviting students to include qualitative feedback that speaks to faculty members’ treatment of students on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability. Notify students that department chairs will receive this feedback.
      2. Synopsis of committee’s discussion points:
         1. In the instructions that are provided to students when they’re assigned course evaluations, students should explicitly be asked to write comments addressing inclusivity.
            1. More explicit instructions can provide a “teachable moment” for students about what happens with the ratings and comments students provide. Demystify this to them: who will receive the comments? What role can comments have in shaping the course in the future?
         2. Did the Student Grievance Committee ever come to fruition? **(Ask Marsha Baum.)** If so, this committee should be involved as well.
   3. Faculty working remotely following the pandemic
      1. Committee’s thoughts re:
         1. Holding forums (hosted by the Provost’s Office) to initiate a campus-wide conversation about what it means to be Fresno State University. What are our values and what is our culture? Are we an online university now?
         2. Creating a Resolution (like our Principles of Community) that states we are a community of scholars dedicated to our local region.
         3. **Creating a Policy Statement** that indicates 1) Fresno State faculty do not work remotely; 2) faculty must attend department meetings; 3) faculty must hold 20% of office hours on campus. Include language for faculty who are unable to follow these criteria for approved reasons (i.e. they need to be a caregiver elsewhere). Faculty cannot simply prefer to live elsewhere and work remotely.
      2. Synopsis of committee’s discussion points:
         1. Absenteeism negatively affects department productivity and morale. It creates inequities when on-site faculty have to pick up the slack for off-site faculty.
         2. The university can’t dictate where someone lives, but they can say how often a faculty member needs to be on campus for service, office hours, supervision, and face-to-face teaching.
            1. What mechanisms exist to respond to the problem?

Letters in the file (which cannot be anonymous)

Peer evaluations (which are not anonymous)

Faculty can request that the Dean investigate a situation in which a faculty member is not contributing their share due to living outside the region.

If Deans do not want to act decisively, what recourse do faculty have to police the behaviors of their colleagues?

* + - * 1. Chairs needn’t kowtow to senior faculty who live outside of Fresno when assigning online-only classes. Deans can overrule a chair’s preferential treatment as needed.
        2. In the Library, the Dean (not a chair) would need to determine how a librarian’s work is negatively impacted by living outside the region.
        3. Tenured faculty can receive negative letters in their files, and over a long enough period of bad reviews could face repercussions.
        4. There could also be a reward system for tenured faculty who contribute their share of service. Commendations from the President, incentives, etc.
        5. **How much need is there to create a policy with precise language for deans and chairs to follow? (Should there first be Forums and Resolutions?)**
        6. **Further consultation with Marsha Baum required.**
  1. Conflict of Commitment
     1. Committee’s thoughts re: establishing a periodic review process or audit for administrators to determine whether faculty members who work outside of their faculty positions are satisfactorily attending to their professional obligations at Fresno State. How best to ascertain whether a faculty member’s outside work negatively impacts their job performance?
     2. Synopsis of committee’s discussion points:
        1. This item could be combined with the previous item in a future policy that speaks to the effectiveness of faculty in contributing to their professional responsibilities. Job Performance is the common denominator, whether we’re thinking about faculty who take on additional outside-the-university work or who live outside of the region.
           1. **Would it be possible for the university to establish guidelines on job performance?**
        2. Marsha was looking at other universities’ language concerning conflict of commitment.

1. Motion to adjourn at 10:36 am.