MINUTES OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Office of the Academic Senate

California State University, Fresno

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Phone: 559-278-2743 | FAX: 278-5745

Date: 10/14/20

Members Present: N. Nisbett (Chair), C. Bohlin, C. Caprau, D. Hart, T. Lone, F. Tehrani, B. Saito, L. Weiser

Visitors: None

Members Absent: C. Coon

The meeting was called to order at 10am on Zoom

1. **Previous minutes:**

Approval of 9/9/20 meeting minutes.

1. **Communication and announcements:**

N. Nisbett attended President’s enrollment management committee meeting, reported updates related to enrollment and enrollment criteria. Enrollment of freshman and transfer students increased this fall. In Spring and Fall: enrollment criteria may not include standardized testing scores; looking at GPA and targeted demographics. Targeting 2.5 as expected GPA but that may change.

1. **Ongoing Business:**

Committee recommendation for Academic Senate Executive Committee regarding use of cameras in the virtual classroom

*Committee members reported on feedback from colleagues.*

F. Tehrani: Reported a diversity of approaches, depends on context of the course; in general: colleagues are context-sensitive and flexible.

C. Caprau: A few colleagues required cameras during exams and quizzes and most posted early announcements of when they required cameras on during exams. Recommend to not have camera required during exams, leave it up to instructor.

C. Bohlin: Seeing students’ faces helps develop a sense of community, increases engagement in discussion. Privacy must be considered; backgrounds may be a hindrance. Highly encourage students to have cameras on, especially in break-out groups, but shouldn’t be required. It’s hard to have a one-size-fits-all in this unique situation.

N. Nisbett: Reminder to the committee: we’re not creating a policy on cameras, we’re providing guidance for faculty in their communications with students.

D. Hart: Shared story of student breastfeeding and negative pushback from instructor.

B. Saito: Did informal survey with English colleagues. More camera usage in upper div courses and grad courses; less in lower div courses; camera usage increases morale and camaraderie, sense of presence – highly important during this time. Could emphasize use of Chat and Reactions, art/drawing, screen-sharing as camera alternatives.

C. Bohlin: Both students and faculty may have unstable internet connections and bandwidth issues; this isn’t only a student issue.

T. Lone: Researched camera policies at other universities; all mention being cognizant of what profile picture to display, make sure it’s appropriate.

C. Caprau: Question regarding avatars taking up bandwidth, as backgrounds can. Important to specify guidelines around backgrounds and avatars.

C. Bohlin: Encourage faculty to remind students that they could consider using virtual backgrounds and avatars to help protect privacy. However, some computer processors or graphics cards do not support virtual backgrounds.

N. Nisbett: Use of backgrounds can depend on equipment. Followed up with SSD regarding Respondus Monitor conflicting with software. Now there is a workaround for faculty requiring Respondus. Faculty should still recognize there are other accessibility issues with use of Respondus and testing.

*N. Nisbett screenshared the memo draft for committee to view/edit/add content; committee co-drafted and co-edited the document.*

F. Tehrani: Add that faculty must clearly state a camera policy in syllabus

N. Nisbett: Students came up with own camera policy: what did they think expectations should be in the classroom? Class is discussion-based; when instructor’s talking, don’t have to have cameras on; do have to have on when in break-out rooms. Devised expectations with understanding there would be exceptions. Three days in semester that students are required to have cameras on, and they knew about it in advance. Students came to policy decision on their own.

F. Tehrani: Recognize students with disabilities may have additional challenges that have not been recognized.

T. Lone: State rational for why cameras are required when they’re required.

C. Bohlin: You can set in Zoom to copy or not copy your chat; can limit student use of chat function; mentioned colleagues who use Big Blue Button and avatars.

T. Lone: A colleague uses avatar as an additional security measure.

C. Caprau: Suggested use of “assessment” instead of “testing”; suggested faculty provide advanced notice of testing dates early on in semester.

*Committee continued editing language of the memo in regards to challenges to establishing uniform policy, recommendations for the classroom (including discussion of avatars, privacy, and virtual backgrounds), and recommendations for assessment.*

N. Nisbett: Memo will be shared with Academic Senate Executive Committee.

**Next meeting**: Wednesday, November 18 at 10am.