2 September 2021

Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

c/o Ray Hall, Chair

As you are no doubt aware, last-minute changes to class delivery modes in the runup to the Fall semester resulted in a chaotic and somewhat anarchic period whose workload burden fell heavily on department chairs, many of whom worked long hours throughout the summer to try to prevent confusion and chaos. While we are grateful for the support we received for accommodating the many unique needs of our faculty in these unusual times, we also feel strongly that more guidance around APM206 is necessary to prevent such a scenario from unfolding again, as we transition into Spring 2022.

Class schedules for Spring 2022 have already been completed and will be open for students to see next month. They must be reasonably final by that time. We know that flexible interpretation of APM 206 ends with the current semester. This suggests that “virtual” will not be an allowable mode for spring semester. If so, would the Senate and Provost collaborate to issue an unequivocal statement that this is the case, and to clarify that all online instruction will be subject to the approvals already built into the policy?

Given that public health circumstances continue to evolve (and deteriorate), many of us are wondering if you are considering an extension of flexible interpretation? And if so, what will be the nature of that alternative interpretation? We are now attempting to make contingency plans in the current semester for a continued worsening of the public health situation

Specifically, we ask for clarification about the following questions:

* Will virtual delivery modes (as opposed to online ones) be an option?
* Are there (or will there be) any restrictions or guidelines to manage the *ratio*of virtual/online classes to F2F classes? Furthermore, to which level of analysis will this ratio apply (i.e., will each department/program need to ensure the ratio is met? Or will it be taken in aggregate across divisions of Academic Affairs, or across Academic Affairs as a whole?)
* In the event that the ratio must be managed in some way, and requests from instructors within a department do not conform to that target ratio, how should departments proceed with deciding which classes will be in the instructor's preferred delivery mode and which will not?
* We assume that the factors delineated in spring would be used again: accreditation, pedagogical constraints, avoiding online for freshman classes. But are we allowed to also consider employee factors, such as whether the instructor lives with an immunocompromised person, or unvaccinated children?
* Are there any mechanisms in place to monitor if a class is being delivered in the mode listed in the Course Schedule? Who will be responsible for enforcing this, and what consequences (if any) will there be if an instructor is found not to be in compliance?
* In the event that the relaxation of APM206 is no longer applicable, what is the timeline for approval of classes for technology-mediated delivery through the restored guidelines set out in APM206, and is it reasonable to ask instructors to follow this process for classes planned for the Spring?

The Council of Chairs therefore requests that the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate take up a further clarification of modalities for class delivery in spring.

Sincerely,

Kevin Macy-Ayotte, Chair

Lorin Lachs, Vice-Chair

Katie Dyer, Chair Emeritus

Fresno State Council of Chairs