THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE (AS-8)

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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Office of the Academic Senate

(559) 278-2743

February 1, 2021

Members excused:

Members absent: A. Alexandrou, L. Brillante, P. DeWalt, R. Maldonado, B. Mason, S. Ojunjemiyo

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Holyoke at 4:01 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing.

1. Approval of the Agenda.

MSC

1. Approval of the Minutes of 12/07/20 as amended.

MSC

1. Communications and Announcements:

Interim President Jiménez-Sandoval updated the Senate about two ongoing searches for presidential cabinet positions (replacements for Larry Salinas and Patti Wade) and also spoke about the importance of faculty participation in the search for a university president, which will begin soon. He reported that the task force on repopulation has reconvened and they are working on a plan. He cautioned that at this time vaccine timelines remain an unknown, but that we are setting an initial target of 70% repopulation for Fall 2021. Interim Provost Fu and Vice President Astone are overseeing the formation of the plan. In addition he has formed a new task force on mental health which will meet soon. This task force will be charged with identifying and making known resources for students, faculty, and staff and proposing methods to promote a sense of campus community. Finally, he described his main priorities in his new role as a safe repopulation of the campus, and a bolstering of our 4-year graduation rate. The strategy for the latter concerns targeting five key curricular areas with identified high failure rate courses including math, writing, chemistry, political science, and social science. Strategies will include more advising, targeted tutoring, and making resources available to faculty. In addition he seeks to maintain our strong alliances with industry partners despite the pandemic, and to elevate the Fresno State brand by highlighting our graduate degrees in an effort to inspire undergraduates to continue their education.

Sen Jenkins (Statewide) asked how the 70% repopulation goal was determined, and if it would be possible to achieve if social distancing is still mandated. The President indicated that the goal is based on an estimate that 30%predict that they will not be able to come back, but that the target will be scalable as new information comes in, and he emphasized that local and state officials will be consulted at every step.

Sen Ram (University-wide) asked for clarification on what department chairs were recently tasked to report concerning what courses will be taught on campus. Given we have no Fall 2021 policy as yet, the question as it was sent out is not clear, which asked for classes that are *preferred* to be taught face to face, but also asked about classes that *must* be taught face to face. She asked for clarification about the goal of the request, as “preferred” and “must” seem to imply different categories. The President answered that our priority is to determine what courses *must* be face to face to establish a point of departure for a repopulation percentage. Provost Fu added that first priority are those courses with face to face requirements for accreditation and disciplinary needs, and a second priority is to bring back courses that just did not work well in virtual mode, bring these courses back to face to face instruction.

Sen Walter (Biology) expressed concern about support to students to ensure equitable access to technology and devices for both Spring and Fall 2021. The President stated that this is a priority and is reflected in how we spent our CARES funds, more than any other CSU we focused on technology access for students. He stated that the DiscoverE program will be retooled as the main means to provide this support service.

Sen Cronin (Social Work Education) asked about the placement of cameras in classrooms for Fall 2021 to allow hybrid models with combined face to face and Zoom instruction. The President indicated that discussions are on-going with some proposals to come shortly, and that Vice President Leon will discuss related issues concerning campus tech at the next senate meeting.

Interim Provost Fu told the senate that the university is launching a search for Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and a committee is being formed.

Chair Holyoke announced that Drs. Goto and Pitt were elected to the advisory group for the university president search. He noted that the university forum to receive input on what we need for a president will take place February 9 at noon. If faculty wish to speak they must register to do so by 5pm February 5.

ASI President Zuniga expressed her support for repopulation stating that ASI wishes to resume face to face instruction, but to do so safely. She also advocates for a student study space on campus as soon as it safe to allow.

Integration of Sustainability in Academics: A brief slide set was presented to the senate. Dr. Beth Weinman presenting with students: Jason Vang (ASI Senator of Sustainability), Marissa Acosta (Climate Corps Fellow), Nicole Lucha, Feng Teter, Ayanna Alewine, and Suzanne Shaw.



1. New Business.

none

1. APM 113 Policy on Academic Organization and Governance.

First reading

Sen Ram (University-wide) expressed concern about a lack of consistency in the main text concerning the description of the different classifications. In paragraph 1 of the policy the academic organization of the university is laid out into units which are identified with numbers 1) through 5) and the library is listed separately from the rest in point 5). She asked is point 5) should be subsumed under point 3) if the library is to be now treated similarly to current college structure. Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs Marsha Baum agreed that the initial paragraph seems to need modification. The goal of the amended policy is to allow the library to restructure in line with current CBA and RTP requirements of faculty in the library.

Sen Lent (Biology) asked if the cost of this reorganization has been determined or any analysis performed. Dr. Baum explained that the administrative positions already exist so this is probably cost neutral, but this proposed change in this particular policy would only allow a proposal from the Library to be brought forward, which right now is not allowed. If this policy change is accepted, the Library could then propose changes that would be subject to approval by appropriate existing policies, committees, and the senate.

1. Proposed Amendments to APM 127 (University Constitution).

Vice Chair Hall now presiding over the meeting

Senator Holyoke (Political Science) explained the proposed amendments to the University Constitution, including amendments giving the Executive Committee authority to approve limited exceptions to academic policies and amendments to expand the membership of the Academic Senate to include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council of Chairs and a designee of the Staff Assembly as voting ex-officio members. Senator Holyoke noted that any amendments to APM 127 approved by the Academic Senate would then have to be approved by the full Academic Assembly.

Senator Bryant (University-wide) recommended grammatical changes to the proposed language regarding the Chair and Vice Chair of Chairs which was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Senator DeJordy (Management) asked for clarification on the procedure to approve the amendments, and then recommended a friendly amendment that the amendment regarding flexible interpretation of the APM be clarified to note that it referred to the President of Fresno State rather than the President of the United States, which was accepted. He also asked for clarification as to who could declare an emergency and whether it included the President of the United States. AVP Baum said the US President could do this.

Senator Jenkins (Statewide) expressed a general concern that the amendments regarding APM suspension and flexible interpretation takes power from the Academic Senate and gives it to the Executive Committee without making it possible for the Senate to exercise ultimate control. Feels that the provisions should be amended so that the Senate must actively approve these actions.

Senator Ram (University-wide) offered a couple of friendly amendments to the proposed language on exemptions and flexible interpretation to clarify the sentences. She also noted that some things the Executive Committee might do with these powers would be time sensitive, or happen during the summer, and so it might be a problem to then have the Senate review it. Might amend with clarifying language at the next Senate meeting.

MSC extending the meeting until 5:30.

Senator Crowell (Sociology) expressed concern that the language on exemptions seems to apply to entire policies but the language on flexible interpretation only applies to parts of policies, and asked if this could be made consistent. Senator Holyoke indicated that the exemption language was not meant to be general and is open to amendments improving it.

Senator Mullooly (Anthropology) suggested the possibility of an amendment indicating that no policy under flexible interpretation could be permanently amended. Permanent amendments would have to wait until the flexible interpretation expired.

Senator Botwin (Psychology) expressed concern about the exemption and flexibility language and wondered if they should be turned into a new Section F. Will bring an amendment to the next meeting.

Senator Parra (Accountancy) also expressed concern about the potential shift in power with these changes. Perhaps make it possible for the Senate to officially vote to reject, or override, exemptions approved by the Executive Committee.

Senator Mercado-Lopez (Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) asks if we might want to consider the possibility of extending flexible interpretation to continue after an emergency is declared to be over. Ending it too early might create problems in terms of student equity. At least consider allowing the flexible interpretation to continue until the end of the emergency and not end it earlier. Senator Holyoke explained that the Executive Committee had not felt comfortable with letting flexible interpretation remain in effect until the end of the COVID emergency, but preferred to be compelled to periodically revisit the decisions. Senator Mercado-Lopez suggested an amendment indicating that ending flexible interpretation early would be done to revisit the decision, which was accepted as a friendly amendment.

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The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be February 15, 2021.

Submitted by Approved by

Raymond Hall Thomas Holyoke

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate