THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE (AS-01)

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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Office of the Academic Senate

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September 13, 2021

Members excused: K. Macy-Ayotte, G. Kim, R. Raya-Fernandez

Members absent: A. Alexandrou, L. Brillante, J. Crane, B. Mason

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Hall at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing.

1. Approval of the Agenda.

New item added (item 8): Extend time period in Student Unplanned Absence Policy (APM 232) in light of COVID-19 and reduce proportion of completed assignments from two thirds to half in Policy on Incomplete Grades (APM 246) in light of COVID-19

MSC

1. Approval of the Minutes of 5/3/2021

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1. Communications and Announcements:

Chair Hall welcomed Michael Lukens to Fresno State as the new Executive Director of Governmental Relations.

Communications from President Jiménez-Sandoval:

Based on the regular briefings the President has been receiving, he is pleased with how our campus is doing in light of COVID-19, but there is still work to do.

Three permanent Dean searches are underway or will soon be launched: Dean for COSS (in progress), Dean for JCAST (to be launched) and Dean for Undergraduate Studies (in progress). A search for a permanent Provost will be launched as well. In addition, there will be a search for a Chief Diversity Officer (formerly Director of the Cross-Cultural and Gender Center), which will be a cabinet level position. That person will still lead the Cross-Cultural and Gender Center, but will also have a more prominent overview of all matters dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion, and will coordinate strongly with the anti-racist coalition. There will also be a position for Deputy Governmental Relations, who will report to the Executive Director of Governmental Relations. This will contribute to expanding our government liaisons in relation to Fresno State, to proactively communicating with our elected officials, and asking for funding and resources for our centers and projects that deal with innovation, economic vitality, and issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The President also mentioned the partnership with Valley Children’s Hospital to promote a healthy lifestyle among the children in the central valley. This comes with a fund of one million dollars per year for ten years and the naming rights for Bulldog Stadium. These naming rights still need to be approved by the Board of Trustees.

There have been a number of initiatives on our campus by the Mental Health Task Force (*e.g.*, ice cream for faculty, staff and students, including a flavor of the month ice cream and student art display, as well as a flash mob and drumming circle organized by the department of Social Work). The task force is open to receiving new ideas.

Two pilot initiatives, one to enhance advising and one to advance tutoring, have been launched in the Department of Chemistry. The results of these pilots could inspire wider initiatives of intentional tutoring and advising to further the success of our students.

Questions for the President:

**Senator Holyoke** pointed out that there was no mention of a search for a Dean of the Visalia campus. The current Dean, Luz Gonzalez, will be retiring – will the campus be maintained and who will be in charge of it?

**President Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that Fresno State will be continuing its presence in the south valley, because it has proven to be beneficial for our students (and is looking to expand course offerings on that campus). Dean Gonzalez will continue to serve as faculty director at the Visalia campus as a FERP faculty member.

**Senator Ram** asked whether the Deputy Governmental Relations and the Executive Director of Governmental Relations will focus their advocacy on funding needed for our core teaching and research needs?

**President Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that that is the case. The Executive Director of Governmental Relations will begin a listening tour with the various colleges to see what projects can be pitched to the legislature and elected officials.

**Senator Walter** enquired where the money from the one million dollar per year for ten years partnership with Valley Children Hospital would be allocated to.

**President Jiménez-Sandoval** explained that these funds will help the Athletics Department with all the needs they have, instead of having to leverage the general budget for those needs.

**Senator Yang** referred to a grant that the department of Social Work received to deal with mental health in the Latino and Hmong population in the Central Valley. He would like to connect with the Mental Health Task Force to know more about the initiatives they are taking.

**Senator Wise** wanted to know whether the naming rights that come with the Valley Children’s Hospital partnership would also be for ten years.

**President Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that that is the case. After ten years the naming rights revert back to Fresno State to seek out other entities who want to name the stadium.

Communications from Provost Fu:

As already mentioned, a number of Dean searches are or will soon be taking place. Two Dean searches are already underway (Undergraduate Studies, COSS). There will be a search for the interim Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. A search for a permanent Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, for a Dean of JCAST, and permanent AVP for Faculty Affairs will be launched soon.

Provost Fu also introduced the newly appointed interim AVP for Faculty Affairs, Jim Schmidtke. He also thanked Marsha Baum for her work as AVP for Faculty Affairs.

Questions for the Provost:

**Senator Dyer** asked for an update on the percentage of students who have self-certified [as being vaccinated or claiming a medical or religious exemption].

**Provost Fu** referred to Lisa Kao and AVP Morillo, in attendance at this senate meeting.

**AVP Morillo** explained that not all students have self-certified yet, but that 21,100 students are fully vaccinated or have received the first dose of a two-dose vaccine, which indicates a very good progress on student vaccination status. Mandatory weekly testing is operational for those who are not vaccinated or who have not self-certified yet.

**Senator Dyer** wanted to know whether students who have not certified yet are on campus, and are they allowed to be on campus? Was the deadline for completing self-certification not Aug 20?

**AVP Morillo** explained that students have until Sept 30 to complete the self-certification, and had until Aug 20 to get their first dose of a two-dose vaccine.

**VP Adishian-Astone** added that 692 students have not completed the self-certification yet. That number has come down significantly from last week thanks to the efforts of Student Affairs to contact students and urge them to complete the self-certification form. The call center, that has been set up for COVID-19 reporting, will help contact these 692 students to remind them of the requirement to complete self-certification, in addition to text messaging that will go out.

**Senator Holyoke**: If the 692 students who have not self-certified yet today, do not get vaccinated or do not claim an exemption by Sept 30, will they be barred from the campus? Also, after Sept 30, will we start seeing changes in some of the campus procedures, *e.g.,* being allowed to lecture without a mask, especially if we are more than six feet away from the students?

**AVP Morillo** explained that as of this week, the call center will be reaching out to students who have not self-certified to remind them that they have to self-certify by Sept 30. In addition, this week, an email will be sent out to students who have not been showing up for mandatory testing to remind them that they must do so. Then, starting next week, they will get another email warning them of these requirements and the Dean of Students will begin to reach out to non-complying students and explain that disciplinary action could be taken.

**Senator Lent** wanted to know whether there are plans to ensure that faculty searches and signing of contracts are not held back by loss of personnel in Faculty Affairs?

**Provost Fu** explained that additional hiring has been approved and other personnel decisions are being taken to strengthen Faculty Affairs. If a specific search is unduly delayed, please reach out to interim AVP for Faculty Affairs Schmidtke and Provost Fu.

**Senator Karr** wanted to know what the current numbers are of reported positive COVID-19 cases on campus.

**Provost Fu** answered that there is a total of 84 cases since Aug 23. He invited Lisa Kao to explain more.

**Lisa Kao** (EHS director)explains that a high number of reports have been submitted to her team. These concern individuals reporting that they have been exposed, feel ill or have tested positive. Everyday her team gets about 50 of such reports that need to be investigated. Additional resources have been awarded to help with contact tracing and responding to all of these reports. These reports sometimes lead to emails to notify the campus community that someone who tested positive has been in a particular building on campus on a certain day. It is required by Cal/OSHA that these messages are sent out.

**Adishian-Astone** added that, while we are experiencing an increase in the number of individuals who test positive and have been on campus, this is not inconsistent with what other CSU campuses are seeing. Additional resources have been brought in to help with case investigation following reports to EHS (*e.g.*, call center, nursing department). EHS has prepared a draft flow chart of what happens when EHS gets a report and how decisions are made to guide students and faculty members. This has been reviewed with the Fresno County Department of Public Health and helps determine what is minimal, moderate and high exposure risk. Currently collecting feedback from the campus community before finalizing and distributing this flow chart.

**Lisa Kao** explained the draft flow chart on the steps that trained case investigators at EHS take following identification of a positive case on campus to determine exposure risk (minimal, moderate or high risk) and provide guidance to those affected. It is not always possible to determine proximity between an individual who tested positive and was on campus and others. Investigators also have to assume that everyone was wearing a face covering. The first question investigators ask is: was the person symptomatic or not? Then class interaction level is assessed (was it lecture only or were there class activities?). *E.g.*, when a person was symptomatic, and in a class with class activities that release more aerosols then simply talking, the situation is considered high exposure. Responses to a case regarding quarantine and testing then vary based on whether it is considered minimal, moderate or high exposure risk. Kao added that, now that testing is available to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, the risk response process is getting easier – people can get tested once exposed (whether they are vaccinated or not) and get an answer within 24 to 48 hours.

**Senator Moreman** had a concern regarding the wording of the COSS Dean job posting. There is no mention in it of us being an AANAPISI or an HSI, and nothing in the required and preferred qualities to have an expertise or background in dealing with cultural equity and diversity. This is something that should be included in job postings.

**Provost Fu** suggests to bring this to the attention of the search committee. The search is nearing its closing date. A search firm has been helping to reach into minority serving institutions for applicants. He will look into this issue further as well.

**Senator Jenkins** wanted to know what happens if a student is not vaccinated by the deadline of Sept 30. Will disciplinary action include disenrollment? He also had a question about guidance from the Chancellor’s office about reporting of numbers on self-certification and vaccination rates, given that there is disparate reporting across campuses. He suggested that daily updates, as some campuses are doing, would be helpful to provide more transparency in this regard. He also wanted to know whether protocols are coming down from the Chancellor’s office, or whether campuses are developing them on their own. Finally, what are the self-certification numbers for faculty and staff?

**Provost Fu** explained that disciplinary action for students includes suspension. Certain protocols and due process need to be considered in this regard. Student Affairs is also considering other means, such as not being allowed to register for the following semester, but no decision has been taken yet.

He also mentioned that there is a scheduled meeting with OIE to develop dashboards with real time data. There are some challenges to be addressed and data cleaning to be done (*e.g.*, there is a number of students who are not in the state and will not access the campus).

**VP Adishian-Astone** explained that employee self-certification is being tracked. Four of our CBA units have completed the meet and confer process systemwide, and those employee groups have until Oct 27 to complete their self-certification. For instance, 62 per cent of all faculty self-certified as being fully vaccinated, and 525 faculty members have not yet submitted their self-certification (but they have until Oct 27 to do so). Still working on protocols for progressive steps and influence for compliance if employees do not comply with mandatory testing or self-certification by Oct 27. Emphasis is now on communication and sending out reminders to all employees. Testing at the testing site on campus (at the SSU) is going well, but not everyone who needs to get tested is complying. More reminders from our vendor and firm communication to students and employees who need to get tested will be sent out after the new testing numbers are available later this week. There are plenty of opportunities to get tested. Also individuals who are vaccinated and have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, on or off campus, can get tested in the testing facilities on campus.

**Senator Maldonado** wanted to thank Dr. Fu and the COVID team for their work. It sounds like people who are not complying with the mandatory testing, keep getting reminders but can be non-compliant without any consequences for two full months, is that correct?

**AVP Morillo** explains that it has been quite a process in getting the vendor set up and to have the correct reports. We have now completed the first full two weeks of testing. Tomorrow (Sept 14) emails will go out to those who are not complying with the testing requirement. Next week (the week of Sept 20) they will receive a warning. Disciplinary action could be taken at that time as well.

**Senator Maldonado** added that it seems that almost 20 per cent of the campus population have to get tested. Is that correct?

**Provost Fu** explained that the percentage of students who should be tested is closer to 15 per cent (*e.g.*, 1,400 students indicated in their self-certification that they are not coming to campus and they do not have to get tested).

**Interim AVP Schmidtke** added that in terms of disciplinary action for non-complying faculty we need to be consistent with the CBA agreement, but it will be in place soon.

**VP Adishian-Astone** mentioned that there will be different disciplinary action for students who are not complying with self-certification and students who are not complying with weekly testing.

**Senator Ram** proposed an idea to encourage people to get vaccinated. In order to reinforce norms (not just rules) supporting vaccination, we could give a "Fresno State vaxxed" pin to vaccinated people on campus who request one. They can voluntarily wear it. It lets people know that they are vaccinated, as a way to encourage others to get vaccinated. Although those with a medical exemption would not be able to get a pin, if this helped to get more people vaccinated, it would especially support their safety. They may also feel (and be) safer if they could see who is or is not vaccinated nearby them.

**ASI President Jackson** explained that ASI have been putting up posters regarding the requirement for self-certification with QR codes. ASI has set up a vaccination campaign, including giving away gift cards. ASI would like to encourage faculty to let students know about the vaccination clinics and that students need to comply with required testing. Students are taking this seriously and they are concerned, but they may not be sufficiently aware of the resources and information. Students are also calling for more transparency about data and tracking.

**Senator Holyoke** moves to extend the meeting for 15 minutes.

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**Senator Walter** thanks ASI President Jackson and ASI for all they are doing in the context of a safe repopulation of our campus. Students have been showing great commitment and the students are leading. Faculty should follow and do their part at home and on campus. Shout out to parent colleagues with under-vaccination-age kids, who are having to deal with the impact of school protocols too.

1. Senator Installation.

Welcoming senator **Lorin Lachs** (Vice-Chair of Council of Chairs)

1. Consent Calendar
   1. Bachelor of Arts in Women’s Studies to Bachelor of Arts in Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies.
   2. APM 206 will be relaxed to allow virtual teaching modalities in Spring 2022.

**Senator Ram** wanted to know what relaxing APM 206 for spring 2022 will mean.

**Chair Hall** explained that this means that APM 206 will not be enforced in the spring. Virtual courses will be allowed and will not violate the policy.

No objection - both items on consent calendar approved

1. Election – Nominations – Nominating/Elections Committee

Executive Committee – position for one Member-at-Large (Nominations from the floor)

**Senator Miele** nominated senator de Jordy

**Senator Holyoke** seconded the nomination.

**Senator DeJordy** accepts.

No other nominations

Motion to elect senator DeJordy by acclamation

MSC

1. New business

Item 8 – see next

1. Extend time period in Student Unplanned Absence Policy (APM 232) in light of COVID-19 and reduce proportion of completed assignments from two thirds to half in Policy on Incomplete Grades (APM 246) in light of COVID-19

**Chair Hall** explained that our current policy on unexpected absences (APM232), talks about having to accommodate unexpected absences up to one week [‘Unplanned student absences should be authorized when the student has a short-term (up to a week of classes, during a normal 15 week semester) serious and compelling reason that prevents them from attending class’]. There is a concern that quarantines that are needed for COVID-19 cases could exceed one week. It has been proposed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate that instead of one week, this is expanded to accommodate up to three weeks of absences.

It is also proposed to reduce the proportion of completed assignments from two thirds to half in the Policy on Incomplete Grades (APM 246) in light of COVID-19.

Both proposals put a burden on the faculty, but they give some leeway to students who may get sick, and it recognizes the severity of this pandemic.

**Senator Lent** wanted to know whether the two proposals extend to accommodating students who have been suspended? Faculty may not be aware of this suspension.

**Chair Hall** explains that we are only augmenting the policy, and that students still have to provide a reason for their absence (*e.g.*, a doctor’s note) and need for accommodation.

**Senator Ram** mentioned that it could be difficult for students to catch up on three weeks’ worth of missed classes, and is something that they might need support from the instructor for.

**Senator Crowell** supports the proposals. Students with children may have to quarantine at home because of exposure in their children’s school. It is similar to accommodating pregnant students. It could be seen as a Title IX issue.

**ASI President Jackson** seconded senator Crowell’s comments.

Motion to relax APM 232 as described (to extend time for unexpected absences to three weeks) and to relax APM 246 as described (students eligible for an IC grade after having completed half of the course work with a C or above, instead of two thirds).

MSC

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:40p.m.

The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be September 27, 2021, via Zoom video conferencing.

Submitted by Approved by

Tinneke Van Camp Ray Hall

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate