THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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May 2, 2016

Members excused: I. Basurto, M. Botwin, N. Delich, P. Durette, T. Elarabi, P. Garcia, D. Lewis, A. McKeith, M. Raheem, J. Smith-Warshaw, J. Therkelsen, M. Thompson, P. Turnbull

Members absent: L. Cornelio, J. Giglio, R. Hall, M. Katti, C. Perez, A.M. Tawfik, R. Thornton, E. Waldman, T. Wilson

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Ayotte at 4:13pm in HML 2206.

1. Approval of the agenda

MSC approving the agenda

1. Approval of the Minutes of April 25, 2016

A friendly amendment was offered

MSC approving the Minutes of April 25, 2016, as amended

1. Communications and announcements
2. Provost Zelezny

On Friday in the North Gym at 3:00pm is the Provost’s Awards winners’ reception.

1. Chair Ayotte

Informed the senate that the Executive Committee has approved the creation of an ad hoc task force to design a policy on the use of unmanned aerial surveillance devices (drones) on the campus. This policy will accommodate existing policies on surveillance, especially APM 648 policy on video monitoring and surveillance.

1. Consent calendar
   1. Approval of the reappointment of Don Austin (JCAST) to the Nominations and Elections Committee.
   2. Approval of the appointment of Dvera Saxton to the Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity.

The consent calendar was approved by unanimous consent.

1. Elections – Nominations / Elections and Nominations Committee
   1. Election of statewide senator to the Senate Executive Committee.

Elections and Nominations Committee Chair Mower announced that there was only a single eligible candidate for the position, Senator Benavides (Statewide Senate). Senator Benavides was elected by unanimous consent.

* 1. Election of at-large senator to the Senate Executive Committee.

Elections and Nominations Committee Chair Mower asked for nominations. Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies-elect) was nominated and elected to the executive committee by unanimous consent.

1. New business

There was no new business for the Academic Senate.

1. Resolution on final grade due dates. Second reading.

Tina Beddall (Registrar) summarized the process her office goes through after grades are received and before the start of the new semester. After the due date her office reminds delinquent faculty to turn in their grades, goes through the incomplete grade contracts to see who has completed work and who has not, runs reports on the academic standing of all students (which is difficult with the MA students because each program has different rules), contacts academically ineligible students to inform them that they cannot return, and then deals with financial aid eligibility and disbursement, and certifies student athletes. She noted that the grade due date used to be on, or close to, January 2, but in recent years they have needed more time to complete all of their work so, after consultation with Faculty Affairs, the due date has been moved forward.

Senator Kensinger (Statewide Senate) asked why it takes the registrar’s office more time now than in the past, especially when we have computers that can do much of the work. Registrar Beddall replied that program requirements have become a lot more complex, and some things, like dealing with limits on the number of times classes can be repeated, have to be done by hand.

Senator Kensinger said that by her calculation the Registrar’s Office only needed 9 days to get all of this done before the beginning of the spring semester, so it should be possible to have a regular January 2 deadline. She also noted that a few times in the past few years when faculty requested a later due date, the administration had managed to push it back, so it can be done.

President Hudson (ASI) said that she thought the first “resolved” in the resolution was too strict and should be softened to give the Registrar more flexibility.

Senator Sanmartin (Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures) said that the shortened grading periods in Fall 2015, Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 (the latest is only seven days, less than two days per course for faculty with a four-course workload) meant there was not enough time for her to grade all of her essay final exams, and her colleagues were in the same situation, as their literature classes all have a crucial writing component. She reminded everyone that if the university really wants to improve student writing, then we need more time to grade it. She also mentioned that the Spring semester deadline had been announced to faculty at the beginning of the semester as May 27th (only eight days after finals are over) but the University website stated it was May 30th,  and asked for a clarification of the right due date. She felt that a spring semester deadline of May 27th was too tight. Registrar Bedall noted that she believed the deadline for this spring was originally May 27th but it had been pushed back to May 30th for infrastructure reasons.

Senator Forgacs (Mathematics) asked how the winter-session courses played into this. He also asked why we just do not push back the start date of the spring semester if the Registrar does not have enough time. Senator Slagter (Women’s Studies) asked why we even needed to have a 16 ½ week semester when other universities do not. Why not just cut out the last half week? Vice Provost Nef said that state payroll requires us to start after a certain date and work a certain number of days, and this largely determines the length of the semesters. Senator Slagter responded that this is a workload issue and creates a disincentive for faculty to require students to write. She does not want to have to work on holidays and weekends at the end of the fall semester to meet the deadline. Registrar Beddall noted that if the deadline was pushed back, her staff would have to work on weekends and holidays.

Senator Gilewicz (English) argued that a firm January 2 date would provide clarity to the faculty, and perhaps the real problem here is dealing with faculty who are routinely late in turning in their grades.

MSC approving an amendment inserting “ideally” into the first “Resolved” in the resolution.

MSC passing the motion to call the question on the resolution.

MSC approving the resolution as amended.

1. Academic Senate resolution in support of AB 798, the College Textbook Affordability Act. First reading.

Vice Provost Nef explained why this resolution has come back to the Senate. The state has created a pot of money for which CSUs and other state universities and colleges can apply to receive faculty support (professional development) for re-designing courses to use less expensive instructional materials, including free open resources. The first resolution did not clearly state what we were supporting, so this version is more specific.

MSC approving the waiving of second reading.

Senator Williams (Agricultural Business) expressed some confusion about the meaning of the words “reduce the cost of textbooks” noting that these are fixed costs. Senator Maldonado (Philosophy) argued that he simply uses e-books because they are cheaper than physical books. Senator Langer (Library) said that faculty could use cheap older editions of textbooks.

Senators Bryant (Political Science) and Ram (University-wide) expressed concern with some of the wording in the resolution, but Senator Langer said that the language came right out of the legislation and therefore should be used in the resolution.

Senator Ram asked Vice Provost Nef if the grant money could only be used for re-designing a course using open educational materials. No, this is the focus, but it may be used for developing other strategies to reduce the costs of instructional materials.

President Hudson (ASI) moved to add a new “resolved” to the resolution clarifying the Academic Senate’s support for the use of reduced cost instructional materials. The motion was seconded and several friendly amendments were offered clarifying the language.

MSC approving the amendment to the resolution.

MSC amending the resolution by adding department chairs to the list of people to receive a copy of it.

MSC approving the resolution.

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:17pm.

The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be on May 9, 2016, at 4:00pm in HML 2206.

Submitted by Approved by

Thomas Holyoke Kevin Ayotte

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate