THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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March 18, 2019

Members excused: P. Hooshmandrad, B. Singh, J. Smith-Warshaw, R. Raya-Fernandez

Members absent: P. Adams, T. Botts, C. Copher, M. Golden, D. Wack, J. Watson

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Holyoke at 4:01 p.m. in HML 2206.

1. Approval of the agenda

MSC approving the agenda

1. Approval of the Minutes of March 11, 2019

MSC approving the Minutes of March 11, 2019 (1 abstention)

1. Communications and announcements  
   1. Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies)  
        
      The Senator expressed condolences to the people of New Zealand following the recent attack on a mosque there.   
        
      In addition, the Senator expressed concern over the recent scandals involving higher education institutions and reminded Senators that universities like Fresno State should stand up proudly about their role in the country’s university system.
   2. Senator Schlievert (Statewide)

The Senator stated that there had been discussions about the recent GE task force report at the last Statewide Senate meeting. The Senator encouraged colleagues to review the first-read items currently on the agenda.

* 1. Chair Holyoke  
       
     Chair Holyoke reminded Senators about the ongoing Provost Search and related open fora.   
       
     In addition, Chair Holyoke drew attention to the recent changes to APM 320 that were made by the President.   
       
     Chair Holyoke reminded Senators about the President’s April 8 budget presentation.

1. New business

There was no new business for the Academic Senate.

1. Student Ratings.  
     
   Chair Holyoke stated that he had been unable to obtain any sample question sets from Scantron. In addition, Chair Holyoke reminded Senators that they are being asked decide on a conceptual direction for student evaluations, and the choice of vendor would be left to the campus procurement officer.   
     
   Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) asked whether the questions eventually chosen must have demonstrated validity and reliability. Chair Holyoke stated that must would be the case according to the APM. Senator Cupery (Social Work Education) asked what would happen if Option B were chosen but the questions could not be agreed upon. Chair Holyoke suggested that it might be possible use the vendor’s questions in that scenario.  
     
   Senator Henson (English) argued strongly in favor of Option B (in-house production of questions) and stated that the questions being proposed have been vetted by other institutions. In addition, the Senator argued that Option B would allow additional campus oversight of the questions chosen and used, which vendors would not offer. In addition, the Senator argued that Option B would allow additional levels of customization to the student ratings instrument.   
     
   Chair Tsukimura (Personnel) was introduced to make a presentation related to student evaluations. *[The full presentation is available from the Vice Chair].*Senator Kim (Economics) asked what kind of work should be done to compare faculty scores across campus to insure consistency. Chair Tsukimura stated that departments would have to share data internally to insure consistency. Senator Henson (English) stated that the in-house option task force is proposing a set of default items that could be modified by departments to measure similar traits across the campus. Chair Tsukimura replied that changing even one question would change the overall instrument and make comparison invalid. Senator Bryant (University-wide) stated that it would be possible to determine whether a question is reliable based on clustering.  
     
   Senator Chowdhury (Art & Design) stated that the questions proposed by the internal task force have been vetted for reliability, unlike those being proposed by vendors. Chair Tsukimura replied that such instruments might still result in grievances being filed.   
     
   Senator Ram (University-wide) stated that even if a vendor were chosen, the campus would still need to create its own instrument and test it for validity. In addition, the Senator asked AVP Baum whether there has been an increase in grievances on other CSU campuses that have written their own questions. AVP Baum replied that she did not have that information on hand. Senator Gillewicz (English) stated that she felt the presentation had been designed to convince the Senate to adopt Option A. Chair Tsukimura stated that he was simply trying to make the Senate aware of possible issues from the Personnel Committee’s perspective with choosing Option B.   
     
   Senator Cupery (Sociology) asked how confident the Personnel Committee is that IDEA Center’s questions are valid and reliable. Chair Tsukimura stated that IDEA Center has been widely used by many universities and has stood up in the past. Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) asked why IDEA was being discussed since that vendor is no longer being considered. Senator De Walt (Liberal Studies) asked how the proposed instrument would account for faculty who modify their teaching between semesters.   
     
   Senator Wilson (Computer Science) asked why the name of the vendor could not be released in advance of the vote to inform the Senate’s decision. Chair Holyoke stated that the vendor cannot be revealed prior to the vote due to state procurement rules. Senator Alexandrou asked whether it would be possible that the RFP could be reissued if no vendor were chosen who meets the campus needs. Chair Holyoke stated that this could be theoretically possible.   
     
   Senator Luo (Construction Management) asked whether the Senate would be asked to approve the pool of questions under Option A. Senator Henson stated that no matter which vendor is chosen under Option A, there would still be a need for instrument design, which would raise the same issue either way.  
     
   Senator Lewis (Kinesiology) asked whether under Option A, the same questions would be used for all departments across the university. Chair Holyoke stated that under Option A, another task force would be established to narrow down the pool of questions initially and then give departments a smaller list of questions to choose from. Senator Parra (Accountancy) asked whether there are any specific experts in survey design that can weigh in on this issue. Dr. Katie Dyer (Option B Task Force) stated that those experts were consulted as part of the task force process. Senator Yun (Literacy, Early, Bilingual and Special Education) asked who would be responsible for administering and evaluating an in-house option. Chair Holyoke stated that a vendor would administer the surveys under either option, and an additional task force or permanent subcommittee would be assembled to narrow down the questions and make recommendations to the Senate on an ongoing basis.  
     
   Senator Lewis voiced concern about departments changing questions from one year or semester to the next, which would create inconsistency for probationary faculty and lecturers. Senator Henson stated that the same issue would exist under either option. Chair Holyoke stated that this might require a change to relevant APM sections. Senator Lewis additionally expressed support for the instrument to provide specifically formative feedback to faculty.   
     
   Senator Gillewicz reminded senators that if Option A is chosen, the work of selecting questions would likely fall upon the Option B task force. Senator Scott (Communication) asked whether comparison at the college level would be possible if each department chose their own questions. Chair Holyoke stated that student ratings are not intended for use comparing faculty to one another regardless, they are only intended for use comparing faculty to themselves over time.  
     
   Senator Hall (Physics) asked for clarification as to whether the senate would be asked to vote on the final set of questions. Chair Holyoke confirmed that this would be the case. Senator Kensinger asked for clarification as to whether weighting questions to address potential biases would be in place under Option B. Dr. Dyer confirmed that this would be studied.   
     
   Senator Wilson (Computer Science) asked whether it would be possible to automatically correlate information from PeopleSoft to a student’s rating form. Dr. Dyer stated that Explorance could do so. Senator Henson reminded the Senate that this information might not be releasable to faculty because of FERPA considerations.  
     
   Senator Burger (Mathematics) asked how likely the student rating system would be to change in the future. Chair Holyoke stated that this would be the purpose of the new task force dealing with this matter.  
     
   The Senate was called to vote between Option A and Option B. The final vote was 7 votes for Option A, 32 votes for Option B, and 1 abstention. Option B was deemed to carry the vote.

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:15pm. The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be on Monday, March 25, 2019.

Submitted by Approved by

Bradley Hart Thomas Holyoke

Vice Chair Chair

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