THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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August 30, 2021

Members present: Raymond Hall (Chair), Tinneke Van Camp (Vice Chair), Kathleen Dyer (Universitywide), Xuanning Fu (Interim Provost), Thomas Holyoke (former Chair), D’Aungillique Jackson (ASI Executive President), Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval (President), Jennifer Miele (At-Large), Rebecca Raya-Fernandez (At-Large), Susan Schlievert (Statewide)

Members excused: (N/A)

Guests: Venita Baker (Academic Senate), Marsha Baum (AVP Academic Affairs), Bernadette Muscat (Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hall at 3:00 pm on Zoom.

1. Approval of the Agenda.

Item to be added following request from Provost Fu (call for service on search committee for interim AVP Faculty Affairs)

MSC

1. Approval of the Minutes 7.29.21

Amendments requested and included.

MSC

1. Communications and Announcements.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** shared that recently a partnership between Valley Children’s Hospital and Fresno State was announced, which will focus on improving health of children in the Valley, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Various departments on campus are involved. It concerns one million dollars per year for a 10-year agreement. It will come with the naming of Bulldog Stadium. The naming has not been determined yet and will have to be approved by the Board of Trustees. It also brings the Carr brothers in direct collaboration with Fresno State, their alma mater.

He also referred to a close collaboration with ASI to incentivize students to get vaccinated (now giving out 50-dollar gift cards for proof of vaccination when vaccinated after August 17). There have also been vaccination clinics on campus. He also emphasized that mask wearing is enforced indoors.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** will soon launch the search for a permanent Provost and VP of Academic Affairs. He will share his ideas of what the university could look like once a permanent Provost is appointed at a later meeting. There will also be a search for a Chief Diversity Officer. The position of Chief Diversity Officer will replace the position of director of the Cross-Cultural and Gender Center. As Chief Diversity Officer they will have cabinet representation and be in charge of campus-wide initiatives. In addition, the search for the Chief Information Officer is underway. A call for faculty representation on this search committee has gone out.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** further mentioned the initiatives of the Mental Health Task Force (flavor of the month ice cream; flash mob organized by social work students; drumming circle). More activities will come.

Finally, he informed the committee that there will be a Fresno State Day with every community college in the region to more intentionally recruit students, with involvement of faculty, students and staff. The aim is to improve the college-going culture in our region.

**Holyoke** wanted to know whether, in regards to the CIO search, is there any thought given to maintaining Technology Services as a separate division or to bring it back under Academic Affairs, as was the case before President Castro was here?

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that Technology Services will remain a separate division, but that the job description for the new CIO clearly makes a connection with Academic Affairs. There are other restructuring ideas, but Technology Services will remain an independent unit, albeit with a close link to the Provost’s Office.

Provost **Fu** shared that in the first week of fall there were a few cases of individuals testing positive for COVID, presumably all of whom were infected off-campus. These cases are being handled very seriously and the services involved are learning to be more effective in the process. We have not seen any large-scale non-compliance with protocols for being on campus. Mask wearing is complied with, with a few exceptions. The FAQs will be updated and perfected. There will also need to be plans for when things take a turn for the worse so we are ready in this developing situation.

**Holyoke** asked whether we will continue to get updates on vaccination rates.

Provost **Fu** responded that updates will continue to be shared.

**Hall** wanted to know whether students who are not vaccinated are now being tested in the testing site in the SSU.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that testing on campus started Wednesday Aug 26 with a prototype; as of today, Aug 30, the testing site is fully operational for everyone who needs to get tested.

**Hall** would appreciate getting updates on testing as well as vaccination rates to be able to have an idea of whether students who need to be tested are indeed getting tested.

Provost **Fu** will work on that.

**Dyer** asked how people who are not complying with the COVID measures are being held accountable and are they being tracked. Can there be a mechanism to keep faculty appraised of how handling non-compliant students is going?

Additionally, **Hall** wanted to know whether we have already disenrolled students?

Provost **Fu** explained that the university has opted for a progressive disciplinary system, and at this point, no students have been disenrolled as far as he knows. He will check with Dean Coon and look into how this can be communicated to faculty to build a common understanding of how such cases are being handled.

**Miele** wanted to know about the response time for hearing after someone tests positive from EHS, more particularly when a faculty member who files a report on behalf of a student, who tells them they tested positive, would be notified of whether or not their class can continue in person.

Provost **Fu** responded that he will talk with EHS to see if a progress report can be provided to faculty after EHS becomes aware of a positive case, regardless of whether a decision of what action to be taken has been made. Not sure whether this is practical - EHS and the health center are understaffed.

Provost **Fu** will also work with the Deans and Chairs to keep communication open and perfect the FAQs and clarity of guidelines for faculty and students.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** added that, if someone was exposed to someone who tested positive, they should receive a message in a timely period. But if they were not in direct contact with the individual who tested positive, they will not receive a message from EHS. For instance, a contact tracer will contact the student, not the faculty member, even if the faculty member filed a positive case on behalf of the student. Faculty members will not get a list of positive COVID cases in their class.

Provost **Fu** further explained that EHS contacts faculty when a class should not continue in person and again when it is safe to resume in-person class meetings. He will verify with Lisa Kao to check the language for this in the FAQ.

**Raya-Fernandez** asked how people are being contacted. There is a security concern with using emails for this purpose.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** responded that this is done by phone.

In that case, **Raya-Fernandez** wondered whether phone numbers are up to date. What if a student cannot be reached?

Provost **Fu** will look into the nature of contact and clarify this to faculty.

**Jackson** hopes that EHS will get additional support and staff to deal with the various things they need to do now, including contacting students and faculty.

Provost **Fu** will ask EHS for a step-by-step breakdown or flowchart of their process following a positive case being reported to them.

Provost **Fu** had a request for the EC regarding MVP position changes, due to retirements and reassignments [list shared with Hall and during the meeting].

* There will be a search committee to replace Dean Nef (JCAST) and Dean Marshall (Research and Graduate Studies), who are both retiring, to be ready to post the job opening toward the end of fall.
* A search will be launched for a permanent AVP of Faculty Affairs. Marsha Baum has been re-assigned. The new permanent AVP should be in place no later than fall 2022 – currently searching for an interim AVP of Faculty Affairs.
* The current Director of CIT will be asked to assume the position of AVP of the California Water Institute (CWI). The new CWI will bring together three units on our campus who are doing water research (CIT, R&D, WET). This is based on advice from the water industry and community leaders, to allow Fresno State to become a real leader on all matters of water. This position will not require a search or cost, this will be a reorganization and change of title only.
* Two internal reclassifications: One concerns an augmentation in Faculty Affairs to Manager of Academic Personnel, who will have supervision abilities. Also, the demand and workload for CFE has increased and evolved into something too large to be part of Faculty Affairs. The Provost recommends to make it into an independent office, to rename it to Office for Faculty Excellent and Academic Technology, and to name Bryan Berrett as interim head while a search for a permanent leader is conducted. This office would operate parallel to OIE.
* Three MPP positions have been eliminated (Director of DiscoverE; Dean of Fresno State South Valley; Vice Provost (for 2021)).

**Hall** asked to see the job descriptions in full for the leader of the Office for Faculty Excellent and Academic Technology. Provost **Fu** will provide it. **Hall** will then make it an agenda item for the EC.

**Holyoke** understands the need to reorganize CWI, but not why the new AVP position is not an interim position first, while a search is done for a permanent AVP of CWI.

Provost **Fu** explains that Hillyer is already an MPP, and will continue to be director of CIT, which falls under CWI, meaning that there is no need to increase personnel.

**Holyoke** clarified that he is not sure it is allowed under APM not to do a search for an AVP. There are many faculty members involved in this institute who will be impacted by this decision. It is therefore concerning that there is no search for an AVP.

Provost **Fu** will consult with the President and report back.

**Holyoke** added that he hopes the advisory committees will be retained under this reorganization of the CWI.

**Hall** agreed that Fresno State needs to keep a leadership role on water issues in the valley, but that leadership of that institute should be supported by faculty.

**Action items**

1. Memo dated June 23, 2021, from Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, President, to Raymond Hall, Chair Academic Senate re: Faculty Appointments to Search Committee – Vice President for Technology Services and Chief Information Officer. Memo has been received.

This was an urgent request from the President in the summer and chair Hall and vice chair Van Camp have served on this committee until a call for service was sent out at the start of the fall semester.

Suggestion: call for service has been sent out

1. Memo dated June 8, 2021, from Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, President, to Raymond Hall, Chair Academic Senate re: Faculty Representation – President’s Enrollment Management Advisory Group. Memo has been received.

Suggestion: send out call for service

1. Memo dated June 9, 2021, from Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, President, to Raymond Hall, Chair Academic Senate re: Faculty Representation – Athletics Advisory Council. Memo has been received.

Suggestion: send out call for service

1. Memo dated April 23, 2021, from James Mullooly, Chair Academic Policy and Planning Committee to Thomas Holyoke, Chair Academic Senate re: Student/Faculty Rights. Memo has been received.

This concerns the creation of a task force.

Suggestion: Add as agenda item and invite James Mullooly to present this

1. Memo dated June 29, 2021, from Deborah Adishian-Astone, Chair Campus Planning Committee to Ray Hall, Chair Academic Senate re: Recommendation for Campus Planning Committee Membership. Memo has been received.

Suggestion: send out call for service

1. Memo dated August 23, 2021, from Keith Clement, Chair Undergraduate Committee to Ray Hall, Chair Academic Senate re: Bachelor of Arts in Women’s Studies to Bachelor of Arts in Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies. Memo has been received.

This has been vetted by the appropriate subcommittees.

Suggestion: add to consent calendar for next Academic Senate meeting

1. Email dated August 24, 2021, from Bernadette Muscat, Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies to Ray Hall, Chair of Academic Senate re: Request to Relax APM 203. Email has been received.

Suggestion: add to today’s EC agenda meeting (new item 7)

1. Search for interim AVP Faculty Affairs

Request from Provost **Fu** to recruit an interim AVP for Faculty Affairs. Asked if anyone on the EC would want to serve, if not, we can ask if someone in the Academic Senate would want to serve. This is a timely matter and will involve one short meeting to review applications and give a recommendation to the Provost. Deadline for applications is tomorrow August 31. One faculty representative is required.

Dyer is willing to serve. Approved.

1. Formation of the task force on faculty responsibilities.

In the last meeting in the Academic Senate in spring 2021, we voted to enact a task force on faculty responsibilities. The chair of the senate will serve, in addition to one faculty representative needed from each college/school, including the library. A call for service for faculty representatives will be sent out by the vice chair of the Academic Senate.

1. Examine student unplanned absence policy in APM 232 in light of Covid. Is a relaxed or modified policy warranted?

**Hall** explains that our current policy on unexpected absences, talks about a week-long absence [‘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 could exceed a week. Do we need to relax the current policy in the context of COVID? Should we kick it up to 2 weeks, before looking at remedies for absences (e.g., IC or W)? Is this too much of a workload issue for faculty? He adds that we need to be mindful that faculty need specific guidance, beyond simply saying that certain APMs are relaxed.

**Jackson** supports relaxing the policy on absences for the time being until things get under control.

**Miele** mentions that on the APM website, APM232 is still listed with the other APMs that have been relaxed due to COVID.

**Holyoke** responds that it is not been relaxed for this semester, but the website might not have been updated yet.

Provost **Fu** will check up on this and make sure the office responsible for updating the website has all the necessary memos.

**Muscat** argues in favor of flexibility on this. Students may even be taken out beyond a period of two weeks (e.g., due to multiple exposures to COVID at home, school, and work), which may keep them away from campus, which does not mean that they are unable to complete their course work. Muscat would also like to see a relaxation of APM 246 on Incomplete (IC) grades, in order for students to have other options but to withdraw from a course. For instance, it would accommodate students to reduce the currently required two thirds of competed course work to half of the course work, which will put a burden on the students, but giving them a year to complete their course work.

**Jackson** adds that relaxing APM 232 could mean allowing 2, or even 2.5 weeks instead of 1 week of absence (to account for recovery time from COVID when ill, and to allow them to get a negative test).

**Miele** suggests to allow up to three weeks of authorized unplanned absence, in case of a positive, symptomatic COVID case, because it is difficult to measure 2.5 weeks’ worth of classes.

**Dyer** explains that it is important to provide specific guidance to faculty and the specify how many weeks of authorized absence have to be considered (and Dyer would prefer to increase the authorized 1 week to 2, not 3, weeks) instead of relaxing APM 232 altogether, which could be taken as simply waiving it. The absence policy should also not be specific to COVID – there might be other reasons why students need accommodation for a longer absence.

**Schlievert** argues that we can extend absences to 2 weeks and reduce completed course assignments to half for IC grades, and revise these if needed depending on the evolution of the pandemic.

**Raya-Fernandez** agrees with having options and to hit low at two weeks for now, but allow for extenuating circumstances to allow for more flexibility.

**Hall** adds that the absence policy is at the discretion of the faculty. It does not mean that faculty cannot accommodate a student for multiple weeks. APM 232 states that a faculty member must accommodate for a one-week unplanned absence.

**Holyoke** argues that 3 weeks seems more practical. COVID has been bouncing around in households – it is not just a student who could get ill, but they may also have to look after a family member. It will put a burden on faculty and a big burden on students, but in the interest of general safety, 3 weeks seems reasonable.

President **Jiménez-Sandoval** adds that COVID is different from any other situation we have had before. It has the potential of impacting others if we bring the person back on campus prematurely. There are also recurring side effects. The contagion factor places it in a different category than others.

**Jackson** echoes the sentiment of the President.

**Dyer** asks why a student being out for COVID is different than a student who is out for a car accident – why would the latter student have to be back after one week, but for COVID they are allowed to be out for 3 weeks?

**Jackson** is happy to see this conversation about policy change and argues that we can use COVID as way to eventually create flexibility and expand the policy for other situations too.

**Hall** reminds the committee that a student does not have to reveal that they have COVID. Their doctor’s note should only state that they need to be absent, not why.

**Hall** suggests to make the following proposal to the Academic Senate about relaxing APM 232: extend authorized unplanned absence in APM 232 from 1 week to 3 weeks.

Supported

**Hall** suggests to make the following proposal to the Academic Senate about relaxing APM 246: reduce completed course work in APM 246 to half instead of two thirds to be eligible for an IC grade.

Supported

1. Relax APM 203

**Muscat** requested to relax APM 203 on special majors, more specifically to take out the sentence that states that students are not eligible for a special major if they apply for a special major in their final semester. It prevents students from graduating who may have been delayed given the current circumstances.

**Hall** proposes to send this to the Academic Grading and Standards Committee, who have looked at this in the past, to make recommendations to the EC.

**Dyer** mentions that the Academic Grading and Standards Committee sent a memo about a proposal on a major revision on APM 203 already in May 2017 to AP&P. These revisions addressed the issue presented today. APM 203 was explicitly designed not to be a failsafe for graduating students. The 2017 proposed revisions, however, included two legitimate uses of special majors: (1) for a composite of existing majors into a new special one, or (2) for a student failing in their major, who may be unable to change their major, to allow them to earn a degree, and allowing them to declare it in their last semester. Revisions were proposed 5 years ago, which would deal with today’s request from Muscat’s office, but ensuing revisions to APM 203 by AP&P did not reflect all the proposed revisions in the 2017 proposal.

**Hall** will check with Mullooly to get a permanent fix on this. It will then be brought back on the agenda of this committee.

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The Senate Executive Committee adjourned at 4:45 pm.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Sept 20 via Zoom.

Submitted by: Approved by:

Tinneke Van Camp Raymond Hall

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate