THE MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

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April 30, 2018

Members excused:M. Dangi, D. Lewis, S. Pooya, A. M. Tawfik, G. Thathcer

Members absent:P. Adams, B. DerMugrdechian, M. Golden, K. Mcbee, B. Zante (ASI)

The Academic Senate was called to order by Chair Holyoke at 4:02 pm in HML 2206.

1. Approval of the agenda

MSC approving the agenda

1. Approval of the Minutes of April 23, 2018

MSC approving the Minutes of April 23, 2018 as amended

1. Communications and announcements
   1. President Castro

The President announced the lecture this evening with presidential historian Michael Beschloss.

The President then opened the floor to questions from Senators. Senator Ram (University-wide) asked the President to discuss the impact of recent events on faculty and staff. The President answered that the university has received more than 25,000 communications regarding the recent situation, with 5,000 calls answers and 9,500 calls not being answered. Approximately 8,000 emails and letters were received and are still being triaged. All communication channels were jammed in the previous week and continue to experience heavy utilization at the present time. Some Fresno State staff endured trauma as the result of this incident.

The President reiterated that this has been a very serious situation and the university’s reputation has suffered as a result. The potential loss of donor support remains unknown. An open forum will be held on Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. in the North Gym to discuss the situation further. Thursday at 7 p.m. an open community event will be held at the Save Mart Center. The president suggested that the senate consider amendments to the APM related to the use of social media.

Senator Sanchez (Chicano and Latin American Studies) asked if there is an estimate on the loss of money to the university. The President answered that an exact figure has not yet been placed and conversations are continuing. The loss of donor money had been “significant”.

Senator-Elect Botts (Philosophy) asked whether there is a discernable theme underlying the threats being made to the university. The President answered that the vast majority were demanding a particular action before the final decision was announced. Following the decision, there was concern about the decision that was ultimately made.

Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) asked how the senate might contribute to this decision. The President answered that the senate can consider social media-related issues and have conversations around this issue. Within the community, university members can reiterate that the university values civility and respect.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) offered empathy for the campus staff and faculty who have been affected and stated that the campus is walking the difficult path of free speech at the moment. The Senator asked whether there is a sense of how many messages are being generated by organizations and how many have come from local community members. The Senator also expressed a concern about to notion of placing a civility restriction on speech by campus members due to the fact that civility is not a universally agreed-upon standard. The President answered that some calls seem to have been generated by certain organizations and media outlets, but sentiment is also strong in the community. Some community members have asked the faculty to discuss these matters and have conversations over speech and civility.

Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) asked how collages could potentially differentiate themselves from other colleges. The President answered that this incident had demonstrated the power of a single individual to impact the larger community. The President stated that he is currently engaging stakeholders from across the university to continue engaging our partners.

* 1. Robert Harper (Interim Provost Appointee)

Interim Provost Harper introduced himself to senators.

* 1. Paul Crosbie (Chair of Biology)

Reported on the Provost’s General Education Task Force. The Task Force has developed seven themes that students can choose between if they so desire in an effort to add structure to the existing curriculum. The task force has also rewritten all the learning outcomes for GE, which will be distributed to relevant committees in due course.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) asked whether it would be made clear that these areas are purely voluntary for students. Chair Crosbie reported that the areas are purely voluntary. In addition, the new learning outcomes are purely advisory.

Senator Ram (University-wide) asked whether existing GE courses have all been mapped onto the proposed themes. Chair Crosbie answered that no courses had been placed into any themes and that decision would be made by departments down the line.

Senator Schettler (Africana Studies) stated that she had significant concerns about the themes being proposed because they may not support a traditional liberal arts education. Chair Crosbie stated that the themes had collectively been established by the task force, but the current themes have no weight and will merely be considered by faculty in the future. The Senator additionally asked what the process will be to establish new learning outcomes. Chair Crosbie stated that the themes will be revised by departments.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) reiterated that this changes nothing in current general education, it merely establishes advisory patterns.

1. Installation of new senators

The following senators were installed:

Tiewei Liu

Library-Digital Services

Takkara Brunson

Department of Africana Studies

Tina Fernandes Botts

Department of Philosophy

Gina Sandi Diaz

Department of Theatre Arts

Travis Cronin

Department of Social Work Education

Jennifer Moradian Watson

Department of Educational Leadership

Hubert Muchalski

Department of Chemistry

Yupeng Luo

Department of Construction Management

The re-election of the following senators was announced:

Rebecca Raya-Fernandez

Student Health and Counseling Center

Todd Wilson

Department of Computer Science

Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Department of Armenian Studies

Bradley Hart

Department of Media Communications and Journalism

Athanasios Alexandrou

Department of Industrial Technology

Chris Henson

Department of English

Michael Botwin

Department of Psychology

1. New Election – Nominations – Nominating/Elections Committee.

The chair was turned over to the Don Austin of the Nominations and Elections committee.

The Executive Committee (Member-at-large) was the first item on the agenda. This was opened to nominations from the floor.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) nominated Professor Rebecca Raya Fernandez to the committee. The nomination was seconded by Senator Botwin (Psychology). Senator Raya Fernandez stated that she was willing to serve. There were no other nominations from the floor and Senator Raya Fernandez was elected by acclamation.

Nominations from the floor were opened for the position of Chair. There were no additional nominations. Nominations from the floor were opened for the position of Vice Chair. There were no additional nominations.

Paper ballots were distributed for the election.

1. New Business.

There was no new business at this time.

1. Resolution on Faculty Free Speech. Second Reading.

Senator McKeith (Animal Science) deferred to Animal Science and Agricultural Education department chair Dr. Randy Perry. Chair Perry stated that he believes in free speech but argued that senators should consider whether there could be boundaries placed on it within the context of the university. Chair Perry additionally stated that this incident had been much worse than previous events for the university and encouraged senators to consider how similar future incidents might affect the campus. Chair Perry emphasized the potential impact of the incident on campus students and encouraged senators to consider placing borders on faculty behavior.

Debate on the motion was interrupted to announce that Thomas Holyoke and Bradley Hart had been reelected to the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) moved to table the resolution pending future developments and the acquisition of further information. The motion was seconded. Senator Ram (University-wide) asked the proposers of the motion whether they believe it is still needed at this time. Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) reitreated that the President had stated that some things are in motion and argued that this should suggest that the motion be tabled.

Senator Bryant (University-wide) argued that the motion is needed because there are APM sections related to this area.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) recognized Dr. Meta Schettler, the motion’s proposer and a former senator. Dr. Schettler argued that the senate should keep the item on the table due to the backlash the university received in this case. The senator argued that there is not enough awareness of free speech issues in the community, necessitating the motion.

Senator Watson (Educational Leadership) argued that the motion should be tabled pending further consideration by senators, particularly from the perspective of a new senator who had not previously seen the motion before the current meeting.

Senator Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) stated that the resolution does not take hate speech into account and suggested that a policy should be developed through normal channels.

Senator Botts (Philosophy) argued that hate speech was not a particular issue in this case because the remarks in question did not rise to the level of that categorization.

Senator Ram (University-wide) stated that some senators may not know how to access senate documents, particularly new senators, and that for this reason a delay to the vote might be required.

Senator Kensinger (Women’s Studies) stated that a resolution differs from policy and is merely a description of the body’s views.

Senator Jenkins (Mechanical Engineering) argued that the motion should not be tabled because the matter is timely. Any APM revisions could be considered at a later date.

Senator McKeith (Animal Science) asked Senators how many faculty have consulted their own departments and fellow faculty members about the resolution, given that the Senate represents the views of the entire faculty.

The vote was called. (16 yeas and 16 nays, 9 abstentions). The Chair and Vice Chair were called upon to break the tie by the Senate parliamentarian. Both the Chair and Vice Chair voted to table the motion, and therefore the motion to table was passed.

1. M/I Graduate Requirement Response to E.O. 1100. Second Reading.

The senate returned to the motion previously proposed by Senator Sullivan (Sociology) to strike items 1 and 2 from page 2 of the task force. Senator Miele spoke against the motion and argued that students should have the opportunity to take any M/I course, and that striking these items might endanger M/I overall.

Senator Sullivan (Sociology) argued that approximately 75% of students are not in departments that offer M/I, which would privilege the departments that represent the 25% of students who are in those departments.

Chair Mullooly (AP&P) spoke against the motion on the grounds that the president may not sign off on the interim policy if those items are removed.

The Academic Senate adjourned at 5:16pm. The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be on Monday, May 7, 2018.

Submitted by Approved by

Bradley Hart Thomas Holyoke

Vice Chair Chair

Academic Senate Academic Senate