

Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 8, 2020

In attendance [all via remote connection]: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Keir Moorhead (Vice Chair), Sarah Senk (Secretary), Steven Browne, Christine Isakson, Elizabeth McNie, Cynthia Trevisan, William Tsai, Mike Mahoney (Provost), Sianna Brito (Academic Support Coordinator)

Absent: None

I. Grading Changes

- Chair presents options for allowing students to take classes for Credit/No Credit.
- Browne notes that it might be possible to convert graded STCW courses to CR/NC. But it is complicated by the fact that students need a C- or better to meet the STCW requirements. Some students, however, “pass” the course with a D, and, therefore, can take the follow-on courses even though they have to repeat the STCW course. For these students, an NC is not equivalent to a D.
- Chair explains that we would need approval from the Coast Guard for STCW classes either way.
- Senk notes that campuses appear to be counting “Credit” as C- or better, so what happens if a student gets a D in a course that doesn’t require a C- to pass? Then they earn no credit for the course?
- Chair notes that East Bay’s policy allows students to petition to change back from “NC” to “D” by August 31.
- Trevisan expresses concern that not all students may want CR/NC grades, and suggests giving students the choice to opt for a letter grade rather than making a C/NC mandatory for all.
- Tsai suggests faculty might record letter grades on PeopleSoft and students can then opt for C/NC grading by requesting the Registrar’s office process the change (per CSU Fresno’s policy). Our equivalent would be something like you have until say Apr 22 (last day of classes) to turn in a change to CR/NC to the registrar. Faculty turn in letter grades. Then in the weeks following, the registrar would convert F to NC's and process each form to convert B's and C's to CR and D's to NC.
- McNie expresses concern if this is a blanket policy for all students but would be in favor of something that would allow students to choose between a letter grade and credit/no credit, rather than having them *all* go to no credit.
- Provost points out that students may want letter grades for the following reasons including financial aid eligibility; Graduate and Professional School admission; certification and licensure; veterans must receive letter grades; student athletes need at least 6 graded units to retain NCAA eligibility; international students might need letter grades to maintain their immigration status, and students on academic probation need letter grades to raise GPA
- Senk notes she spoke to university advisors about the probation policy and urges the university to reconsider academic probation. Notes that East Bay’s policy would allow students on probation to return in the fall no matter what the grades are this semester. Problem is that students on probation are experiencing so much anxiety right now, particularly if they don’t have adequate resources to participate in class or online tests, etc.

- Provost reports that he spoke with president and both are against a blanket policy that would switch *all* grades from graded to CR/NC.
- Senk says that an acceptable blanket policy would be a mix of two elements from East Bay's and Fresno's policy that "F grades on all grade rosters will be replaced with NC" automatically *and* "students subject to academic disqualification will remain on probation."
- Christine: how should we structure this process? Should we have a sub-committee (made up of one representative from each school)? Isakson, McNie, Moorhead, and Senk volunteer.
- Browne asks whether we should make it a Senate Executive Committee Resolution so that we don't have to wait for a full senate meeting vote.
- Provost asks if there can be an ex officio member like the Provost or President because it's problematic to have a resolution drafted by a few people on the Executive Committee.
- Senk asks for clarification: impression was that this sub-committee was being created so that we could work nimbly and expediently to produce a draft, ideally by the end of the day tomorrow, and that this draft would *not* be final, but would be a starting point that would then get administrative and student feedback. Isakson agrees. Provost says this is acceptable.
- **ACTIONS: Isakson, McNie, and Senk will draft resolution in the next 24 hours and share with ASCMA, President, and Provost for feedback on Friday, April 10. Chair will schedule a meeting with those constituencies on Friday.**

II. Cruise

- Provost notes that a recent projection by the University of Washington funded by the Gates Foundation has projected no deaths in the state of California by the end of May due to the rigorous social distancing measures that were implemented early. And if this is true, it may be possible to begin cruise by late May. Nothing is set in stone right now, but this is what Provost reports hearing at Cabinet meetings.
- Moorhead reports need to consistent communication about cruise. How do we operate the academic programming? (eg. in Engineering it's required that students have a 60-day cruise. They may be satisfying sea time requirement, but we need to ensure that students are getting the right academic qualification.)
- Isakson asks if someone who teaches on Cruise is there in these Cabinet Meetings.
- Provost understands the concern and expresses that the #1 concern of the university is that students are educated properly.
- Isakson recommends it would be helpful to have someone who actively teaches on cruise to attend these meetings.
- Provost reports that the Cabinet meetings are focused more on quarantines, eg. how to quarantine students, how do they return to campus, how to test them, how to get them all into separate rooms. There's a total of ~550 rooms and 514 students who are still in need of STCW courses, and this is the thing discussed in cabinet more than cruise, because we have to get the students back here in the first place, and they're coming from all over the world, and there are concerns about them bringing the virus in from other states.
- Isakson asks about plans to quarantine faculty who will be teaching. Provost notes that was brought up.

- McNie adds that this is sounding exceptionally complicated for a few reasons: just because we hit a point of zero deaths in California does not mean that social distancing measures will be relaxed; the two-week quarantine plan seems to be new, because the plan that was communicated previously involved students returning to take classes right away; and finally, just because they're sticking around the Farallon Islands doesn't mean that anyone on the ship is less at risk.
- Provost clarifies that his report is meant to give insight into what Cabinet is dealing with right now. It is all tentative.
- McNie asks if there is a date at which a decision will be made, because a lot of the stress and anxiety stems from the lack of a decision about what will happen.
- Provost reports: maybe by the end of April, because if we delay much past that we will start to get into the Fall semester. We are trying to see what happens in the next week or two, the most critical two weeks we have in terms of reaching the peak. Provost emphasizes he wishes he could give us a date but can't. But suspects that by the end of April we can expect to know more, especially since regular classes will be done by then.
- Moorhead asks what are the contingency plans being discussed at Cabinet level if the cruise doesn't happen.
- Provost reports that discussion has involved doing it during the academic year.
- Moorhead points out that there is no committee right now that as a group discusses the academics on cruise. The existing cruise committee is focused on where to put the ship, not the academics.
- Provost asks who would be a good representative to bring in when we focus on the cruise itself. Isakson suggests Moorhead, who volunteers to speak to the Engineering side of it but notes that they diverge from Deck in STCW requirements. Isakson suggests Steve Browne or Dan Weinstock or Bets McNie. Provost says it would be good to have it be a member of the executive committee to streamline communication.
- **Actions: Provost will make recommendation that Moorhead and either Browne or McNie will join cabinet discussions when the topic turns to academics on cruise.**

III. Student Evaluations

- Chair reports that President conveyed a desire to know how alternate modalities worked for students.
- Tsai says in principle we don't want to ask questions about individual faculty. But are we trying to get a "big picture" by asking questions about all of their courses, or questions about individual courses that we will aggregate together?
- Trevisan asks if we can ask students to "think of your instructor before the switch to online learning" because if we do evaluate faculty individually, students may otherwise focus on the negative if they didn't like
- McNie suggests a radical proposal: what if we just don't do evaluations this semester?
- Pinisetty notes that we may have to teach online in the fall, so this is an opportunity to learn more to improve if we have to do this. We can't blame the instructors if things don't go well because we had *two days* to make the switch.

- Tsai says he is okay with this. Data would go to individual faculty and would get aggregated into an anonymized report.
- Pinisetty suggests evaluation goes to individual instructors and faculty development coordinator.
- Isakson notes this is a problem because it assumes rational and unbiased response to the data. Isakson expresses concern that the data would stay with the faculty development coordinator. In a perfect world it would be wonderful if we could have this data used only for self-improvement purposes. But speaking for junior faculty, the *purpose* of not having evaluations this semester in the first place is because of the extraordinary situation we're dealing with this semester. If you can say in writing that these evaluations will not produce a bias in the minds of people on tenure committees, and people will not see this data.
- Pinisetty recognizes that this is a valid point, asks if it would be acceptable to send an email to faculty saying that this data will not be considered for RTP purposes, and his email would serve as that record?
- Isakson says she doesn't know if that's enough to keep people from being unbiased. McNie adds that if the data get out there, people could still be influenced. Suggests that we make it optional for each faculty member to decide.
- Provost emphasizes that this data will *not* be used for RTP. The goal is just to evaluate teaching in the alternative modality framework because we could be doing this again in the fall. So we may have to do online courses in the fall as well, and it would be nice to have some input.
- Pinisetty suggests maybe best option is to not evaluate individual instructors and keep the survey broad/general.
- Browne notes in chat: "For those who get good feedback, it would be nice to have an official way to get course evaluations. Perhaps the information can go directly to the faculty member. The faculty member should decide whether to include the feedback in the WPAF."
- Tsai shares survey on Screen Share. Provost asks who is responsible. Tsai notes it was a group effort: Tsai, Pinisetty, Senk, with input from Nipoli Kamdar, Michele van Hoeck, Amber Janssen, Khaoy Mady, Gary Moser, Kristen Tener, and Graham Benton, and we adapted questions from other surveys including the HEDS consortium.
- Provost suggests making questions even more specific.
- Senk advocates for using this survey.
- McNie suggests changing first question to allow for
- Isakson suggests changing "alternate modality" to "online teaching" since the former is a technical term that students might not understand.
- Committee agrees to use the survey developed by Tsai et. al.
- **Actions: Tsai will work with Khaoy Mady to get the survey to students.**

IV. Faculty Development Coordinator Vote

- **Actions: Pinisetty will set up election for Faculty Development Coordinator. Will use Survey Monkey (only available option without Qualtrics) and will send a follow-up email to faculty. Election will be open for one week.**

V. Other Business

- Trevisan notes that ASCSU has been discussing what happens with campus parking fees. ASCSU chair is collecting information from all of the campuses.
- Provost reports he sent CSU Interim refund policy by email.
- Trevisan's impression was that the document was CSU-wide information.
- Provost reports Cabinet has not discussed parking, and he will bring up the topic. Also notes that reimbursement policy needs to be decided, and it's complicated because we don't know when people are coming back.

Meeting adjourned.