

Senate Exec Meeting (3/4/2021)

Attendees: Dinesh Pinisetty, Elizabeth McNie, Margot Hanson, Matt Fairbanks, Lori Schroeder (Provost), Christine Isakson, Frank Yip, Cynthia Trevisan, and Thomas Cropper (University President)

- Introductions
 - Getting feedback on the content of minutes. Maybe a little more organization in terms of headings, topics, etc. Margot noted this makes it easier to skim the material.
 - Margot asked about Sharepoint for the Senate Exec. Dinesh said he would follow up with IT.
 - The Provost and the President joined us (transitioning from another Zoom meeting).
- Conversation with President Cropper
 - Dinesh thanked the President for attending. Views this as important to the relationship between admin and faculty.
 - Bets started off talking about the Deputy CIO position. Faculty are scratching their heads about why this hire is happening. This appears to be a new position, A/V support position is unfilled, and we still have bad internet in Maritime North. Why is the deputy CIO position being filled?
 - President said he appreciated the question. Would like it if these questions came to him earlier so he could bring specific information. Thinks the Deputy CIO position is not new, but simply unfilled.
 - Frank and Margot fleshed out the A/V position situation. A/V positions used to be Randy Thomas, and Royster. Then Royster/Jamar. Then Jamar. Then no one.
 - President wondered whether this is more Khaoi's department.
 - Margot explained that they are separate positions, though they would have reported to Khaoi until they shifted to being under IT supervision recently.
 - General agreement from attending faculty that the A/V services on campus are weak to non-existent in some facilities.
 - President wanted to be make sure the issue is clear: is it that tech support to faculty on campus is weak? Also asked whether this issue has been raised to Deans/Chairs. If they don't know, then perhaps some adjustments to the way we communicate need to be made. He understands the question, but this is definitely something that the Deans should be working with and should be hearing directly from faculty and faculty leaders.
 - Dinesh noted that some of the issues are stemming from using spaces (due to COVID) that aren't normally classrooms. For example Rizza: faculty can't access the A/V equipment, and the A/V support is not there.
 - Cynthia noted that the development of the Deans and Chairs duties/policies is a positive development and should help with the communication side of things.
 - President agreed, but said he would continue looking into the problem so that can be solved.
 - Margot reiterated for the record that it has historically been two positions in this area. Royster and Jamar most recently.
 - President noted that people do sometimes not give much notice on retirement and resignations.
 - Margot said that at least in the case of Royster, there was plenty of lead time.
 - Bets noted two other more minor issues. The census data from last fall and the faculty climate data (from Fall 2019). Bets would advance this with Graham.

- Cynthia and Dinesh noted that the department reports that require this data were turned in without it.
- Margot noted that the CSU-wide data might be a supplement (Tableau-based).
- President Cropper noted that a cadet (IBL?) is working on bringing Tableau to our campus. He did not specify what data sets would receive this treatment, but the implication was that it would be analogous to the CSU-wide version.
- Frank brought up a couple issues: (1) that admin roles do not go through the same justification process that faculty positions do, and this frustrates faculty, (2) noted the example of Qualtrics, which is a two year process that still hasn't completed. It's always - "We're working on it." - but it seems not to progress. Credited the Provost for pushing this ahead.
- Margot noted that the announcement of the two new Advancement positions raised questions among faculty. President said that these were budget neutral, essentially replacements. Linda Brouwer, for instance, resigned, and is being replaced.
- Margot asked about the off-site that is coming up.
- President said it would be at the Anchor Center, pods of 5-6 in separate rooms for social distancing.
- Cynthia expressed surprise that it was in-person meeting. [awkward silence followed]
- Frank asked the Senate Exec members who would be abstaining. Most said yes. The President did say that accommodations would be made (Zoom) for remote meeting participants.
- Dinesh brought up VPAT issues for faculty. Noted cases where faculty shifting to COVID-adapted courses need certain software. Faculty put in applications for things, and the timeline is indeterminate. 4 months? 10 months? Even Dean Michele van Houck was unable to get specific timelines out of IT and the CIO.
- Margot shared that some CSU campuses already have VPATs on file for certain software, which can help model our applications for the same software. Not that we should do business this way going forward, but it can help. Would like to see some coordination between CSUs to certify VPATs across the system rather than specific campuses.
- President noted this, and said he would follow up with Deans, Provost, and CIO. Important that the communication includes these folks. Dinesh noted that at least the communications from engineering faculty copied the Dean and Chairs.
- News from President Cropper
 - President thinks that next week (3/11 – 3/15) will see some vaccines being administered on campus. Not sure on the vaccine manufacturer. Everyone who signed up will get the vaccine.
 - General happiness ensued.
 - President thanked those working on the enrollment management project.
 - President has charged the Unity Council with work that will look at structural barriers that may exist to hiring and retaining employees and students of underrepresented groups. Looking for policies and procedures that have some implicit bias that are preventing this in any way.
 - He would like all of us to participate in this work in some way – department and class procedures, admissions, recruiting, etc.
 - Frank shared his experience on the Unity Council. Noted that this effort (to tackle issues surrounding the treatment and retention of employees and students of underrepresented groups) was pushed by Nipoli Kamdar and Ian Wallace back in 2014, but the Unity

Council was mostly bound up in efforts for celebrations and planning events, which was less rewarding in Frank's (and other faculty's) opinion.

- Margot noted that she is excited about this work, but feels ill-equipped to address it. Would like to see people with the necessary expertise brought to bear on the issue. From her perspective, dedicated hiring in this area would bring a lot of benefit to the University.
 - President said not to sell yourself short. Can start with something specific, like policies and procedures in Library – are they inclusive, are they helpful, do they discriminate in some way against specific groups.
 - President noted that bringing in expertise does take quite a long time, so though expertise is important, we do need to move on this ourselves.
 - Provost noted that this work may fit nicely into the retention and resilience work that's happening. Noted that Student Affairs staff and the people working on the retention and enrollment projects have a lot of knowledge on these subjects, though appreciates the need for expertise in addressing these issues.
 - President brought up risk management, not just COVID risk, but the risk of mental illness, etc.
 - He noted he does “fireside chats” on the waterfront, and that there's a variety of programming and social events that are being done or coming online soon.
 - President talked about monies to Schools to support faculty scholarship. Nothing specific, but this would be in addition to the President's Mission Achievement grants.
 - The President asked for some feedback on these issues or anything else.
 - Margot noted that disparity in the communications from the University (Twitter, Insta, etc.) regarding the online programs. Most stuff seems geared toward the in-person students and programs.
 - President appreciates the point and noted some efforts in that regard – online fireside chats, calling campaign, etc.
 - Christine said that representing them in campus social media would be good.
 - Provost shared that Deans have been asked specifically to come up with ideas and programs that would engage the online students and also represent them in campus communications.
 - Christine and Frank noted examples of inadvertent, but problematic, things that exclude the online students. Frank brought up the social media accounts' posts being almost exclusive to on-campus activities and students – and the comments on those posts reflect online students' frustration with that. Christine mentioned a conference that was made much more difficult to attend for online students.
 - President thanked us for our comments. Said we all have some work to do.
- Meeting adjourned.