



General Faculty Senate Meeting

Time: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Minutes

10/21/2021

In attendance:

Julie Simons, Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Elizabeth McNie (Vice Chair), Margot Hanson, Christine Isakson, Colin Dewey, Nipoli Kamdar, Frank Yip, Keir Moorhead, Mike Holden, Ariel Setniker, Margaret Ward, Tamara Burback, Steve Browne, Wil Tsai, Matthew Fairbanks, Ali Moradmand, and guests.

1. Call to Order

- After some technical issues with the meeting were addressed, the meeting was called to order at 11:05am.
- *Agenda approved by acclamation.* (Hanson motions, Simons seconds, no objections.)

2. Senate Chair Updates

- On the issue of assigned time for exceptional levels of service to students: Senate Chair Pinisetty, CFA, and Associate Provost Benton have been in talks to organize the process for these awards. There are 6 WTUs to award recipients in Fall 2022/Spring 2023. There has been no award the last three years (including the current academic year), which was an error.
- Senator Simons clarifies that the origin of these WTU awards in the CBA is to alleviate the cultural taxation of faculty members who engage in exceptional levels of service to students because of their gender, race, or ethnicity.
- Steve Runyon [CFA Chapter President] noted that the selection committee should receive some guidance on the nature and purpose of these awards.
- A new task force: the Learning Spaces Task Force. The goal is the standardization of classroom technology. It will be chaired by Khaoi Mady [Director of Academic Technology]. There will be three faculty representatives, one from each School preferably.
- On the subject of the indoor mask mandate: There has been some lackadaisical implementation. Senator Chair Pinisetty that disciplinary measures will be enforced on both cadets and faculty who are found to be violating the mandate.

- Announcement: RTP letters from Department Chairs and Department RTP committees are due today to Associate Provost Benton.

3. Introduction of Robin Bates (new HR manager and DEI officer)

- Robin Bates introduced herself and noted her long experience in the CSU (21 years at SFSU prior to her last position at Contra Costa County), and she's excited to be back.
- She wants to build community for all campus groups and create an environment where everyone feels respected and valued. She looks forward to working with us.

4. Resolution on Changing Toxic Culture (Dewey and Yip)

- Senator Dewey is presenting. He outlined a brief history of incidents of intolerance and hate on campus and the campus response to them.
- He noted that this resolution is not about pointing fingers, but to affirm the responsibility of faculty to set the tone for campus. Faculty are one of the biggest influences on student behavior. We do not want to appear indifferent to the climate on campus around these incidents.
- A piece of the response to the incidents that was missing was the whole faculty standing up and voicing our opposition to these incidents and also what we will *do* to change the culture.
- Faculty are sometime reluctant to call out their colleagues. Unfortunately, silence on these issues can signal acceptance or at least letting the unacceptable do unchallenged.
- We want to work with other campus groups to tackle these problems.
- Senator Yip, who co-authored the resolution, spoke in support of Senator Dewey's statements and noted that although the resolution only references a few incidents, we likely do not know about all the problems and there are also many more of them historically.
- Senate Chair Pinisetty opened the floor to questions or comments.
- Senator Dewey noted that one incident that is in the current draft (SS coffee on the O2x table) will be deleted as our campus has terminated our relationship with that company.
- Senator Hanson wanted all to know that King Xiong [EOP Coordinator] and the DEI Council have also been doing a lot of good work on these issues recently.
- Senator Simons noted that one of the incidents is already the subject of an investigation by an outside party.
- Steve Runyon wondered whether gender-based violence and sexual violence were meant to be in the issues called out in the WHEREAS sections.
- Senator Yip clarified that the other resolution under consideration today directly addresses that, although this resolution is also meant to call for the examination of campus culture and institutions. Perhaps that isn't clear in the current draft, so thank you for that question.
- VP of Cadet Affairs, Kathleen McMahon stated that she appreciates this discussion and also that there was going to be an investigator from another CSU coming in to examine the incident at the end of summer cruise.
- Senator Burback indicated her support for this resolution. She mentioned that the campus responses have often been adequate to good, but the public acknowledgement of the existing issues is important – we made a mistake, this happened, and we're not proud.
- Senator Ward asked whether an investigator from within the CSU can really be independent, and also expressed her concern that any investigator should know something about how ships work to properly address the issue.

- Senator Hanson said that she was looking at other campuses who were addressing these issues and thought a group to work with Robin Bates to coordinate efforts across campuses might be a good idea.
- Discussion concluded. Senate Chair Pinisetty will collect feedback on the resolution prior to its second reading.

5. Resolution in Solidarity with Victims and Survivors of Sexual Assault (Burback and Isakson)

- Senator Burback is presenting.
- The Midshipman X atrocity prompted the writing of this resolution. We want to get to a better place collectively.
- Senator Burback reviewed the RESOLVED statements and made the following important comments: (1) the letter to MARAD from the maritime academy Presidents asks MARAD to lead, which is not the way we should proceed – we should be leading. (2) We need continual improvement and we need assessment. (3) We need to engage people who are not normally engaged in these issues for trainings and other efforts to improve.
- Senator Simons offered a small correction – the resolution should say ‘Faculty Senate endorses, etc’ in the 1st RESOLVED.
- There were many supportive comments and many thanked Senators Isakson and Burback for their work on this resolution.
- Senator Yip pointed out that the reporting mechanisms have serious issues on this campus and cited the example of flow charts from the Title IX that had many abrupt and unsupportive ends for students who are considering reporting an incident.
- Vice Chair McNie commented that she particularly liked the call for us (faculty and Cal Maritime at large) to be a leader on this rather than a follower.
- Discussion concluded. Senate Chair Pinisetty will collect feedback on the resolution prior to its second reading.

6. Request for Early Access to eWPAFs (Dean Mandernack)

- Dean Kevin Mandernack presenting.
- He said that Associate Provost Benton indicated to him that the current access rules for WPAFs are a relic of the paper WPAF past.
- He proposes access be granted to subsequent reviewers (Deans, etc.) when the eWPAF is finalized in late September so that those reviewers have more time to properly review its contents. He noted that of course he (and the other reviewers) would read the letters written by the earlier levels of review before concluding their own reviews.
- Secretary Fairbanks asked a clarifying question: is this a proposal for next year’s cycle?
Answer: yes.
- Senator Yip drew an analogy to jury getting all the evidence in one instance. His opinion is that Deans and other subsequent reviewers should get the WPAF as a complete package including the letters of the previous reviewers. He suggested adjusting the timeline instead, within the constraints of the CBA.
- Dean Mandernack clarified that he wasn’t asking for the ability to submit a review earlier than previous levels of review.

- Mike Strange [Associate Professor of Engineering Technology] indicated that he agreed with Senator Yip's position.
- Senate Chair Pinisetty noted that the current RTP policy states that the eWPAFs must mirror the paper WPAF procedures. We also need to consider the ten day window for rebuttal at each level when considering changes to the timeline.
- Senator Tsai noted that formally, the RTP Committee would need to initiate a review of the policy, and he put forward that perhaps that faculty need to have better guidance on how concise the file and its contents should be. That could help with how time-consuming the reviews can be.
- Senator Browne pointed out that a change to the RTP policy would be a lengthy process and that all tenure-track faculty would need to vote on changes. In addition, he stated that the rebuttal letters are important to have on file prior to subsequent reviews of the WPAF, so previous levels of review would have to complete their work prior to access by the next level.

7. Student Evaluations – Issue of Misogynistic and Xenophobic Comments

- Senate Chair Pinisetty is presenting. He described the instances of misogynistic and xenophobic comments that have occurred in student evaluations in past years. He noted the previous efforts to encourage constructive student comments in course evaluations and statement added as a preamble to paper student evaluations in AY 2017-2018.
- In 2020, the transition to the online modality meant no preamble statement for many courses.
- The immediate plan for this semester, where evaluations will again be online, is to add the statement as a preamble to the online version of student evaluations.
- However, how to deal with these comments is still an open question. Ideas for next steps: (1) a committee for pre-review of comments, deleting comments deemed not constructive/offensive, but Pinisetty noted some faculty opposition to this idea in the past. (2) look to other campuses for workable solutions, but none Pinisetty has found seem to have a perfect solution. (3) The Senate Executive Committee will be convening a task force to work on these issues and the student evaluation questions themselves.
- Senator Simons commented that we can solve some of the problems with better evaluation questions. That should be job #1 for the task force.
- Senator Tsai reported that he had consulted with Pat Harper, who indicated the online evaluations did include the language of the paper preamble statement [referenced above], but perhaps we could adjust it so that the students would have to actively acknowledge reading it prior to the evaluation itself.
- Senate Chair Pinisetty suggested a collaboration with Cadet Affairs to help students understand the purpose of the evaluations and their responsibility.
- Khalid Bachkar [Professor, IBL] stated that he believed that the students needed to be heard, but they also need to know the consequences of their comments. Bachkar noted his personal experience with xenophobic comments in his evaluations. He would advocate for having offensive comments deleted. He also noted that he had been tracking these kind of comments over five years, and there has been an increase in their frequency over time.
- Senate Chair Pinisetty thanked everyone for their comments and noted that it was a difficult problem.

8. Open Floor

- Secretary Fairbanks asked whether there was time to approve the minutes from the last two meetings now and apologized for not noticing that minutes review and approval was not on the original agenda. Agreement that these would have to wait for a future meeting.
- Senator Simons brought up the issue of many locked doors in instructional spaces on campus. Facilities has not been responsive in her experience. These are learning spaces, and they need to be functional, which includes being open during class hours. Provost and others noted that this was meant to be the responsibility of janitorial services in the morning and parking services in the evening, but the issue would be reviewed.
- Senator Simons also brought up the research funds that have been given to Schools and was wondering about the processes for application. Provost Schroeder responded that these should be in place sooner rather than later and that she was pressing the Deans to develop appropriate processes for applications. There should already be a form to apply for “scholarly activity” funds.
- The School Deans followed up on the above, saying that they were in discussions to develop the processes and they have also been talking amongst themselves to keep the processes consistent across Schools.

9. Meeting Adjourned [12:15 pm]