

Senate Executive Committee Meeting (11/4/2021)

Attendees: Bets McNie (Vice Chair), Matthew Fairbanks (Secretary), Margot Hanson, Frank Yip, Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Provost Lori Schroeder, and Christine Isakson

Absent: Wil Tsai. Was attending ASCSU meetings today.

- Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)
 - Its units don't count, and the CSU is trying to move away from the exam itself. Not sure where the necessary GE units will come from in certain majors on campus. Pinisetty noted he has no idea where 3 units will come from in ET – they don't even have the units to satisfy EO 1100 yet.
 - McNie – not sure the Chancellor's Office should dictate whether individual campuses use the writing exam.

- Student Representatives for General Senate/Senate Exec
 - Hanson noted that we're supposed to have student reps there as well from the Compass (previously known as the Diamond, which was previously known as the Triad). We should get these and also update the by-laws to refer to the Compass instead of the Triad.
 - Also, **Leah Wyzykowski is our new Senate Exec student ex-officio member.**
 - Yip complimented Wyzykowski as a student, and said we were lucky to have her here.
 - Hanson hoping to visit the Associated Students (AS) meetings as often as possible to reciprocate the representation.

- Commercial Cruise Program
 - USMMA (United States Merchant Marine Academy) has suspended their commercial cruise program for 1 year.
 - We are not sure what will happen with our commercial cruise, but we need approximately 210 billets. In normal times, we get about 135 billets. Not sure how this will be resolved. There will possibly be commercial cruise for some on the TSGB.
 - Yip – do we know what efforts are being made to make folks feel safe and prevent sexual harassment and assault? Pinisetty – Career Services says satellite phones and a buddy system are being considered.
 - Hanson – any conversation at AS on this issue?
 - Wyzykowski, speaking personally, thinks the suspension is horrible. Basically punishing the whole class because of bad actors.
 - Yip – yes, rather than addressing the root causes, they suspend the cruise and punish the other students.

- Student Evaluation Task Force and other Committees
 - Pinisetty – noted the change to co-chairs in the Student Evaluation Task Force, which he suggested. Julie Simons and Aparna Sinha will be co-chairs.
 - No volunteers from faculty for the other positions on the Task Force as yet.
 - McNie will be targeting individuals for service. She commented that we seem to be running out of willing individuals for the various service commitments (task forces, etc.).

- Pinisetty – and the ARC? McNie – actually Steve Browne and Wil Tsai did volunteer to rejoin. McNie reached out to tenured female faculty in an attempt to improve the diversity of the ARC, but they all said they were overburdened with service already, which is accurate.
 - General Education Committee – Ryan Wade has stepped into the Chair role for the remainder of the fall semester.
 - Learning Spaces Task Force – Ariel Setniker, Sam Pearson, and Keir Moorhead have volunteered. Wil Tsai also expressed interest, so perhaps him as well. McNie also reached out to C&C to get their perspective on the committee. Waiting to hear back.
 - Academic Support hiring committee – Aparna Sinha and Ariel Setniker volunteered. Pinisetty reached out to them specifically because of their involvement with the tutoring center and other student support services.
 - Yip – is this person [the Coordinator of Student Academic Support] going to be coordinating tutoring and have relevant expertise?
 - Provost Schroeder – tutoring and so much more actually. They will oversee tutoring, will be consulting with faculty on basic academic skills sessions. The Provost also noted potential tie-ins with the FYE program.
 - Yip noted that this would be the first time since 2014 that someone with expertise would be running these programs. It is very much needed, so this hire is much appreciated.
- Incident on Cruise (Student Locked In)
 - Pinisetty informed the President about the issue. He met with the Commandant and Keir Moorhead last Friday. The Commandant tried to figure out who the student is who was locked in. Pinisetty wondered whether this was important compared to the incident itself. Commandant clarified that he wanted to be sure the student was supported appropriately.
 - There was some discussion of the other causes of the student being in there – apparently there have been previous incidents of students going into those spaces to smoke, etc. It was noted that the failure was that the incident didn't make it into the safety records and safety meetings on cruise.
 - Hanson noted that the space was locked from the outside. The discussion of smoking and other activities are a smokescreen. [general agreement]
 - Commandant also claimed that he reached out to Keir multiple times to follow up on the incident, which Keir did not recall.
 - Pinisetty also emailed the Captain and Commandant to ask about their response to the incident. Commandant noted his inquiries and his instructions for more frequent checking of these spaces. The Captain essentially said Commandant was correct. One line email.
 - Mural Policy
 - McNie mentioned her draft email to the Captain on this issue. Nice, short, and direct: the policy is stalled, and we want to get it moving.
 - McNie shared the draft email with the group. Hanson suggested that including a specific start date might be good if possible. The time period between the start of the policy draft and now that she recalls is actually longer than 1.5 years.
 - Some discussion of this. McNie found an email – February 2019 for the start of the process. Yip – the goal was for the committee to have a policy ready for cruise 2019?

McNie – that would have been ambitious for a university-wide policy, but agreed that was the initial goal.

- Yip – should we send something stronger, perhaps from our Senate Exec email? We could ask the Captain to present on the issue at the General Senate meeting.
 - It was agreed that the Senate Exec email address would be the sender. McNie will invite him to speak at our 11/18 General Senate meeting.
 - Yip noted his appreciation of McNie staying on the issue.
- Draft Resolutions Feedback
 - Pinisetty likes Yip's idea of sending them wide (faculty *and* staff) with an ask for feedback.
 - Pinisetty will be sure he has the latest version from Burback and Isakson for distribution.
 - Tenure-Track Search Policy
 - Pinisetty thanked the group for our feedback. Provost has forwarded it to the Deans. Deans will be considering the suggested revisions.
 - Provost Schroeder shared that she had also brought up untenured membership and was in support of it. She will be asking the Deans to adjust that. The Provost also spoke to the issue of ranking of candidates. She noted that there are ways in the written feedback to indicate support and views the unranked list as a fairer way.
 - IRB (Institutional Review Board)
 - Fairbanks laid out the issue, which is that the IRB's Chair, Khalid Bachkar, resigned, and the IRB does not have all its representatives, so it can't elect a new Chair. This is an issue, because research proposals cannot be reviewed and approved by the IRB until the Chair is in place.
 - The Provost said that she had filled the staff positions on the IRB and that Veronica Boe is the point person on IRB issues. The only unfilled position is the at-large faculty representative.
 - McNie will be recruiting for the at-large faculty representative, who should preferably have a social science background to complement the existing expertise on the IRB.
 - Provost Updates
 - First: we all know about Midshipman X and the commercial cruise incident. Congress is involved. MARAD has brought a 30 day halt to all commercial cruise programs. No immediate impact to our cadets. If it is extended, we might get a directive on accommodating the USMMA students, and also there might be issues with our own commercial cruise. We will likely be hearing quite a bit of conversation on this.
 - Second: the 'black water' incident (raw sewage overflow and clean-up) on the TSGB. Captain Sam Pecota presented on the incident in a VPs meeting. The Provost outlined the issue as presented there: ship came into port at Cal Maritime and there was a sewage overflow. The Chief Engineer deemed it not an emergency and could be delayed until an effective cleanup option could be ascertained. The VP meeting participants indicated this was an error in strong terms.
 - Sometime later (weeks), it was decided that cadets could clean it up. That was a serious error in judgment. The individuals who made that decision have been spoken with.

- They're hoping for a health and safety 'post mortem' on this led by Craig Dawson (Health and Safety manager for campus). The Provost was originally told that the delay in clean-up was a requisition issue, but pointed out that there are short cuts to that process when it's a serious health and safety issue.
 - McNie – it doesn't seem like the Captain is being held accountable. Provost – the Captain claims he was not informed, but he was pressed hard on this point in the VPs meeting. There were questions of whether he should have known or who didn't communicate appropriately. Also, if the female cadet initially asked to clean it up hadn't complained, would we know about the incident at all?
 - Various members of the Senate Exec were incredulous of the Captain's claimed lack of knowledge of the incident.
 - McNie will pen a letter inviting the Captain to address the issue at General Senate.
 - Keir Moorhead apparently had brought up the issue both to the Captain and the Provost. Keir talked to the Provost specifically about two classrooms, which were in some way affected by the overflow. The Provost passed the issue to Marc Goodrich who currently handles janitorial services.
 - Yip – can I ask Leah [Wyzykowski] whether students were aware of the issue? Wyzykowski said that it was a general topic of conversation. Essentially everyone knew about it. Wyzykowski was commercial cruising at the time and still heard about it.
 - Yip – we really need to hear from the Captain about his claims of ignorance.
- Athletic Events Notification
 - Pinisetty – some students are not notifying instructors in a timely manner. Noted that his faculty have been affected. STCW requirements are strict, and so the faculty are put in a difficult position.
 - He noted the importance of athletics but the academic concerns need to take precedence.
 - The athletics committee decided that it's the responsibility of the cadets to inform faculty of absences rather than coaches or anyone else. Assis Malaquias is the faculty rep on the committee. Tom Oppenheim was the representative, but he is on sabbatical.
 - Pinisetty – we need to determine who is responsible when notification doesn't happen. Students?
 - The Provost spoke to Karen Yoder, Director of Athletics, about the issue this morning. What's clear to the Provost is that Yoder wants the student athlete taking responsibility, which is apparently a best practice on other campuses. However, this is a culture shift for our campus which is happening perhaps too rapidly. In response to this, Karen Yoder has noted that the PassPort has a function that can communicate the athletics schedule to faculty directly. Provost said this seems like a reasonable middle way in the near term. Karen Yoder has instructed coaches to recruit such that students who put themselves in this situation (with STCW or other classes) just don't go on trips as a consequence. Academics first was Karen Yoder's position.
 - McNie – I actually prefer that the student be individually responsible. I don't want to sift through schedules and lists of students. Would prefer to communicate individually with her students to handle the issue.
 - Pinisetty – but we don't want to be in the position of failing a cadet because of a missed notification. We need a mechanism, while we're working on this transition of responsibility, to help these students.

- Yip – seems like we can have both mechanisms for notification, and he would hope that athletic travel is optimized for academics, not convenience. He noted an example of a travel schedule that seemed to optimize costs rather than the ability to balance academics and athletics. The schedule he noted had a lot of back and forth in airports, buses, transit centers, etc all to avoid paying for another night's stay in a hotel.
 - Wyzykowski – the students who had to do that were exhausted and were not happy about it either.
- Resolutions and Open Floor
 - Hanson – regarding resolution responses from the President: these should have been discussed last General Senate meeting, and they need to be on the agenda for the next.
 - McNie – we need to discuss it in the next Senate Exec and then the General Senate? [general agreement]
 - Discussion of resolution responses – I will be posting them to the website. Yip wanted to ask the President about whether he directed admin to not offer virtual options to meetings. The Provost clarified that she thinks he's not opposed to it but that it shouldn't be an expectation because of the technical overhead.
 - There was also some discussion of Louis Solana's rebuttal to his suspension. Fairbanks noted Julie Chisholm has a copy and that Solana wants it distributed widely. Chisholm would be happy to give a copy to anyone who wants one. Wyzykowski apparently got a copy on a Discord server, so it's definitely out there and being discussed in the student body.
 - McNie stated that the situation is catawampus. There's been so much energy and time spent on a dispute on someone's beard, and yet we've got two months of black water.
 - Hanson brought up the draft AS resolution on grooming standards and problems with the current standards. There was general applause regarding the resolution. Wyzykowski said it was moving forward to a vote very soon.
 - Isakson joined (she was attending ASCSU meetings earlier). She noted the black water incident and that she was disturbed by it. Will there be testing for diseases for student workers who worked to clean up the sewage? There's a lot of potential for disease. Additionally, the clean-up was at least partially done in a class. There should be standards for what tasks are appropriate in these classes.
 - Wyzykowski noted the incident last year when a contractor fell, injured their head, and a student was tasked with cleaning up the blood. Blood got all over their coveralls, which were replaced, but the task seemed out of line with what a student should be doing.
 - McNie noted that the sewage cleaning was going on for *days*. Protective equipment varied from nothing to Tyvek suits. The idea that the Captain doesn't know anything seems preposterous.
 - Isakson made the point that the lecturers for those courses are at the command of the Chief Mate and/or Captain and so there's pressure to just go along instead of refusing the directive. Curriculum (tasks and assignments) should be determined by the academic faculty without their position being at risk. There should be clear boundaries on what tasks are appropriate.

- Yip said that the Midshipman X issue is hitting *hard* on the campus. Both with students and faculty. We're not professionals in mental health, and yet we're being asked to deal with these issues.
 - General agreement that these issues are pressing and that we should continue our discussions in our next meeting. Next meeting isn't scheduled (Veterans' Day holiday), but should be soon.
 - Wyzykowski said it was good to see that the issues students are discussing are also being discussed here.
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- Meeting Adjourned