

Senate Executive Committee Meeting (3/3/2022)

Attendees: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Bets McNie (Vice Chair), Matthew Fairbanks (Secretary), Christine Isakson, Leah Wyzykowski (Student Rep), Frank Yip, Keir Moorhead, Wil Tsai, and Provost Lori Schroeder

- Minutes
 - *2/24 minutes approved by unanimous consent* after small amendments and clarifications to the record.
 - *2/10 minutes approval postponed*, because one of the participants from that meeting has not yet arrived.

- Chair Updates
 - There is a Senate Exec meeting with three CSU Trustees on campus 12:30 – 1:30 on 3/4. Pinisetty asked if we could meet. Isakson, Pinisetty, McNie, and possibly Fairbanks and Moorhead will be able to attend.
 - Commandants candidate interviews: Pinisetty requested 30 minutes for the Senate Exec, but Commandant Konecni cannot accommodate that. His stated reason is that there are lots of meetings with small groups of students already scheduled for the candidates. We were encouraged to come to the designated faculty hour during each interview. These are scheduled to occur the week of 3/7.
 - Pinisetty walked down to HR and finally managed to get the faculty list for determining Senate representatives, so that process is moving. Pinisetty: when was Julie Simons' end of term? Fairbanks: beginning of Fall 2022. Pinisetty will send information on Senate representatives, etc. to Fairbanks.
 - Pinisetty shared the Department Chair survey form draft. He would like feedback on the form from us. Steve Browne, Nader Bagheri, Assis Malaquias, Cynthia Trevisan are the Chairs to be evaluated. Those Chairs will submit a 3 page summary of their accomplishments as Chair and how they've fulfilled their responsibilities as Chairs.
 - Tsai: question about the timing. When would we normally do this? Fall? Pinisetty: spring. Their terms start in July. Survey would normally be administered in their second year as Chair. Bagheri is currently in his third year, so he's the odd one out, but all others are in their second year (as designed).
 - Tsai: is this being done in Qualtrics? Pinisetty: either that or AdobeSign if we can't get that together. McNie: Qualtrics is good for aggregating information.

- Discussion of the First Year Experience (FYE)
 - Pinisetty: concerning FYE - Tsai, Mac Griswold, and Graham Benton presented to the Chairs/Deans meeting. Pinisetty believes we should be advocates for the proposed FYE program. The problem will likely be the proposed 1 credit weight of the FYE.
 - Tsai: the challenge may be that faculty experiences with past FYE are making them reluctant to adopt this new FYE.

- McNie: concern in my department was the elements of FYE that were associated with ELDP (Edwards Leadership Development Program), which does not resonate with MT faculty.
- Provost: At Cal Maritime it seems that we've had department-specific courses and then GE courses kind of beamed in from the CSU. This FYE is university-wide, but originates internally. What happens if you don't get full buy-in to a university-wide program? Faculty will need to wrestle with what happens then and how to resolve it.
- Some discussion of this. Some of the points made: (1) the Chancellor's Office (CO) may have something to say about adding an FYE, i.e. a common course requirement. (2) It was also noted that Senate trying to impose anything on departments is not something that is generally done and likely would not be successful. (3) although the idea of FYE is somewhat foreign to us, that's not the case within the CSU more generally. Other campuses may have a process for this type of university-wide academic program.
- Provost: at my previous institutions, common courses (across the University) were approved by the whole faculty in some manner rather than each department saying yes or no.
- McNie: perhaps the problem is that right now, the pitch is to give up a credit. If the CO says it's ok to add a credit to all majors, that would ease the process considerably.
- Isakson: interested by that idea (adding a credit across the board). If the CO approved, that would be a good solution. She noted that students would have to pay for that credit and it would have to go through the Curriculum Committee. She wondered whether some funding could be made available to pay for that credit so that students wouldn't have that additional financial burden.
- The Provost noted that it would be difficult to have that financial support in perpetuity.
- Moorhead and others thought adding credits to the major is unlikely to be popular or possible. Pinisetty thought that the CO would be reluctant to do this if only because of the precedent it might set for the CSU.
- McNie wondered if somehow pulling a credit by fractions from a whole basket of courses would be feasible. Provost Schroeder encouraged this, saying that perhaps Senate could approve the FYE and then leave departments to creatively implement that 1 credit.
- Pinisetty: I think we need to simply encourage faculty to have an open mind about the FYE. If we start by saying there's just no way and not thinking about solutions, we're not going to get far.
- Tsai: I kind of feel like I'm starting two goals down. Not even sure we have a majority of Senators/Senate Exec that would support the FYE as is.
- Yip: I think it would be a hard sell. Speaking from a department that does a lot of service to other departments, it seems like there's a lot of factionalism when it comes to courses and credits.
- McNie: I wonder whether some subset of departments would be feasible as a sort of pilot for the FYE.
- Pinisetty: some faculty feel that Captain's hour is sufficient and they don't see the additional value in FYE, but obviously the last couple years (in particular) demonstrates that something needs to change.
- There was more discussion of how the FYE program's value could be made clear and convincing to faculty.

- Yip: I'm concerned that the commandants are not the appropriate leaders for FYE. They don't have an educational background and students often view them as rule enforcers, punitive in nature.
 - Isakson: when I was here, there wasn't a commandant, there was a "professional development officer". Perhaps we need a discussion of the nature of the commandant's office.
 - Moorhead: this is perhaps off topic, but I'm tired of the argument that 'punitive' is necessarily bad. Faculty can fail students, have high standards, but still get good reviews.
 - Pinisetty: I think we need to focus on progress. We're in a sort of an existential crisis and we need to try to not look backward. He volunteered to speak with faculty one on one on the FYE issue.
 - Provost Schroeder noted that faculty passed a resolution that wanted more faculty input and presence in FYE and the culture of the University. Also, not everything needs to come together for FYE in one year, but if we can show success, perhaps those who are resistant will support further developments.
 - Pinisetty pointed out that usually developing a good FYE takes a few years. We might not get immediate results and improvements.
 - Moorhead floated the possibility of integrating FYE into the "Intro to" courses (MT, ET, etc). McNie indicated that idea was met with resistance in MT.
 - Tsai said he looked at those courses as well. He had viewed those as a possibility, but less so after the initial conversations with departments about the proposed FYE.
 - It was agreed that Senate Exec will be taking a team approach to assisting the FYE team in speaking to departments.
 - Yip: I think a closer look at the "Intro to" classes is worthwhile. They seem at least in part to be part of socialization within the program. Seems like that fits well with the FYE.
 - Some discussion of other options, including perhaps getting credits from senior level/upper division courses.
- Open Floor
 - Moorhead shared measures being announced by the Corps Commander including freshman Friday formation adjustments (and the odd activities during them) as well as limiting the Mezzanine of the dining center to senior cadets only. This doesn't seem to be helpful in terms of improving cadet experience.
 - Tsai: the Title IX (TIX) investigation initiated by the CO for each campus is proceeding. They're starting at Fresno. It seems like they're moving quickly. He's wondering about the intersection of those investigations and the document about Cruise 2021 shared with campus recently.
 - Yip thought we should probably try to get to front of the line (i.e. be investigated sooner rather than later). It seems likely that otherwise we will be waiting for some time due to our small population, but we clearly have issues that bear examination.
 - Some discussion of this and whether we had already had some level of review from Grand River Solutions (Jody Shipper). There were some mixed recollections on whether she was going to be writing a report on our TIX issues.

- Provost Schroeder said that the person we're hiring to be TIX coordinator would most likely be doing a comprehensive review when they arrived. She would think the coordinator's and the CO's TIX investigations could work hand-in-hand.
- Isakson noted that the new coordinator will be very busy. It doesn't seem like they would have the bandwidth for a comprehensive campus review.
- Provost Schroeder said that the person would not just be handling current investigations and incidents. Their job would be to also proactively seek out solutions to patterns they observe, gather relevant data, etc.
- Pinisetty shared that the faculty TIX deputy appointment would likely be delayed until we've acquired the full-time coordinator. Perhaps Fall 2022 or Spring 2023.

- Moorhead wanted to voice a concern: for the upcoming summer training cruise there will be a new Captain, new First Engineer, new Second Mate, new Chief Mate, potentially others, and the watchstanders in engineering are all external. McNie indicated that she was also interested in and concerned by this.
- What is the Captain selection process? Pinisetty expressed confusion. Right now he thinks it's the Captain's recommendation vs. a faculty recommendation. McNie said that was her understanding as well.
- Pinisetty: we should move the faculty side forward then.
- Provost Schroeder shared that the Captain already had two candidates, both alums.
- There were some comments to the effect that this process is odd and unlike other hiring procedures at the University. Additionally, since the Captain already has selections ready, is it worth faculty time to recommend others? There has not been a lot of interest in serving on the faculty committee, perhaps because of these concerns.
- Others noted that the process is important and the faculty at least formally have a voice. Isakson volunteered to service on the faculty committee for selecting Captain candidates. Moorhead said that we should be working from the same list and it would be great to do a general call for applications, even just for two weeks.
- There was agreement that a general call would be good, but that the University was already on a very aggressive timeline for having someone in place in time for Cruise.

- Meeting Adjourned