

7-17-2020

2020-07-17 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

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University of Dayton. Academic Senate. Executive Committee, "2020-07-17 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate" (2020). *ECAS Minutes*. 497.
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Approved Minutes
Executive Committee of the Academic Senate
July 17, 2020
10:00 am – 11:30 am
Zoom meeting

Present: Joanna Abdallah, Paul Benson, Connie Bowman, James Brill, Sam Dorf, Deo Eustace, Mark Jacobs, Carissa Krane, Leslie Picca, Jason Pierce, Fran Rice, Andrea Seielstad

Guests: Janet Bednarek (Faculty Board representative), Anne Crecelius, Denise James, Sean Falkowski (Faculty Board representative)

Excused: Shannon Driskell

Opening

- Opening prayer / meditation-Sam
- Approval of minutes from 07/10/2020 ECAS meeting-Minutes approved no revisions

Announcements

- Next ECAS meeting July 24
- Leslie will present the Academic Senate's plans for this academic year at Staying Connected on Wednesday, July 22, from 2:00-3:15. On July 28, she will meet with CAS and CAP to discuss the 11 steps toward becoming an anti-racist university that have been announced.
- Please send agenda items to Leslie for future ECAS meetings.

New Business

- Full Time Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Administrative Responses to Mary Ellen Dillon—Concerns expressed in this communication are also concerns held by many tenured and tenure track faculty. It was suggested a similar communication be sent to them too.
- Updates, Questions for/from Path Forward Working Groups—Multiple questions and concerns were expressed.
 - There was a reminder that not every class will be offered remotely. Students will need to work with their advisors if they want to switch their schedules to all online classes. About 35-40% of courses will be offered fully online. Every effort will be made to ensure students can make progress in their courses if they become ill or need to quarantine.
 - Faculty in engineering were asked to have online options for missed classes.
 - Will the scheduling of courses be based on the preference of the faculty teaching? Will NTT be given the same option? Response: About 2/3 of the faculty want to teach in person, this percentage differs dramatically across units and divisions. Departments will have the final decision on the modality of a course.
 - from chat-What is the university's tolerance for faculty choice? Presently, any faculty member can decide at any time that they do not want to teach in person. Is that correct? Comment: This varies across units. We were asked what we thought but it is not clear that we can actually choose. Comment: Faculty need to know what the university policy is on that. Otherwise, you get the usual problem of some people feeling more responsible to the university to press themselves to take risks and others staying at home.

- Course modality for biology offerings has already been marked in Banner without input from faculty teaching the course. Response: This has not been released to students, the current composite is a draft, classrooms are still being assigned. There will be a communication with faculty before the composite is finalized.
- Faculty are struggling with how modality will be determined. Pedagogy plays a part in this decision too. When will these decisions be made?
- Are decisions being made about room assignments and the like before any of the safety measures and plans are determined? Breathing internal air is increasingly being recognized as a rather significant risk.
- Will talking points be developed to help faculty advise students around modalities? How do you advise students who don't want to come back on campus, especially if they are returning to campus to only take one class face to face while the rest of their classes are online?
- from chat: We have to keep in front of us that many students take classes in other units. Our engineering students take a 1/3 of their courses outside the school of engineering. That communication is critical to advisors to stop the sending of students to other places for answers to questions
- Concerned students on campus will choose not to attend in person sessions if a remote option is also made available to reduce capacity issues. Response: Classroom modality will be determined by the end of July, and students will be able to see the modes of their classes. Each program is different, flexibility is dependent on the student's major, the faculty, the chair and the deans.
- Has it been determined where students will be able to participate synchronously when they are on campus in a remote or blended environment? Where will students physically be present to take assessments?

What concerns should be addressed by the Academic Senate and ECAS

- The FAC could work to articulate who would be furloughed and who would not if this situation occurs again. They could also address how much of a choice an individual faculty member would have and how much of a voice they would have in determining class modality.
- The senate could identify resources for faculty if they disagree with the decisions made by their department chairs. Response: One of the primary reasons for Dean's offices is to address concerns like this. If the person believes the dean's office isn't responsive, concerns need to be conveyed to Carolyn. Together with Paul, the concerns will be addressed. The faculty hearing committee on grievances is also available for this purpose.
- This is a time for chairs to engage with their faculty. That communication is not happening with consistency across the institution which is causing more uncertainty across campus.
- When will final classroom assignments be released? Is the infrastructure in place to support the classrooms?
- How flexible will the university be if someone chooses to begin a semester under one modality and then chooses to switch to another?
- Should we evaluate how decisions are made at the chair level across the university?
- from chat: Leaving this choice issue to individual faculty with pressure from the administrative side to create face-to-face and messaging already sent out . . . does lead to an equity issue in the same way that service does. Some people are more likely to step up to the plate and feel the obligation to the institution, some easily do not. This can and does have a gender correlation,

- among other things. When you later look and see who opted to teach only online and you hear some side conversations, including some of the political ones, it seems like a foolish choice for those who initially felt obligated to try to do the face-to-face.
- We need to make sure that the traditional avenues of governance, feedback, and complaint are highlighted and emphasized to discourage to some extent, fringe noise that distracts from the MANY.
 - Preparing for this fall has been more work. An overarching recognition and appreciation for this increasing workload would be appreciated.
- Closing the Loop on the Proposal from Mary Ellen Dillon on May 13, 2020- The issues raised in the proposal have now been addressed. The larger issues of FT-NTT faculty representation will continue to be addressed.
 - Shared Governance & Petitions—
The workload of the senate for this year:
 1. Decision making and responses to Covid-19
 2. Senate composition
 3. Revisions to the UPT policy
 - To address NTT representation on the senate, ECAS will develop a couple of proposals to bring to the senate. Last year's work on senate composition will be used for background.
 - People need to be reminded of previous communications, remind them of structures already in place to voice concerns, and encourage participation. The current situation is not conducive to setting up new systems, it would be difficult to make changes now.
 - How core decisions are being made and who is making them is still a serious concern.
 - Many points outlined in the petition have been addressed, or are already happening. Perhaps not to 100%, but attempts are being made.
 - The faculty voice and the way decisions have been made have had great impact on staff. The attempt to include all at the decision table, especially the lower ranks of staff, is appreciated.
 - The action part is missing in this petition. If there's interest in a new process or representative group, a draft proposal needs to be developed that includes duties and authority instead of expecting a person of authority to do this. Comment: And when would staff persons do these things? Especially non-salaried staff who have expressed concerns with not having time or space to organize?
 - To broaden the understanding of faculty governance, suggest the development a website for the entire university. Develop a brief primer, include the history of the senate, and convey there is an openness to change.

Old Business

Adjourned: 11:32 am

Respectfully submitted, Fran Rice