

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes August 11, 2020

Senators in attendance included: A. Everhart, S. Yohannes, T. Robinson, M. Rathinam, B. Kaufman, T. Olson, H. Schreier, S. Sauro, P. Bennett, S. Pitts, A. Sofie-Clemmenson, A. Ekas-Mueting, B. Bickel, C. Viaoux, D. Flint, T. Yamashita, R. Lambert-Bretiere, K. Omland, M. Castellanos, N. Sinnott, K. O'Dell, J. Liebman, Orienne Smith, and S. McDonough were in attendance.

Other attendees: President Hrabowski, Provost Rous, P. Dillion, N. Young, D. Alfgren, R. Forno, A. Reid, T. Gierasch, A. Moreira, V. Sipe, R. Bennett, E. Meyre, V. Thomas, C. Sheffield, B. Souders, F. Ferraro, A. Biswas, J. Squire, K. Carroll, J. Maher, D. Johnson-Tate, K. Moffitt, E. Feeser, C. Nicholas, E. Friar, A. Rocha Lima, A. Wayman, B. Chapin, E. Friar, Y. Mmozie-Ross, W. Lacourse, T. Carpenter, S. Sutton, S. Casper, S. Shin, S. Bass, S. Purushotham, R. Chen, R. Meyers, P. McDermott, M. Perks, G. Simmons, L. Schaefer, K. Cole, P. Dawson, M. Bains, L. Akchin, A. Wayman, J. Rutledge, D. Bradley, K. Steiner, and E. Lavik.

I. Call to Order

President Smith called the meeting to order. She welcomed the senators and thanked them for attending the July meeting. President Smith introduced herself for those who were new in attendance, noting that this would be the last of three meetings of the Faculty Senate this summer to discuss the impact of the COVID19 on our campus community and issues related to the reopening of our university in the fall.

Susan McDonough, Vice President, will serve as timekeeper and will monitor the “chat box” to assure that all questions are brought forward. She will announce when time limits have been reached and will take note should there be queries regarding our process and procedures. The chat function is for senators interested in posing a question or comment during the Q/A. Dr. McDonough will recognize senators in the order in which these requests are made.

President Smith noted too that the Senate had invited the leaders of the Fall Planning Work Groups to join the meeting and also that the meeting would be recorded to assist in the preparation of the Faculty Senate minutes. She added that the minutes for this meeting will be available prior to our next special summer meeting.

The senators received a copy of the proposed agenda prior to the meeting. There were no objections to the agenda and the agenda was approved unanimously.

President Smith was pleased to share the results of the last meeting's first item, the “Suggested Interim Amendments to UMBC's Policies Impacted by new Title IX Regulations”.

There were twenty four votes with twenty senators voting “yes” and three senators voting to abstain and one senator voted “no”. These amendments have been approved.

On the second item, “Recommended Template Language for Inclusion in Syllabi on Blackboard for Fall 2020”, Twenty eight senators voted and all twenty eight voted “yes”. This proposed template language has been approved.

The senators received a copy of the proposed agenda prior to the meeting. There were no objections to the agenda and the agenda was approved unanimously.

II. President’s Remarks

President Hrabowski expressed his sincere appreciation for everyone attending the meeting.

President Hrabowski shared with the senators that the campus status is an evolving situation right now. He reminded them that ninety percent of our courses this fall will be taught online; eight percent will be taught in a hybrid format and only two percent will be face to face.

He also pointed out that every department and every faculty member has been given the choice to decide which format is best for them, and faculty can decide at any point to change their courses to fully remote. President Hrabowski noted that UMBC has been very conservative in its approach to the reopening of the campus—an approach that not all campuses have adopted. He stated that several campuses did not follow the low-density model that we have in place and they are now having to close because they were not in the position to reopen safely.

The President concluded by reminding everyone to “keep hope alive!” and thanked the senators and campus leaders for all that they have done.

III. Provost’s Remarks

Provost Rous addressed the senators. He thanked the faculty and their departments for their continued spirit and diligence throughout the pandemic and during these very stressful and challenging times.

He emphasized what President Hrabowski stated earlier about UMBC’s prioritization of safety during the reopening planning and how this has given our university a distinct advantage over other universities that were not as cautious. He also reminded the senators that this continues to be a fluid situation and that the university will continue to carefully monitor the situation.

Provost Rous updated the senators on the items related to faculty support that were mentioned at July’s Faculty Senate. He noted that later in the meeting the senators would hear from Dr. McDermott, Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs, and Valerie Thomas, Chief Human Resources Officer, who will discuss modifications to

UMBC's faculty support plan and provide an overview of the federal leave policies available to help caregivers during this time.

Provost Rous also mentioned that his office is currently developing language about the impact of COVID-19 on research output that will be included in the letters that go out to external reviewers as part of the promotion and tenure process.

Finally, Provost Rous recognized Dr. Scott Casper who will be stepping down from his position as Dean of CAHSS on August 17th. Provost Rous noted Dr. Casper's exceptional service to the university. He went on to welcome Dr. Kimberly Moffitt who will be serving as Interim Dean of CAHSS and to thank Dr. John Stolle-McAllister for his willingness to be considered for this position as well.

IV. Approval of Minutes

The senators received an electronic copy of the July 14th meeting minutes and they were approved unanimously without changes.

V. Enrollment Updates – Yvette Mozie-Ross and Janet Rutledge

Dr. Mozie-Ross provided a presentation outlining the enrollment numbers as they stand currently. She called attention to the outreach activities of her team to boost enrollment of both new and continuing students. This presentation was shared electronically after the meeting.

Dr. Mozie-Ross added that student orientation is a two week event. During the first week students go into an online module, exploring them at their own pace. In the second week they are assigned to an advisor who helps them with registration. Currently, 1727 freshmen have signed up for orientation this year which is up from approximately 1500 last year.

She shared with the senators a new initiative that has been very successful this summer—a re-engagement campaign designed to attract former students who had left the university without finishing their degrees. Her team reached out to students who fit this profile from the years 2009 – 2019, and so far the results have been very promising.

Dr. Rutledge presented a chart of the graduate student enrollments which was shared electronically after the meeting. She announced the beginning of a new program, “Global Ambassador,” which enables current graduate students to serve as paid mentors to international students who are taking online courses.

After these presentations a question came up in “Chat”:

“Can we have an update about athletics, and especially whether there were athletes on campus who now participate in events where conferences are canceled or sports are postponed?”

Greg Simmons, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, answered: “There have been fewer than fifteen athletes on campus in the last couple of months. Those athletes have been approved to come onto campus for rehabilitative training either post-surgery or going through injury recovery. We are expecting the student athletes to be back in the fall living on campus or off campus in residential housing. They have been approved through the risk assessment process and the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee to begin training with their teams. We do not yet know what is going to happen with winter sports.”

VI. Testing and Symptom Tracking at UMBC – Nancy Young

Nancy Young, Vice President of Student Affairs provided an update on Testing and Symptom Tracking at our campus.

Dr. Young noted that UMBC has been preparing for our reopening throughout summer with a series of pilots to test how quickly we can process tests and to work out any glitches in the procedure. The summer sampling with these pilots suggests that our efforts so far have been successful. She noted that the original invitation was sent to 200 people with the expectation that they’d have far fewer in terms of participation. They ended up inviting many more and got a very high response rate, which demonstrated the willingness of our community to help out in this effort. Dr. Young singled out the research community in particular in expressing her appreciation.

Dr. Young noted that the residence halls will be at about 35% occupancy, and that all resident students will be tested on campus between August 21 and August 26. Given the announcement from USM that requires anyone who is going to be on campus to take a test fourteen days prior to the return, the testing will have to be expanded considerably.

A question was asked to clarify that this measure is only if faculty are teaching face to face, and Dr. Young said that this is true.

Question: A question was asked about whether faculty who needed to come on campus to turn on computers in labs would have to be tested. Clarification was requested on this item.

Question: “How long will we continue testing?”

Answer: “The CDC does not recommend testing asymptomatic people. However, establishing a baseline at the beginning of the semester will help us remove as many positive cases as possible. We know that testing is far from perfect: there will be false positives and false negatives. What we do after this initial baseline testing will depend on the results we receive after the August 21-26 testing dates. If someone tests positive then that person will not be tested again as part of this process. This person will instead follow the protocol outlined for people who test positive.

VII. Update on Approval Process for On-Campus Access – Tony Moreira

Dr. Moreira noted that faculty have already been approved to work on campus during the summer, particularly faculty in the research community. These faculty members will be tested on August 17. It was suggested that faculty and staff who would like a quick turnaround on their tests could go to the Convention Center in downtown Baltimore where they are turning around the tests in 2 – 3 days. If this is not convenient, faculty and staff can also sign up to be tested on campus during the August 21-26 testing event.

In addition to getting tested, faculty who will be on campus must engage in daily symptom tracking.

Question: “How often do we need to test during the semester since we will be exposing ourselves every time we go face to face.”

Answer: “We do not know the answer to that yet.”

Question: “If faculty need to come onto campus to pick up a book or make a copy what do they need to do?”

Answer: “You need to get approval from your supervisor, from the department chair and the building manager, or the college access coordinator to agree on a time to do that.

If someone has been approved to come on campus and has committed to doing their symptom tracking then that faculty member can come to their office. If they don't have a key to where they need to go then campus police must be alerted and will let them in.

VIII. Questions and Feedback: COVID19@umbc.edu – Lisa Akchin

Lisa Akchin, Associate Vice President, Engagement, Institutional Advancement, noted that the Communications team is in the midst of the second redesign of the Return website. This will include additional resources for students, staff and faculty and a redesigned launching page. Members of the UMBC community who have questions pertaining to the impact of COVID-19 on our working lives, are invited to send their questions to the COVID19@umbc.edu inbox. She noted that this inbox is monitored daily and all questions are responded to in a timely manner.

IX. Overview of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) – Valerie Thomas and Pat McDermott

Valerie Thomas, CHRO, Associate Vice President, and Patrice McDermott, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, provided an overview of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

A power point presentation was presented for the senators and later distributed electronically.

Valerie Thomas explained that the FFCRA is a federal act that requires employers to provide emergency paid sick leave and medical leave to employees who are unable to perform their job duties because of COVID-19. This benefit is available from April to December 31, 2020. Anyone who has been on payroll for 30 days would be eligible for this benefit.

She noted that applying for this benefit should be done through the department chair or the supervisor of the employee's division. The faculty or staff member will submit the forms to their immediate supervisor who will route them to HR along with any additional documentation as required. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to exercise scheduling flexibility for their employees as needed. The information about this new benefit is located on the HR website.

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Question: "Can faculty donate leave to colleagues?"

Answer: "The only way to donate leave is through what we have now is a leave donation program in HR. We understand that new faculty may not have enough accrued leave to get them through the entire twelve weeks and we are exploring ways in which we can help to supplement our new faculty who wish to apply for this benefit.

Question: "Are adjunct professors eligible for this leave?"

Answer: "Yes."

Question: "Are faculty eligible for additional sick leave if they need it?"

Answer: "The leave donation is not from one person to another. It would be from the leave bank to the individual who needs it."

X. COVID19 Support Policy for UMBC Faculty – Pat McDermott

Dr. McDermott provided additional information to the senators about the new COVID19 Support Policy for UMBC Faculty developed by the Provost's Office. This support plan was shared with the senators. As Dr. McDermott explained, this plan would enable faculty members to work with their Chairs to develop an individualized plan that would identify and recommend adjustments to their workload to minimize disruption to research and teaching productivity as a result of COVID 19.

XI. Resources for Caregivers at the Women's Center – Jess Meyers

Jess Meyers, Director of the Women's Center shared some resources that are available to caregivers and noted that the Women's Center is currently working on gathering additional resources to help caregivers during this time.

XII. Library Update – Patrick Dawson

Dr. Antonio Moreira, provided an update on behalf of Patrick Dawson, Director, AOK Library.

Dr. Moreira stated that the library staff has been returning to campus and working onsite. They plan to start Phase II next week in which they will provide contactless checkout and return of books and media.

Question: "If we are on campus during regular business hours, are we still able to pick up materials?"

Answer: "I will inquire about this."

Patrick Dawson will be invited to the September Faculty Senate meeting to provide additional information.

XIII. Faculty Development Center Resources – Kerrie Kephart

Kerrie Kephart, Associate Director for Pedagogical Innovation, Research and Assessment, Faculty Development Center, provided resources for faculty in preparation for the upcoming fall semester. She encouraged the senators to share these resources with their departments.

President Smith thanked the senators for their thoughtful questions and thanked the attendees for the information they provided.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.