



Plenary Session

April 21, 2021 – Zoom – 3:00 pm

MINUTES

Present: Faculty and Guests

- Adams, Jamie
 - Ard, Bri
 - Bates, Robin
 - Beebe, Donald
 - Brazy, Martha
 - Broach, Ellen
 - Chadhain, Sinead
 - Clayton, Kristi
 - Cleary, John
 - Cloutier, Robert
 - Copeland, Donna
 - Carr, Nicole
 - Delmas, Peggy
 - Feldvoss, Joerg
 - Fregeau, Laureen
 - Gregoricka, Lesley
 - Godang, Romulus
 - Halbrooks, John
 - He, Jia
 - Henry, Alison
 - Henning, Jeremiah
 - Holder, Shelley
 - Hossain, Delwar
 - Huang, Jingshan
 - Huang, Ying
 - Lewis, Drew
 - Lynch, Colleen, excused
 - Madden, Ellen
 - Manders, Jeannete
 - McCready, Susan
 - Myers, Charlene
 - O'Connor, Tracy
 - Parlescu, Andrei
 - Pelekanos, Sharon
 - Pettaway, Kimberly
 - Prakash, Aishwarya
 - Raczkowski, Christopher
 - Rayner, Jonathan
 - Rinehart, Jason
 - Sayner, Sarah
 - Shepard, Beth
 - Spencer, Edmund
 - Strickland, Jason
 - Swanzy, Debra
 - Sweeney, Bob
 - Thompson, Tara
 - Turnipseed, David
 - Vandewaa, Elizabeth
 - Vrana, Laura
 - Walker, Sean
 - Webb, Brett
 - Weber, David
 - Woodmansee, Brenda
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- Meeting called to order 3:00 pm
 - Approval of Minutes: Approved

- Approval of Agenda: Approved
- Guest Speaker: Nicole Carr reported that graduation retention rates increasing student persistence 13% increase in retention from fall 1st year to fall 2nd year. Fall 2020 graduates of the pandemic was rough. The return for spring was lower, mid-term and avg. GPA were lower. She reported that 4-year graduation rates were 32%, which is a significant improvement. She encourages faculty to encourage students to register for summer and fall semesters.

Nicole Carr reports that the University is part of a project supported by the Association of Public Land Grants and Institutions to improve success and performance gaps by mapping the initiatives that we have at the institution for students.

President's Report

- Covid Updates

Campus and community numbers continue to improve. There are still concerns with the percent vaccination in the community and new strains of the virus.

- Vaccine Updates

Vaccine rollout has been very successful. Student Health should be able to offer on-campus vaccinations soon. They are waiting on approval for testing on the newly installed freezers.

- Reopening Campus

Since the situation could change, administration is hesitant to release specific information for the Summer and Fall terms, however, the current thinking is that masks will be required, and that 3 feet social distancing will need to enforce in the classrooms.

- Salary Survey

At the last Executive committee meeting with the Presidents Council, Dr. Smith, and Dr. Kent both stated that we are going to conduct a salary survey. They also committed to participation from the Faculty Senate. Dr. Kent has met with Gordon Mills from Institutional Research to get the process started. Dr. Mills is preparing a list of peer institutions and will share that list with the Senate for review. Dr. Kent stated that the process should take 3-4 months.

- Budget Updates

There are still no real updates on the budget except that there has been no change to the Governors recommendation of an approximately 6% increase, however it is still in committee.

- Fraudulent Unemployment Claims

There have been several reports of fraudulent unemployment claims and concerns there was a security breach at USA. Administration is very confident we have not had a breach and that fraudulent claims are happening all over the country. If an unemployment claim is made in your name, HR will contact you.

- Student Athletes-Football

There have been reports that the football program will be having morning classes and that students are being advised not to take any classes before 12:00 in the fall semester. Joel Erdman confirmed that the preference is for morning practices and student-athletes are being asked to schedule classes for the afternoon. Dr. Erdman also stated that they are students first and if they need classes in the morning, they can take them and will be expected to attend them.

Teaching, Learning, and Technology: Jamie Adams

A vote was taken and by unanimous vote the FS committee chairs were selected.

- Presidential Search

We have been in discussions with the Board of Trustees on the makeup of the Search Committee. The short answer is that the makeup will not change. However, the FS president will fill John's position on the search committee, and he will continue to participate in the process. This will allow the faculty voice to have a better chance at being heard.

John solicited feedback from faculty for preparing the advertisement for the position. The Board of Trustees (in the resolution) outlined several "Preferred Credentials", attached. To facilitate input from the Senate, we will have a breakout session at the Plenary. Please review this list to give input on what should be emphasized, what should be modified, what should not be included, and what needs to be added. A "Ph.D." is not required and the candidate should have experience with health care. This was a suggestion at the Board of Trustees meeting and was not adopted or commented on by any members of the Board of Trustees.

FS members went into a breakout session and discussed recommendations for the qualification requirements for the presidential search.

- **Completion of Pending Business:**

- None
- **Reports from University Committees:**
 - The Fringe Committee report is attached to the President's report that was sent out to the FS prior to the meeting. See below:

The University Fringe Benefits Committee met on February 23, 2021. If you recall from my last report the outlook for the university health care plan was rather grim when considering the financial deficit. Thus, the increase in our healthcare premiums at the beginning of 2021. The deficit of the university healthcare plan at the end of 2020 was only \$4,620,337. If you look at that deficit compared to where we were in August of 2020, we recouped a fair amount. For those wondering how that happened, the cause seems to be the lack of healthcare visits due to COVID-19 restrictions. One cost that still increased when compared to 2019 was pharmacy costs. To help mitigate the ongoing increase in pharmacy expenses the FBC is looking into 340B and is considering putting out a bid for pharmacy plans to confirm that express scripts is still the best plan for the university.

The emergency PTO donation went well last year. Over 5000 hours of PTO were donated, with all those donations used. The emergency sick leave donation had over 5000 hours donated, but only around 300 hours used.

Some possible changes to be discussed further at the next University FBC meeting in May 2021:

- Eliminate Base Plan 1/1/2022 and move all those individuals to the Standard Plan, or those individuals could enroll in USA Select (replaced the Viva health plan). Difference between Base and Standard benefit design:
- Prescription annual deductible increased from \$50 to \$100.
- The copay amount changed from \$10/\$25/\$35 to \$10/\$50/\$75 and 50% of specialty drugs to \$5,000 individual and \$10,000 family. Out-of-pocket maximum subject to ACA limitation combined with medical.
- The Standard Plan is a non-grandfathered group offering full coverage for preventive services, independent appeal review, and other ACA compliance requirements for non-grandfathered status.
- There is some discussion of adding a High Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account referred to as HDHP-HSA. A HDHP-HSA offers a very flexible tax advantage.

Advantages:

- Lower monthly premium resulting from the higher deductible (cost shifting).
- Employee contributions to the HSA are tax favored under the Section 125 Plan and are not subject to federal taxes, Social Security (6.2%) and Medicare (1.45%).
- Portability of employee ownership (no use it or lose it rule).
- Encourages consumer to make better informed choices for cost effective health care.

Disadvantages:

- Lower paid employees may be attracted to the plan and may not be financially able to handle the deductible. The deductible may cause rationing of healthcare including primary care and early detection of disease. Tax regulations apply to the HSA such as a 20% penalty for early withdrawal.
- Other plan coverage and secondary plan coverage (COB) may disqualify HSA pre-tax contributions.
- Employer responsibility to educate employees on this type of plan.
- Funding an HSA precludes funding a health care FSA.
- Please reach out to chair of the Salary and Benefits committee with feedback in preparation for the May Fringe Benefits committee meeting.

○ Handbook Committee

Discussion through email on the policy about non-tenure faculty position, the committee needs to have a longer meeting to further discuss to the policy.

○ Environmental Committee

David Turnipseed reported that the Environmental Committee will make a change to The Environmental and Sustainability committee, including all sustainability, in particular faculty sustainability.

○ **Reports from Senate Committees:**

○ FS Diversity and Inclusion Committee

A document from the Diversity and Inclusion committee was sent out prior to the FS Plenary meeting FS for suggestions for recruiting and retaining faculty from underrepresented groups. The FS will review the document and vote to have the document posted on the FS website. The FS committee will begin to work on getting language in the faculty handbook that directs committees to the document.

A vote was called to approve the document for the FS website. It was approved by the FS to put the document for recruiting and retaining faculty from underrepresented groups on the FS website.

- Delwar asked for suggestions for the Teaching and Learning Committee regarding the student perceptions to take to the committee. The next meeting of the committee is 4-23-21.

○ **New Business:**

- Elections for FS Officers

President: Beth Rugan Shepard. Beth was voted in as FS president by unanimous vote.

Two Candidates for Vice President: Jamie Adams and Delwar Hossain. Both candidates addressed the FS with credentials and plans for moving the FS forward. A secret ballot was sent out for a vote. Delwar was voted in as the FS Vice President.

Secretary: Donna Copeland. Donna was voted as FS secretary for another term by unanimous vote.

- Elections for FS Committee Chairs

Diversity and Inclusion: Laureen Fregeau

Policy Handbook: Edmund Spencer

University Planning and Development: Jason Rinehart

Environmental Quality: David Turnipseed

Research and Creative Activities: Sara Sayner

Evaluation: Chris Raczkowski

Academic Monitoring: Shelly Holden

Salary & Benefits: Elizabeth Vandewaa

Adhoc Health Affairs: Donna Copeland

Meeting Adjournment: MMSA :00 pm

Minutes transcribed by Donna Copeland