

## **Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report for September 2020**

**Eugene Mueller**

**Faculty Senate Vice Chair, Chair of the Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee met three times in September, and minutes will be duly available once approved at a future meeting.

### **September 16**

Senate Chair Krista Wallace-Boaz reported from various meetings with University leadership on several pandemic-related topics. Covid testing from the athletics department was rolled into the dashboard reporting testing at U of L. Inside spaces to replace the tents as the weather cools were being identified by Facilities.

Virginia “Ginger” Brown reported that the Staff Senate had created an *ad hoc* committee on antiracism, the schedule of Staff Senate meetings, and that the SHARE program had provided assistance to 29 staff members in July and August.

Benjamin Barberie reported that the full SGA Senate had met.

A discussion of concerns over RAVE alert content and the procedures led to an invitation to University of Louisville Police Chief Gary Lewis to appear at the next meeting (see below).

Shared Governance and possible actions to strengthen faculty participation in it were discussed, including the breakdown over the summer of regular meetings with Staff and Faculty Senate leadership with the administration before decisions were taken. The incoming Faculty Chair and Vice Chair affirmed a strong commitment to making sure that faculty viewpoints are considered in all substantial decisions.

The status of proposed Redbook revisions that were submitted in August 2019 was discussed and a request for clarification of its progress through the administration was requested.

A brief discussion was held concerning the ever-evolving budget for the current fiscal year, especially in light of the tuition revenue coming in above projections. Dan Durbin has been invited to brief the Executive Committee. In particular, the committee requested an analysis of the accuracy of the projections made last March that led to mitigation steps and the magnitude of the resulting budget surplus *vis-à-vis* the cuts to faculty and staff salaries and retirement contributions. The invitation also requested analysis of current budget status with regard to the likelihood of restoring retirement contributions and release of unit/departmental funds sequestered to contingency accounts. No reply to the invitation has been received.

Changes to the University Conflict of Interest policy were raised for discussion, but the Executive Committee members requested a ‘red line’ document that directly compared the new and old policies to more easily see the changes and clarification about the congruence of the policy with

Redbook section 4.3.3. A request has been made for Sandra Russell to make a presentation of the new policy to the Executive Committee.

David Schultz and Eugene Mueller agreed to respond to a request by the Provost to offer faculty input on the two-page 'simplified flow chart' describing response to a student or faculty/staff member contracting Covid-19, a topic that received considerable discussion by the Executive Committee. Those recommendations are still being considered by the administration.

The balance of the discussion concerned the best way to attain more uniform representation by unit and faculty demographics on Senate Committees, which led to the description of commitments required by membership on the various committees that were included in the request for volunteers to stand for election to committees.

The reports from standing Senate Committees were minimal because most had not yet met this fall. The Part-Time Faculty Committee was preparing to launch a survey of part-time faculty that was delayed in the spring due to the pandemic and acknowledged the Arts & Sciences resolution regarding promotion of part-time faculty.

### **September 23**

Senate Chair Krista Wallace-Boaz introduced the Provost's proposal that Spring Break be cancelled with an adjustment to a later start (*note*: the Pivot to Spring Academic Scenarios Committee will make a recommendation on October 9; Vice Chair Eugene Mueller [eugene.mueller@louisville.edu](mailto:eugene.mueller@louisville.edu) is the Senate representative and is very receptive to comments on this topic.

Benjamin Barberie reported that SGA favors the plan to cancel Spring Break. He also reported that the survey of students regarding preference for course instruction modalities in the spring semester was imminent. The SGA is pushing to add the topic of racial justice as a supplement to GEN 100 (the required freshman course). A report by the Cardinal Core Committee was expected soon.

No substantial work by the Senate standing committees was reported for the week since the last Executive Committee meeting.

VP Rehan Kahn reported on the current effort to replace the aged PeopleSoft systems and what of that effort is covered by budget allocations over the current and upcoming fiscal years. Oracle and Workday are the leading contenders, and presentations are scheduled (Workday demonstrations are complete and Oracle demonstrations nearly so as of October 7). An 'implementation vendor' is anticipated to be identified by December of this year with implementation beginning very early in 2021.

Chief Gary Lewis gave a thorough presentation of the process that leads to issuing a RAVE alert and assured the Executive Committee that the flagrantly problematic alert on September 10 was due to a breach of policy. Disciplinary action has been taken against the officer who authorized the alert. Chief Lewis also gave a thorough overview of changes he has instituted to ULPD since during his tenure.

### **September 30**

The Executive Committee met with President Bendapudi and Provost Boehm to communicate concerns in both directions.

Four finalists in the Provost search will have on-campus interviews in mid-October. Opportunities will be provided for faculty forums with the candidates that will include both virtual and limited in-person attendance.

Regarding the current fiscal year budget, the governor requested a statement of the expected impact of an 8% cut of state funds on all recipients of them; for U of L that would constitute approximately \$10M. It remains uncertain whether spring semester enrollment will hold up, and any drop will have a budget impact. The tuition income for the current semester came in \$1.4M above expectations, and a decision about restoration of retirement contributions is expected by December.

The Shared Governance Working Group is projected to start meeting soon with strong presidential support. *note:* Two senators in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate will be on this group, so please consider volunteering.

President Bendapudi “feels good” about the themes of the Grand Challenges, especially in light of the pandemic. There will be opportunities for cluster hiring of faculty to work on the particular areas within the themes of the Grand Challenges.

Covid testing is provided with no out-of-pocket cost to faculty, staff, and students as often as every two weeks in the absence of symptoms and whenever there has been the possibility of exposure or symptoms (in which case, one should call Campus Health Services rather than use the general testing service). After Fall Break, testing is mandatory for faculty, staff, and students who will be on campus.

President Bendapudi discussed both positive and negative comments received concerning her message following the announcement of indictments leading from the events leading to the death of Breonna Taylor. A more general discussion of U of L reaction to the announcements and subsequent protests followed.