

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report for February 2021

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Faculty Senate Vice Chair, Chair of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met twice in February, and minutes will be duly available once approved at a future meeting.

February 17

President Bendapudi provided the Executive Committee (XC) an update on vaccination policy, but as has occurred at least twice earlier this year, the tentative plan presented was superseded by action in Frankfort (U of L Health had planned vaccination of faculty and staff 65+ years of age, but the Commonwealth announced 60+ as the cut-off late the next week). The mandatory testing period was extended one week due to the winter storms. President Bendapudi then stated her continuing commitment to shared governance and answered particular questions on the topic, including a query about inclusion of faculty on the Council of Academic Officers. Both President Bendapudi and Provost Boehm indicated that its function is primarily administrative and that faculty were not involved in the equivalent groups at other universities (including all ACC schools). It was explicitly pointed out that the budget does not “pass through” the Council of Academic Officers for approval and that faculty were represented on the committee that derives the budget. Concerns were again raised by XC members about the optics of official University messaging after the announcement of a comment period for a “new” printing policy. President Bendapudi stated that she will establish one person to manage all internal University communications with the goal of avoiding problematic wording that can leave the wrong impression about the communicated information. Questions about U of L’s long-term plans to maintain enrollment were answered with the suggestion that Vice Provost James Begany be invited to make a detailed presentation to the XC (which will be done).

Provost Boehm updated the XC on the potential change to library hours and averred that if the hours are changed, the library will remain open until midnight. She also reported that the new efforts to increase compliance with masking mandates in the library has resulted in a noticeable improvement and that a “sweet spot” for division of staffing the library between library and security personnel is being sought. As an indication of the openness of the administration to faculty leadership about vaccination policy, Provost Boehm also provided more details about the envisioned vaccination policy that was later superseded by directives from Frankfort—and she requested that XC members not make the information public because U of L policy decisions had been rendered moot by Commonwealth decisions several times already this year.

The XC received a report on the current status of the Cardinal Antiracist Agenda (CARA) from Senior Associate Vice President V. Faye Jones, her Senior Executive Assistant Diane Whitlock, and Prof. Muriel Harris, the new chair of the Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity (CODRE). The presentation and subsequent discussion will guide the goals and efforts of the newly formed *ad hoc* Faculty Senate committee dealing with issues encompassed in CARA, and details will be duly available in forthcoming meeting minutes.

Highlights from standing reports included Senate Chair Schultz reporting that the Shared Governance Workgroup is starting to meet again after a pandemic-induced hiatus, Staff Senate representative Brown reporting that their committee dealing with issues encompassed by CARA is now a standing rather than *ad hoc* committee, and AAUP representative Cunningham reported that AAUP's involvement in choosing the vendor for the imminent total compensation survey.

February 24

Chief Procurement Officer Sally Molsberger presented the printing policy and the revisions to the implementation of compliance with it. Because she will be making a similar presentation to the full Faculty Senate at the meeting when this XC report will be delivered, no details will be provided here, but they will be duly available in XC minutes.

The issue of textbook accessibility was raised in a presentation by Senator Dale McIntosh and elaboration by Chief Operating Officer Mark Watkins. Discussion focused on the program Follett Access and this first aborted attempt for a trial run in 2019. With the support of Provost Boehm, an *ad hoc* Faculty Senate Committee is being formed to examine the issue and make recommendations; the committee will include representatives from the multiple administrative offices that will be required to work in synch to establish a program that rolls textbook payments into the billing that includes tuition and fees so that students need not wait for a financial aid payment in order to obtain access to textbook and related materials.

Vice Provost Tracy Eells presented the proposed Intimate Relationship Policy for feedback from the XC; Provost Boehm was also present to provide additional clarity and answer questions. As with the printing policy, detail seems unnecessary to present in this report because the matter will be before the full Faculty Senate when this report is delivered. Details of the XC discussion will be duly available in XC minutes.

There were no substantial regular reports for the week between the XC meetings.