

## **Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report for July and August 2021**

**Eugene Mueller**

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

The Executive Committee (XC) met on July 14, August 18, and August 25, 2021, and minutes will be duly available once approved at a future meeting.

### **July 14, 2021**

The XC met in the University Club Board Room with the option of joining by Teams.

Senate Chair David Schultz requested the session for consultation prior to a UofL Board of Trustees meeting. The XC immediately adjourned to executive session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to KRS 61.810(1)(f). No action was taken.

### **August 18, 2021**

The XC met in 229 Shumaker Research Building with the option of joining by Teams.

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Beth Willey briefed the XC on two matters: the ongoing status of the collaboration between UofL and IBM and the proposed change in policy from pass/fail to pass/no pass. She used the UofL Digital Transformation website (<https://louisville.edu/digital-transformation>) to highlight activity and encouraged XC members to tour the site on their own to look for opportunities to incorporate features into classes. The change in pass/fail policy will be presented to the full Faculty Senate.

Associate Provost Willey also fielded questions about Covid-related policies for the upcoming semester and took XC feedback to Provost Gonzalez (*note: several XC-recommended changes/clarifications were promptly enacted*).

Executive Director for IT Katherine Stevenson briefed the XC on issues and UofL policy related to secure access to UofL systems. The issue is a thorny and constantly evolving one that must balance ease of use from multiple devices by UofL personnel with digital security.

Student Government Association representative Alexa Meza reported on move-in programs and events, meetings to discuss library security and access with the goal of reopening Ekstrom Library 24/7, and concern of a curtailment in the English as a Second Language program for international students.

Virginia "Ginger" Brown could not attend but provided a written report from the Staff Senate, which met in July but not August and will convene again on September 8. She reported staff concerns about the lack of mandated Covid vaccination and the report from UofL Foundation Executive Director Keith Sherman on the health of the UofL endowments.

AAUP representative Michael Cunningham inquired why the case by UofL against former President Ramsey was dropped. A discussion followed, but there was no call for further action or request to hear at a future meeting from a UofL official who could knowledgeably brief the XC.

Faculty Senate Chair David Schultz reported on information and decisions by the Covid Coordination Committee, including the state of enrollment for 21F (fewer students in total but more out-of-state students, so the tuition revenue seemed poised to hit the budget goal)

and a growing sense of alarm over the ability of UofL Health to secure sufficient nursing staff. The UofL Board of Trustees approved many of the academic program matters that had come through the Faculty Senate and approved a budget with a 1% cost-of-living adjustment with another 1% possible in January 2022 (depending on the budgetary outlook) and a \$1,000 bonus for full-time faculty and staff. The change in President Neeli Bendapudi's compensation package was also discussed. Chair Schultz reported that no endowment accounts were 'under water' and that the UofL Foundation manages endowment funds of over \$1B. He expressed concern that the newly formed Executive Budget Steering Committee (combining two former committees) had only the Senate Chair and Vice Chair as faculty representatives and would explore with Provost Gonzalez ways in which to increase faculty voice during budget planning. The committee to explore textbook access will soon meet for the first time. Chair Schultz also fielded questions regarding the Covid vaccination rate among students and planning to provide boosters if they are recommended by the CDC and FDA.

The standing committee reports reflected a typically light summer workload. The Academic Programs committee had one pending proposal that is anticipated to be presented to the full Senate at the October meeting.

Senator Roy Fuller inquired about the recommendation by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) that three UofL programs be closed. The XC will delve into the process more thoroughly to determine whether the recommendations originated at UofL or Frankfort.

### **August 25, 2021**

The XC met in the University Club Board Room with the option of joining by Teams.

Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs Tracy Eells briefed the XC on the efforts of the Faculty Leave Policy Workgroup, and faculty workgroup members Ariana Levinson and Karen Christopher also attended to provide insight. Revised policy for Parental Leave and Temporary Medical Leave were presented and will appear for consideration by the full Senate.

Student Government Association (SGA) representative Alexa Meza reported that between 600 and 800 students attended the SGA-sponsored luncheon on Saturday August 21. She also noted the initiatives to encourage Covid vaccination of students and the upcoming trip to Atlanta for the Kick-off Classic; she responded to concerned questions about Covid-related protocols during the trip, especially on the lengthy bus rides.

Virginia "Ginger" Brown reported that the Staff Senate will meet on September 8.

AAUP representative Michael Cunningham reported strong concerns among the AAUP leadership about the resurgence of the pandemic with spread of the delta variant of SARS-CoV-2. He indicated that AAUP leadership favors mandatory vaccination for faculty and staff.

Senate Chair Schultz had little new to report in the week since the last XC meeting and then lead a discussion about the composition of the new Senate Grievance Policy Review Committee. Senator Enid Trucios-Haynes will forward the recommendations of the Redbook Revision Committee (submitted a few years ago and under consideration in the President's Office) relating to the faculty grievance procedure for the committee's information.

The XC discussed the proposed change from pass/fail to pass/no pass, including whether or not Senate approval is required. A strong preponderance of members felt that the change was clearly an academic matter within the Senate's purview for approval or disapproval, but the administration suggested that the change a minor adjustment of the administration of academic policy. The issue of the Senate's jurisdiction was referred to the Redbook Committee, and the change in policy will soon be before the full Senate.

Senator Rebecca Jemian, chair of the Committee on Committees and Credentials, led the start of the periodic review of Senate Committee structure that is required by Senate bylaws. That effort will continue at the September XC meetings.

None of the standing committee representatives had anything new in the previous week that merited reporting.