

**University of Louisville Staff Senate
Vice Chair's Report
Monday, April 13, 2020**

In our historical consciousness, we always think about the Black Death that struck medieval Europe in the 1340s. That plague gave us the *Decameron*, Boccaccio's famous frame tale of ten well-to-do Florentines who ditch the plague-ridden city and ride out the epidemic with a storytelling contest at a country estate. I know we're all living our own versions of that right now with the coronavirus pandemic. The plague actually recurs throughout history, in all sorts of places, and one of those places was 17th-century England. It started in late 1664, and it closed Cambridge University in 1665. An as-yet-unknown student, Isaac Newton, went home for the "plague year," scrawled in his notebooks, made some important discoveries, and became the greatest mathematician in the world. Now, as then, there's a lot of uncertainty. There are a lot of challenges. There's a lot of fear. There is also a lot of potential for growth, for change, and for exploring our humanity as we learn to live through these strange times.

Meetings Attended

- March 16: Staff Senate leadership meeting
- March 26 :Staff Senate Executive Committee meeting
- March 30: Staff Senate leadership meeting
- April 2: TFTFS Student Fee Review Committee meeting
- April 6: Staff Senate leadership meeting
- April 6: Staff Senate leadership monthly meeting with Mark Watkins
- April 8: Task Force on Tuition and Fee Setting (TFTFS) meeting
- April 8: Staff Senate and Faculty Senate executive committees joint meeting with President Bendapudi and Dan Durbin
- April 8: Staff Senate leadership meeting
- April 9: Staff Senate executive committee meeting
- April 10: Provost's Advising Task Force meeting
- April 10: TFTFS meeting

Meetings I Missed

- I was unplugged during spring break. I don't think there were any scheduled meetings I missed, and vacation looked a lot different after the university came out with its first big coronavirus email (extending spring break and initiating the conversion to online courses) on that Wednesday afternoon. And now, with zero commute time and all meetings being on Teams, attendance is even easier.

Committee work/looking ahead

- **Coronavirus spiel on committees and reporting:** Please remember to submit written reports from all staff senate and university-wide committees. I know I write this *every time*. Every aspect of our work at the university has been disrupted by a global pandemic. We are all still adjusting to working remotely, even as we enter the second

month of doing it. The pandemic seems to be consuming everything. Still, the senate has to continue to operate. Although the COVID-19 response seems larger than and separate from the senate, our committees and representatives across the university will play a crucial role as the crisis plays out—and beyond. So, please, keep the lines of communication open, keep making committee reports, and please let me know if/how university-wide committees are functioning.

- **Task Force on Tuition and Fee Setting (TFTFS):** One tiny silver lining of working remotely is that it has dislodged TFTFS from the same meeting time slot as the Staff Senate. My subcommittee (Student Fee Review) met last week to finalize its recommendations for the year. These were reported at the TFTFS meeting on April 8. Our main recommendations for SFRC related to ongoing student fees related to Natatorium debt; the technology/career management fee attached to courses in the College of Business; and posting historical and current student fee information online. The larger body of TFTFS is now discussing a university-wide technology fee for students. This is unlikely to be decided in the current academic year, and a subcommittee will be charged with exploring options. The committee's final business for the year is to make a recommendation on tuition rate increase.
- **U of L Athletic Association Board:** There has been no meeting since January 17. The next scheduled meeting is Monday, April 20, from 9 AM to 12 PM. The ULAA board has received communication from the president about pandemic response, but there has been no communication about whether this meeting will take place or what the agenda will look like.
- **Provost's advising task force:** The committee met on Friday, April 10. The coronavirus has changed the timetable because it has led to the delay of the provost search. The original charge of the committee asked for a report on May 1, with the idea that the finalized recommendations could be reviewed and possibly handed off to a new provost. Now, we intend to submit an outline of findings to the provost, with plans to remain empaneled into the fall semester and continue to refine our recommendations (and explore areas like faculty and departmental advising that we did not originally have time to address). The committee will form new subcommittees to begin drafting the report in earnest, probably by mid-May.
- **Main job:** As far as I can tell, Honors went remote relatively early, during the week of spring break. I haven't been to campus in almost a month; the last time was the Tuesday after spring break, to get my laptop to sync up with the active directory. Since then, we've wrapped up advising remotely and made it through registration (March 31) in pretty good shape. We're still helping students respond to the effects of the pandemic, and now we're turning toward planning—as well as we can—for summer orientation advising and programming in the fall.

Getting in Touch

Please feel free to reach out to me at andrew.grubb@louisville.edu or (502) 852-1482 (forwarding), especially during this trying time. I am always glad to take questions or discuss current issues. In the meantime, stay safe, and hang in there.

--Submitted by Andrew Grubb