

Chair's Report
November 2021
Submitted by John Smith

Does anyone else have the feeling our last full senate meeting was just like a week ago? That's what I said last month and it still feels like the deal. Time is flying by this semester. It is hard to comprehend we are only a few quick weeks away from finals. It is a little scary to me to think about that since this time of year with the upcoming holidays already seems to go faster than the rest of the year.

Covid: We continue to get interpretations from various sources regarding the federal vaccination mandate. Matt Stanley will be with us for our November meeting and will provide more details. Our infection rate is currently 3.5%. Our vaccination rates are students 87.4, Staff 87.1 and faculty 84.6. We are doing much better than Jefferson County. That is significant because the CDC protocols are based on infection rates within the county in which you are located. Jefferson County is still in the "red" zone. We actually dropped out of it for a short while a week ago but have seen a small spike and are back in the red. One encouraging statistic is the continued decline in deaths. We had seen a high of 65 deaths in a week in Jefferson County. Our death total last week was 2. That is still too many but is encouraging that far fewer people are experiencing the more serious outcomes. Hospitalizations are down significantly as well.

Boosters are now available for any faculty or staff member. The CDC said "education" was eligible for the booster and much of their material had been focused on K-12 but we are taking a more liberal interpretation of that and making boosters available to all employees.

Threlkeld Hall: The "New Threlkeld" is on schedule and on budget. It will be a mirror project to the new hall that opened this fall. It should open next fall for occupancy. The new Denny Crum Hall is a little over budget due to escalating cost of supplies but there are some things that can be done to bring that back to on budget. Nothing has changed on either of these projects.

Board of Trustees: The biggest thing from the BOT was the approval of the Faculty Accountability Policy. There was serious discussion of the policy that prompted a number of edits over the development process. The policy was

deeply vetted by committee and supported by the Faculty Senate. A question came up about whether there was a staff accountability policy or document. There is not a specific document other than Human Resources documents and policies. The things covered in this new Faculty Accountability Policy are already in place for staff, just not in a single policy.

Executive Budget Committee: I serve on the Executive Budget Committee. The University is moving to a budget model where academic units will receive a set amount for every credit hour they instruct. I support that. I feel it is a much more accurate representation of what is actually being done than the antiquated incremental budget model. It provides incentive for academic units to be creative in the development of new programs that will attract more students to the university and specifically their unit. However, support units like Physical Plant, IT, Student Affairs, Public Safety, et al., where many staff are couched, will still be on an incremental model. A portion of every credit hour will go to the Provost who will then determine where and how those funds are distributed to those units. I have been advocating for the success of those academic units growing enrollment but have also been making sure people understand that success on that front also means increased demand for services and functions of the support units and we have to address plans for that.

We have talked about the difference in restricted and un-restricted funds several times in our conversations with Keith Sherman of the Foundation. 2/3 of our un-restricted budget comes to us in the form of tuition which is why retention and recruitment are so vitally important to us. That is where funds for things like raises, covering the increased cost of health insurance etc. have to come from.

Meetings Attended:

Wednesday, October 13, Candidate Presentation, 1:30, SAC W117

Wednesday, October 13, Covid Advisory Committee, 3:00

Thursday, October 14, FCA, Noon

Friday, October 15, Executive Budget Committee, 10:30, TILL Classroom, Library

Tuesday, October 19, IM Staff, 8:45

Thursday, October 21, FCA, Noon

Monday, October 25, Huron Workday, 9:00

Monday, October 25, Covid Coordinating Committee, 4:00

Tuesday, October 26, IM Staff, 8:45

Tuesday, October 26, Senate Financial Review, 1:00

Tuesday, October 26, Neeli, 1:45, Grawemeyer Hall

Tuesday, October 26, Staff Senate EC, 3:00

Wednesday, October 27, Executive Budget Committee, 2:00, TILL Classroom

Thursday, October 28, Foundation Board of Directors, 11:00

Friday, October 29, Board of Trustees and Foundation Board Audit Meeting, 1:00

Tuesday, November 2, Neeli's Senior Leadership Team, 9:00

Tuesday, November 2, Executive Budget Committee, 1:00

Wednesday, November 3, Mark Watkins, 10:00

Thursday, November 4, Student Affairs Marketing Committee, 10:00

Thursday, November 4, FCA, Noon

Monday, November 8, Huron Steering Committee, 9:00

Monday, November 8, Provost Covid Leadership Team, 4:00

Tuesday, November 9, IM Staff, 9:00

Tuesday, November 9, Staff Senate, 2:30