

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL

November 4, 2020 – 3:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

(via Zoom)

MEETING MINUTES

Present: S. Axley; B. Benjamin; Y-H. Chen; S. Chengalur-Smith; S. Chittur; C. Fauchon (Recorder, non-voting); R. Gil-Garcia; J. Hwang; Provost C. Kim (Ex officio); Z. Lawrence (Chair); L.A. McNutt; S. Rafferty; K. Reinhold; K. Rethemeyer (Ex officio).

Guests: G. Berg, CEHC; S. Galime, Provost's Office; J. Goodall, CEHC; C. Kim, Provost; J.A. Malatesta, Undergraduate Education; K. Williams, Graduate Studies; K. Winchester, Undergraduate Education.

I. Approvals of Minutes

a. Approval of minutes: April 8, 2020 meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 8 2020 minutes. The minutes were approved without any revision. Two members who did not attend the April 8 2020 meeting abstained.

Vote: Yes = 7 No= 0 Abstain= 2

b. Approval of minutes: September 21, meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 21 2020 minutes. The minutes were approved without any revision. Two members who did not attend the September 21 2020 meeting abstained.

Vote: Yes = 7 No= 0 Abstain= 2

II. Provost's Report

a. The Academic Affairs Budget Timeline

After thanking all faculty and staff for their time and effort during these difficult past weeks, Provost Kim shared the Academic Affairs Budget timeline for budget reductions developed with the help of the three workgroup that were set up during the summer. The timeline shows how and when data will be shared across campus and feedback gathered and included. At the time of this presentation, the Deans are reviewing raw data and once the numbers are agreed upon these numbers will be put into a model and will be going back to the Deans to arrive at preliminary reduction.

Although the Budgeting Group will be working closely with the Deans and their Chairs during in the next few months, the group will also be getting feedback from all over campus through consultations with the President, the Executive Council, Campus Governance Leadership, Collins Fellows and Distinguished Faculty, the Senate and its subcommittees such as the UPPC. An initial town hall is scheduled to take place the first week of January 2021 to share the Budget Planning Model with the Campus. Implementation planning is to start in February and will also be based on consultations and feedback. A final town hall is scheduled for March 2021 to present the final version of the Budget Implementation plan.

Three working groups were set up during the summer:

- 1) Diversity Equity and Inclusion:
- 2) Budget: this workgroup developed metrics regarding allocations.
- 3) Futuring: this workgroup looked at what do we need to do as a campus to better support our students navigate into the future – how to support our students in their career pursuit, their intellectual pursuit, five years, ten years from now.

UPPC member Karin Reinhold asked Provost Kim to share with the Council some of the themes that have emerged through the Academic Budget timeline work so far. The group came up List of metrics that they feel are important to consider as we develop resource allocations: enrollment, diversity and inclusion, internalization, student success. All of those are distributed around 100 points and there will be discussion on the metrics themselves and on the distribution. Rockefeller College Dean Karl Rethemeyer, member of the working group joined in the discussion and added that other components are also being considered such as the contribution to General Education, Scholarly contribution, contribution through externally funded research, trying to look across all of the ways a department or a College or a School is contributing. Also considering important consideration about the future burden of the University so gateways into first and second majors, into minors as well because that an important to enrollment.

UPPC Shoba Chengalur-Smith joined the meeting at 4:05p.m.

Chair Lawrence asked the Provost is there had been given to putting programs on pause rather than eliminating from our portfolio for the resources again in the future? Provost Kim reminded that the Futuring Group, working with the Deans and their Chairs is determining what our campus needs to do in order to best serve our students in the future. That group Dean Rethemeyer assured the Council that the Deans are acutely aware that the decisions that are being made now will open or close doors in the future. The Budget Workgroup is also We are also asking ourselves if we were doing this outside of a crisis situation, what choices would we make with respect to long term strategic planning.

UPPC Member Bret Benjamin asked if there were units that the Budget Group is focusing on and if does it seem likely that we are looking at program retrenchment or elimination? Provost Kim clarified that although it may come down to eliminating some programs, it is not the objective. We are working with the Deans to figure out do what is best for their Schools and Colleges, and from Provost Kim trusts that the Dean and their Chairs know best from my perspective for the whole University.

b. Inclement Weather

Provost Kim reminded the Council that the Fall 2020 offers very little flexibility for inclement weather. So instead of cancelling classes, when a weather emergency occurs, all faculty members teaching in person or hybrid classes will need to switch to an all online format for the day(s). There is no plan in place at the moment for emergency situations involving the loss of electricity / internet so if and when those happen, we will probably have to look at each situation more on less individually and figure out something. The Spring 2021 calendar offers a little bit more flexibility in the Spring 2021 (except on Wednesdays).

c. Issues with *Respondus* Browser

Provost Carol Kim invited Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education JoAnne Malatesta to talk about various issues associated with the new *Respondus* Browser. Blackboard. We have been hearing from faculty and also from student about issues about academic integrity, especially in exam situations. The issues are in the vast majority at the undergraduate level. As a tool to reduce these issues, ITS has been working for the past few months to make *Respondus* available to the faculty should they choose to use it. *Respondus* is a custom browser that works with Blackboard to lock down the testing environment so that students cannot navigate away from the test screen (it has also has recording capability). *Respondus* is utilized by a great number of SUNY Schools and is rated as the top technological proctoring solution in the industry; it is reasonably priced at less than \$10,000 a year for the whole University. However, misconceptions about *Respondus* have been spreading amongst the students and engendered concerns. ITS, Undergraduate Education, Graduate Education and the Office of the Provost have been working with Student Affairs and ITS is just finishing a three-page FAQ document to address the students' concerns. This document will be made will be send to the students soon and we are going ahead with the pilot program. It is important for faculty and staff to understand that this will be just be another proctoring tool and it is not the only one. For example, we are encouraging faculty to utilize Zoom, and we are setting-up in-person proctoring on campus. Provost Kim added that it was important to note that the *Respondus* browser is only in Blackboard. Once you leave Blackboard you can no longer use *Respondus*. Provost Kim also emphasized that the level of academic integrity issues and cheating incidences has risen alarmingly over the Fall semester and is now three times our regular number.

UPPC Member Shobha Chengalur-Smith asked if the students could refuse to be recorded. Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education JoAnne Malatesta responded that the Provost Office is currently developing a proctoring policy and we also do now a policy in place that requires students to have a camera. In addition, members have to have a statement in their syllabi if they are going to record students.

UPPC member Ramon Gil-Garcia noted that some students have difficulties affording computer equipment. Provost Kim informed the Council that the University has a small amount of funds available to address such cases.

III. Chair's report

a. Open Access Policy

Chair Lawrence and Provost Kim briefly updated the Council about conversations started under the direction of former Chancellor Johnson on the possible development of an Open Access Policy on campus. The subject has not been brought up by our new Chancellor and it is likely to not be a priority until we get through our current challenges.

b. The Role of the UPPC

Chair Lawrence reminded the members of the SEC decision regarding the two CEAS graduate program proposals that the Council reviewed and approved at our September 21st meeting. The two proposals were then presented to the Senate and the SEC decided that the financial and faculty information needed to be presented for each degree program separately rather than combined. A request was also made to have the funding needed for library materials re-calculate to reflect current budgetary constraints. All related new information was sent to the Council members a few days ago in order for all to review again before the proposals are moved back onto the SEC agenda. This occurrence highlights once again that our role is an important one and that we want to do our job with consistence, care and diligence so that the review process does not get subjected to unnecessary delays.

Provost Carol Kim and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Malatesta left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

IV. Committee report: RAPC / UFC

RAPC (Resource Analysis and Planning Committee) and UFC (University Facilities Committee) Co-Chairs Karin Reinhold and Louise-Anne McNutt gave the report. The two committees joined forces last year primarily to ease the burden on the members. So far this year the joined RAPC-UFC Committee has been working on the composition of the Committee and on setting up appointments with the Budget Office and with Institutional Research in an effort to start the conversation on what is being planned past COVID-19

and what is going to be the mixture of online versus in-person courses. The joined committee is also looking at ways to make sure that classes on campus are safe communicating these efforts to the campus community. Chair Zina Lawrence emphasized the importance of looking at our mix of classes not only in term of planning for the future but also in term of the impact on our students. The mix for the Spring is especially important for our graduate students that do not live in the Capital Region and did not have classes in the Fall – if they now have one or two classes that are only offered in-person they are now put in a situation to have to find a short-term lease, probably without roommates to ease the cost burden.

Council member Sridar Chittur proposed opening in the dorms that are not completely full to our graduate students. The suggestion was supported by Council member Sean Rafferty who added that this solution would be beneficial to both the students and the University in financial terms, but also from a safety point of view.

offered to present this suggestion to Vice President for to Finance and Administration Todd Foreman at their planned meeting on November 17th. Co-Chair Louise McNutt also pointed out that we should be planning to have proper infrastructure in place not only for this Spring, but for the next two years as we are going to have to deal with CO-VID related issues for a while.

Council member Ben Benjamin commented on the lack of data available on the percentage of in-person courses taught by our contingent faculty, as there is some concern that in-person courses are being taught by a disproportionate born by a certain cohort of our faculty. RAFC / UFC Co-Chairs Karin Reinhold and Louise-Anne McNutt will obtain the data for the Council.

V. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 5:57 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Corinne Fauchon

Minutes Approved: 2/17/2021