

UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PLANNING COUNCIL

September 21, 2020 – 3:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

(via Zoom)

MEETING MINUTES

Present: S. Axley; 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); S. Rafferty; L.A. McNutt; N. Ndambuki; K. Rethemeyer (Ex officio).

Guests: G. Berg, CEHC; K. Boyer, CEAS; Karen Chico-Hurst, Registrar; T. Foreman, Finance and Administration; S. Galime, Provost Office; C. Kim, Provost; JA. Malatesta, Undergraduate Education; Yanna Liang, CEAS; J. Stefl-Mabry, CEHC; B. Szelest, President Office; K. Williams, Graduate Studies; K. Winchester, Undergraduate Education.

Due to some of the key participants' tight schedules, the members agreed to move the order of the agenda items and to start with a discussion of the "Revised Proposal: CEAS - MS and Ph.D. in Environmental and Sustainability Engineering".

I. New Business

Revised Proposal: CEAS - MS and Ph.D. in Environmental and Sustainability Engineering

Chair Lawrence gave a brief background of the proposal, and explained why it was coming back to the UPPC for a second review. This proposal came to UPPC as a letter of intent in May of 2019. The letter of intent was approved through a streamlined process in an effort to get it out to the full Senate and off Campus faster. It is coming back to the UPPC today because they were some changes made from the letter of intent to the actual Proposal, and also because it is a significant contribution from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and it is important to do a full review that includes input from the Provost and from Finance. Chair Lawrence also emphasized that the discussion was not about the curriculum aspect of the two programs, as they had already gotten the green light from the Graduate Academic Council (GAC).

Dean Kim Boyer provided details about the financial aspects of the proposals and explained the two graduate programs would not create any additional costs to the College because the programs would be utilizing already existing faculty and support. In fact, not approving the proposals would cut off for revenue streams not only from the MS and from the Ph.D. tuitions, but also tuition from a potential four plus one BS, MS combined program, and from possible revenues derived from research. In term of the number of faculty in place right now the Department has four tenure-track faculty members in addition to the Chair Yanna Liang and to Professor Paul Millard, Professor of Practice. This number is adequate to start the

program - this was a primary concern for the Council. Dean Boyer is expecting the program to grow and as the program grows, the number of faculty will grow as well. Dean Boyer pointed out the College extraordinary federal research expenditures, and Chair Liang's three and a half million dollar contract with the Department of Energy.

Chair Lawrence solicited feedback about the proposal from Provost Carol Kim and from Vice President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman to make sure that we had the resources to move forward with it and have it be successful. Provost Kim thanked Dean Boyer for providing helpful details on the ESE programs and stated her belief in revenues being generated as these programs grow. Vice President Foreman also expressed a positive outlook, pointing out CEAS excellent track record. ESE Chair Liang reminded all that the Letter of Intent (with the number table) had been already approved by UPPC in May 2019 and that the proposal is not asking for separate resources for the MS and Ph.D., as all of the resources will be used for all three ESE programs. UPPC Chair Lawrence added that any changes that that did occur with the GAC was curricular or was simply information added to the original Letter of Intent.

Dean Boyer, Provost Kim, Professor Liang and Dean Rethemeyer left the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Graduate Academic Council Chair George Berg reminded the UPPC members that the GAC had already considered and approved the proposal. The members proceeded directly to a vote to approve the Proposal.

Vote: Yes = 9 No = 0 Abstain = 0

II. Provost's report

Provost Kim was unable to address the Council due to time restraints.

III. Chair's report

a. The Role of the UPPC

Chair Lawrence went over the role of the UPPC, which is primarily a fiscal one. The Council is not looking at whether or not a program curriculum is sound, this is what the GAC and the USC are really supposed to be looking at before those proposals come to the UPPC. The UPPC is charged with looking at the financial implications of the proposals, look how resources are being generated, make sure that the resources put into the programs are appropriate for the success of those programs, and make sure that the new programs offered that are building off of existing degree programs are built off successful programs. The UPPC relies on other councils and committees to do their job effectively and that it is perfectly acceptable for the Council to send proposals back if they are not well defined or missing document documentation. It's also going to ensure that when the proposals get

out of UPPC and to SEC, they are going to be in good shape because the Council has done its due diligence.

b. Proposed Revisions to the new Academic Calendar

Chair Lawrence invited Registrar Karen Chico Hurst to speak about the proposed revisions to the new five-year planning academic calendar model. The revisions are an effort to minimize COVID-19 exposure. Several versions were considered and the Provost Office decided on the following version:

- Winter session (online) intact, still ending on 1/15/2021
- Spring start date moved from 1/20/21 to 2/1/21
- Spring Break removed from the calendar
- Reading Day removed from the calendar
- Last day of classes moved from 5/4/21 to 5/5/21
- The final exam period remains the same, ending on 5/12/21

Registrar Karen Chico-Hurst pointed out that there is concern about removing the Spring break, as we traditionally build in that break for the students' mental health, but that she has been watching the national conversations and that most campuses that have released their plans for Spring do not have a spring break. Other than removing the Spring break, the changes proposed are minimal, and the numbers of contact days are still compliant, although not consistent. Registrar Karen-Chico Hurst also noted that several offices in the Campus, including Student Affairs are mounting additional activities, virtual events and on campus events for students, to help with the isolation and stress and add to the students' quality of life. The University has also increased the number of mental health counselors.

Vice-President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman added that the Flu season had been one of the driving forces in coming up with the revised version. By starting the Spring semester later, we hope to minimize the strain on our Student Health Services. In addition, the University saves energy and money.

c. Spring Classes Scheduling

Chair Lawrence invited Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Joanne Malatesta to give an update to the Council regarding the classes scheduling. Vice Provost and Dean Malatesta informed the members that the schedules are coming from the Schools and Colleges today and will be going to Registrar Chico-Hurst in the next few days after she and Dean of Graduate Studies Kevin Williams have gone through them. The hope is to be able to begin advanced registration by November ninth.

Chair Lawrence pointed out the importance of having all necessary information soon as possible with the changes coming up in the calendar. In addition, in term of the student needs, the goal is to have as much in-persons or hybrid classes as possible – students have been clear on this being their preference. We have to consider if having a quick turn-

around time is pushing the faculty to go the online route, and if that might negatively impact student registration down the line. Vice-President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman added his agreement that it could have a significantly negative experiences on our students, which in turn could impact retention and hurt our success. Students want to have an on-campus experience, with in-person classes.

d. Campus Recreation Challenges

Chair Lawrence invited Director of Campus Recreation Sammy Axley to talk about our student services on campus. Director Axley told the Council of the challenges of offering as many student services as we can to the students who are on campus while following the extensive State guidance directives. We also have to offer as much as we can to our virtual students. Director Axley pointed out that not only the Division of Student Affairs, but everybody on campus is committed to give as much positive student experience to the on-campus students and to the virtual students. Registrar Chico-Hurst mentioned some of the fun activities that are being created every day (some through Zoom and some in-person), such as jeopardy, movie nights, trivia nights, game night, mini golf on the circle, Masses on campus .

IV. Vice President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman on the University-wide budget update

Vice President for Finance and Administration Todd Foreman updated the Council about the Campus financial future. The number of courses that are going to be offered in person versus fully remote are going to drive our revenues. Although we certainly have challenges ahead of us, our brand is strong, our marketing efforts are good, our reputation is where we needed to be and growing, and there is still interest from the students. We can reasonably expect that when the number of in-person classes starts to climb, students will come back to the residence halls and we should be able to close our budget gap potentially much faster than we would have been able to had the issues been enrollment driven issues. Vice President Foreman emphasized that, however, the students, faculty and staff safety is still the forefront of our thinking and decision-making. Vice President Foreman also talk about investing in our future in different ways once revenues start coming back, and generating new opportunities. Regarding the growth of our online programs and the role of the UPPC, we have demonstrated that we can offer many of our classes online, and we have been very successful Winter and Summer online sessions, so we should certainly continue to look at what we can offer online successfully. However, we are still a brick and mortar institution, we serve a very important niche for individuals that want place-based learning, and some programs lend themselves to be offered online better than others so UPPC should not expect all proposals to have both an online and an in-person component to it.

Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Joanne Malatesta left the meeting at 4.55 p.m.

Vice- President Foreman also gave the members a brief update of our construction projects. Our most significant project, The Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (ETEC) is on schedule and we are now working on final assignments of spaces in the buildings. One of the challenges we are having with the very large buildings is to find staffing money for all the needed people such as cleaners, electricians, plumbers, etc. that keep the buildings functioning. Facilities is looking at creating efficiencies on the uptown campus so that we can free up some people. In term of the former Albany High School which was to be the home of Engineering, we did not get the bids we were hoping for so we are back to the drawing board to do some cuts and we are hoping to go back out to bid by the end of the calendar year. Some of our other more modest projects on campus have experienced some delay and are still going on right now. In term of capital dollars, it is questionable whether or not we will still be getting what had been promised to us but we are hoping that the federal government will want to use infrastructure projects to boost up the economy.

V. Committee reports and call for memberships

The RAPC (Resource Analysis and Planning Committee) and the UFC (University Facilities Committee) joined forces last year primarily to share membership. They do have separate Chairs but meet and report together. Professor Karin Reinhold, RAPC 2019-2020 Chair, and Professor Louise-Anne McNutt UFC 2019-2020 Chair, have both agree to continue to chair the committees for the 2020-21 academic year. If any of the UPPC member would like to serve on these joined committees, please contact Karen, Louise-Anne, UPPC staff support Corinne Fauchon, or Chair Lawrence.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Corinne Fauchon

Minutes Approved: 11/4/2020