

**Academic Assembly – 2020 Summer Session No. 1**July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

2:05 – 4:00 pm, Zoom Meeting

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Frank Shih, Nalini Iyer, Russ Powell, Holly Ferraro, Sarah Bee, Terri Clark, Margit McGuire, Kirsten Thompson, Chris Paul, Katie Oliveras, Mimi Cheng, Gregory Silverman, Shane Martin, Yancy Dominick, Patrick Murphy, Robin Narruhn, Kate Koppelman, Kathleen La Voy, Felipe Anaya, Angie Jenkins, Connie Anthony, Russell Powell, Marc Cohen,

**Guests:** Erika Moore, David Powers, Bryan Ruppert, Sven Arvidson, Eric Bahuaud, Kathryn Bollich-Ziegler, Michelle DuBois, Rob Aguirre, Lydia Bello, David Green, Agnieszka Miguel, Rosa Joshi, Jen Sorenson, Mary Kay Brennan, Dylan Helliwell, Natasha Martin, Katherine Raichle, Sonia Barrios Tinoco, Maria Bullon-Fernandez, Charles Lawrence, Alvin Sturdivant, Nova Robinson, Harriet Phinney, Robert Dullea

*Minutes taken by Lindsey Nakatani*

**I. AcA President Update****2:05 – 2:08**

- a. AcA President gave brief overview of meeting agenda. Greeting of the newest AcA Members.

**II. Review 06-08-20 Minutes****2:08 – 2:09**

- a. Review of AcA minutes tabled until official Academic Assembly meetings resume in the fall of 2020.

**III. Provost Update *Shane Martin*****2:09 – 2:15**

- a. The Provost wishes all present the best for continued safety and health. The Provost offers his welcome to the new AcA members and thanks the new members for their service. The national conversation relative to COVID-19 and the pandemic's impact on higher education, has shifted quite a bit over the past week. The Provost appreciates the faculty continuing to share reading materials on relevant issues. Fr. Sundborg's Re-Opening Task Force and its several subgroups continue to meet and strategize for the possible re-opening of campus. COVID-19 cases continue to spike across the nation; the University of Washington Greek fraternity system has announced over 100 students who have tested positive with COVID-19. Harvard, the University of Southern California, The University of California Los Angeles and many other institutions have made announcements of moving to almost completely online learning for the next AY. While there was hope to re-open SU's campus in the fall, the discussion is now shifting based upon current case trends. If there are in-person courses in the fall, these may be much fewer than previously thought. A final go/no-go decision will have to be made in the next few weeks. In addition, the re-scheduled, in-person commencement scheduled for October is looking increasingly unlikely. The university continues to navigate a myriad of challenges including continued financial challenges, COVID-19 challenges and the issues and opportunities brought to light by the Black Lives Matter protests. Despite all these circumstances, students are reporting having received a positive and highly engaged pedagogy and learning experience during their spring quarter.

**Questions/Discussion**

- b. The CDLI is offering lots of excellent tools to assist faculty in their online teaching endeavors. Faculty are strongly encouraged to use the tools provided.
- c. A budgetary update has been scheduled for the next AcA meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- d. *Faculty are concerned about the adjusted due date for final grades being moved up to December 4<sup>th</sup>. This timeline would only allow faculty 4 ½ days to submit final grades. Faculty are wondering if this date could be changed to the following Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup> to allow the faculty more time to submit final grades?* The Provost agrees that the December 4<sup>th</sup> date does not make sense and will be looking into adjusting that date.
- e. *There is great concern regarding the recent rule adjustment made by ICE regarding the requirements for students in the U.S. on F1 and M1 visas. The new rule states that "students attending schools operating entirely online may not take full online course load and remain in the United States."* The Office of the Provost is monitoring the situation closely and is looking into options it can provide for its international students.

#### IV. Black Lives Matter, Impact, University Response/Endeavors

2:15 – 2:45

*Shane Martin, Natasha Martin, Alvin Sturdivant*

- a. **Meeting with the Black Student Union – Update from Dr. Natasha Martin:** Dr. Natasha Martin found the meeting to be very productive, with high levels of engagement with the students. Students shared their desires for change and the pain, isolation and struggle students have been experiencing around these issues. The students spoke a lot about “raising the bar” of an adequate response from SU as a learning institution. Students would like to see this response take the form of more scholarships for historically underrepresented student populations, more pathways for those students to come to SU and to thrive, increased professional development opportunities for students, faculty and staff, anti-racist pedagogy and greater attention given to equity issues across campus. The question facing the faculty is “how do we advance the curriculum in an intentional way?” Overall, the students expressed a desire for a qualitatively different experience at SU and for a different kind of ally-ship from the university. This movement extends to faculty hiring, recruitment and retention and how to embed more inclusive strategies into SU’s hiring procedures while also incorporating accountability models for these procedures. SU needs greater bias prevention and incident protocols, a subject that a working group led by Dr. Natasha Martin has recently explored but needs to be pursued further. How do we design or build our capacity to do this work well and do it in a sustainable fashion? Synchronizing the work across the campus will be key. The creation of one large system with the understanding that this work will be a long, arduous process. Collaborators will have to be disciplined, determined and unrelenting in their work to meet the needs of SU’s students.
- b. **Meeting with the Black Student Union – Update from Dr. Alvin Sturdivant:** The students expressed a major desire to see the university pivot from performative actions to actions that will allow for the breakdown of systemic issues at the university. Dr. Sturdivant felt that there was an authenticity to the student’s desire to reach out and collaborate with the university. Students have been holding their own events to discuss and work through the current issues and have launched their own fundraising efforts. Students would like to see the development of more resources such as lists of opportunities to support black owned business in the local community. Students are truly interested in working alongside the university and have not lost faith in the university’s ability to move forward.
- c. **Update from Provost Martin:** The current situation causes everyone to stop and re-examine their priorities. While the Office of Diversity and Inclusion was established just three years ago, the Provost feels that this essential office has never been adequately resourced. Dr. Natasha Martin has done an exceptional job. The university leadership is looking to strengthen the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to allow the office to more widely spread its meaningful, intentional and essential endeavors across the university.

#### Questions/Discussion

- d. *The AcA membership charges itself to brainstorm what it can be doing to forward the university’s efforts in diversity and inclusion. The AcA membership believes that it would have the greatest impact within the areas of program review and curriculum development. The membership would be interested in and would like to request to speak with students and hear their thoughts about what the AcA could be doing.*
- e. *What is the timeline for making curriculum changes and for restructuring of the Office of the Diversity and Inclusion?* Due to a myriad of circumstances, society in general is currently running way behind where it should be during a normal year. The university would like to start the new AY with some ideas for forward movement. The university leadership would like to see a greater coordination and facilitation between university initiatives and initiatives at the local level for diversity and inclusion, under Dr. Natasha Martin’s leadership.
- f. Questions have been raised in the past about how equity, diversity and inclusion accountability is incorporated into the Program Review process. There is currently, no protocol or structure for evaluating how diversity and inclusion is assessed in SU programs. The creation of such a protocol should be a priority.
- g. Graduate programs and graduate students will also need the same consideration for diversity and inclusion initiatives.

- h. *Strong faculty movement on these initiatives in the past were never able to get off the ground. The faculty would like to see more financing, accountability and care given to hiring faculty from historically underrepresented populations. Perhaps the BOT could dedicate money to scholarships supporting students from underrepresented populations. The CAS moved, in a letter signed by numerous CAS faculty, to make a course on race, a required part of the UCORE. The Office of the Provost has not met with these constituencies yet but is planning to soon. Provost Martin would gladly support such a motion. There were also lingering questions about SU's relationship with the Seattle Police Department, as well questions regarding SU's Campus Security force. These questions still need to be discussed and answered.*
- i. Faculty would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the CDLI Team. The faculty would also like to highlight that this is a moment for reset. The university should be making sure students know they are not coming back to "business as usual" in the fall. The university should also take the opportunity to inform students and faculty about this movement, encourage faculty to update their syllabi and course descriptions and encourage the library to update its material collections or lists to reflect diversity and inclusion material.
- j. The CDLI summer trainings and their stipends are being handled directly by CDLI. Stipends and trainings are available to all faculty.

#### V. Re-Opening & Instructional Continuity Working Group Update *Bob Dullea*

2:45 – 3:40

- a. **Report-Out from Bob Dullea:** The charge of the working group was to develop strategies for in-person and on-campus instruction for a potential campus re-opening. The initial step of the working group was to structure its thoughts around understanding instructional continuity under social distancing guidelines. The working group was focused on improving any potential, emergency switch from in-person to online instruction. The working group has adapted their approach to account for all current issues. The group has successfully deployed and aggregated data from several surveys to the campus community. The surveys reflected an increase in interest from students in virtual education. The working group has mapped survey results with physical surveying performed by facilities, to create an inventory of class sizes and room capacities across campus. Some traditionally non-academic spaces could be used for instructional purposes. This work found that SU could teach ½ of the course sections capped at 26 students, and none of the classes with caps over 26 students. This inventory showed the biggest constraint to in-person instruction is the physical capacity of the campus.
- b. The Vice Provost would like to highlight a key recommendation of the report: "We commit to faculty for fall quarter that they may teach virtually if the circumstances of this difficult time can reasonably be expected to impact them or members of their household in ways that make this necessary."
- c. The working group is now conducting an instructional modality inventory. This inventory is addressing key challenges such as: How do we understand what teaching and learning in a physically distanced environment will look like? Can physical shielding be placed in classrooms? What will students and teachers need to do to be in a classroom together? The working group is also examining the class schedule and working on a solution for passing periods which often cause backup in the hallways of school buildings. The working group and university leadership are committed to supporting faculty in the decisions that they need to make for their safety, and what is best for their situations. The university needs to better understand what kind of commitment it needs to make to its students, while recognizing that each student population's needs will be different depending upon the year of their education and other factors. The university also sees this as an opportunity to build on the emerging strength of hybrid and online education.

#### Questions/Discussion

- a. *How will students be made aware of the changes so that they can register for the courses that are best for them?*
- b. *How was the working group's student survey structured? Were students asked about their preference for online instruction specifically within the context of the ongoing pandemic? Questions sent to students were sent by Admissions and Student Development, and it was understood that the pandemic situation was implied, though the lens of the BLM protests might have been omitted. The working group was looking for*

alignment between the needs of students, faculty and staff. Faculty and students seem to be shifting their initial preferences as the situation and news reports change during the pandemic.

- c. *What is the decision date for letting students about fall re-opening?* Initial approximations placed the deadline around August 15<sup>th</sup>, however university leadership believes an earlier date would be more beneficial. The leadership is looking to land a date somewhere in early to mid-August. (Note, this was later clarified that the decision date will be July 31<sup>st</sup>).
- d. In the context of teaching first time students and allowing faculty to choose their preferred modality; NTT faculty, by a large margin, teach first time students. *What protocols will be in place to protect NTT faculty from being taken advantage of?* The university leadership maintain its commitment to supporting all faculty in their decisions for what is best for their situations. This also speaks to the alignment between student and faculty preferences. If the alignment shifts or is no longer there, further options will be explored.
- e. The faculty has perceived a hesitation on the part of the university leadership regarding making concrete decisions. The faculty would like to encourage continued flexibility for schools/colleges when the deadline for decisions comes.
- f. *What would the economic hit to the university be if there had to be a last-minute switch of re-opening strategies?* The data and survey results do not accurately provide and answer to that question. The CFO is continuously modeling different scenarios. There is the potentiality for significant reductions in tuition revenue as well as housing revenue should an emergency strategy switch need to be implemented.
- g. Faculty are frustrated that returning students are not being surveyed about their instructional experiences in the spring quarter. Their responses could assist faculty in their planning for the fall. The university leadership understands the frustration and will investigate gathering data from returning students.
- h. *If students are taking hybrid instruction, where on campus will students be able to take their online courses?* This is an important piece of the re-opening puzzle, the allocation of study spaces for students remaining on campus. The library is looking at identifying spaces to accommodate physically distanced study halls.
- i. *The AcA representatives from the CAS would like to inquire about the departure of the University Registrar.* The university leadership will not be going into detail regarding the Registrar's departure, as it is not appropriate in a public setting. The decision was not made lightly, however the leadership believes it was the right decision for the future of Seattle University.

## VI. Open Discussion

3:40 – 3:48

- a. ICE and DHS just revised rules for international students holding F1 and M1 visas. There is a lot of ongoing discussion surrounding this decision and the university is committed to taking it seriously, monitoring the situation closely and actively pursuing solutions.
- b. It seems to be increasingly less likely, based upon recent events and the news, that the campus will re-open as fully planned in the fall. The national conversation has shifted due to the movement of data points in the last week and spikes in COVID-19 cases across the country. The university leadership reiterates that any decision that SU makes will be based upon data and expert health guidelines. The leadership is troubled by the upwards trend in the COVID-pandemic however, the university is also aware of the financial implications of not opening the campus. If SU had to be moved completely online for the fall and the campus had to remain closed, there would be incredible financial implications. The re-opening of campus is a complicated, delicate and difficult situation for all involved.
- c. The AcA is encouraged to think about potential issues that the body will have to weigh in on soon, so that discussion and decisions can be conducted swiftly and decisively.
- d. *Could some of these larger questions (ex. student evaluations) be considered, not just in the short term of the upcoming quarter, but in terms of comprehensive reformation to school policy?*

- e. The ACA Law School representatives would like to remind the university, that the Law School starts three weeks ahead of the rest of the university. In terms of decisions for re-opening, what is timely from the perspective of the university, may not be timely for the Law School.