

Liberal Arts Council

Zoom Meeting

28 October 2020

Presiding: Dean Mary Brennan

Present: Council members: Manda Anderson, Susan Day (recording), Beth Erhart, Ken Grasso, Craig Hanks, Lucy Harney, Paul Hart, Jeff Helgeson, Bill Kelemen, Yongmei Lu, Gloria Martinez, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, Aimee Roundtree, Chad Smith, Vicki Smith

Guests: Natalie Ceballos, Toni Watt, John McBride, Michelle Moritz, Tammy Coyle, Heather Houston, Katie Bonner, Laura Gonzales, Blake Bissing

Absent: no one

Employees from Human Resources attended LAC to provide information about their reorganization. Employment has been moved out of HR, which will emphasize employee services. In the near future, an organization chart and locations of the new areas will be posted on the HR website.

The minutes of 21 September 2020 minutes were approved without dissension, pending typo and omission corrections, on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. Lu.

Dean Brennan asked chairs to return the student liability notice form, due to Nay, today. If it does not apply to their departments, she asked inform Nay of that in writing

Dean Brennan noted that second-year evaluation forms of tenure-track faculty are due on November 16 to Stella LoPachin.

She asked chairs and faculty to volunteer to represent CoLA in other College's CRG meetings.

The next Salon Series with Joe Laycock and Natasha Mickles, discussing their book *Gods and Monsters*. Rachel Romero and Deborah Harris, discussing *Gracious Spaces*, will be the third Salon. To attend, send an email to Leslie requesting a zoom link.

The University is sponsoring a BOKO's election night watch party at the Student Center. Up to 199 students can attend, and there will activities and break-out rooms to help students channel emotions in a positive way. In the days following the election, Dr. Cavitt has asked faculty and staff to check bathrooms and walls for objectional signs and posters

A Gary Ray report on college admissions revealed that, nationally, undergraduate enrollments are down, and graduate enrollments are up. In Texas, the largest enrollment decline is in community colleges. Dean Brennan relayed the request from the administration for departments to process scholarships that can go to 1st year students.

Dean Brennan noted that the Texas State health report found COVID-19 national and state trends worrisome, although Williamson and Hays counties are doing well. The Texas State University positivity rate is .9%, but Texas State's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Caranco reports concern about students returning from the Thanksgiving break. The Student Health Center is providing messaging to take the positive behaviors used on campus to their homes. Provost Bourgeois has now said faculty have discretion to go virtual after Thanksgiving. Take-home synchronous finals must be done in scheduled final exam period.

A vaccine workgroup being is created. The Texas State Covid dashboard is the highest rated dashboard in Texas.

President Trauth has announced that there will be an in-person commencement this fall.

Dean Brennan noted that Jamie will be meeting on Friday with Cindy and Nick to discuss temporary funding for the spring. Let her know if additional funds are required.

Our summer budget has been cut by 15% overall, based on growth patterns and course offerings. Some colleges lost up to 25%. Last summer's on-line classes were well-enrolled. Dean Brennan asked Chairs to submit summer instructional need data, with a deadline in November. If previously submitted ECF budgets had summer spending in them, that spending should not be included in the summer instructional need data report.

Dean Brennan suggested that as chairs and directors begin to think about the issues related to classes in the spring. Faculty should be reminded to put quarantine and isolation information on their syllabi. She encouraged faculties to think about the various methods of offering classes and the consequences of those practices. Chairs noted that face-to face-classes are not well-attended, if students have access to the class on Zoom. Performance may suffer as well. Dr. Roundtree noted that students who pay extra to take on-line classes are not treated fairly if classes that are face-to-face allow Zoom attendance with no additional tuition required. Student engagement is also a concern, as are students' evaluation of faculty. Of special concern is engagement in large first- and second-year classes.

Dean Brennan expressed her appreciation to LAC for their cooperative work on the Covid impact statement on tenure-track faculty. Chairs will report their faculty's views of the statement.

Around the Screen

Dr. Hanks reminded everyone about the **Jonathan Zimmerman presentation on Academic Freedom & the Political Climate on Campuses in the Age of Trump**, to be held on Thursday, October 29th, at 2p.m.

Dr. Roundtree asked chairs to please rank NEH external reviewer's vitas. She will send an appeal for additional reviewer nominations.

Dr. Kelemen asked whether departments will be doing learning outcomes in Canvas.

Dr. Helgeson asked whether outside observers should be allowed to attend department PC meetings in order to evaluate the processes. Opinions can be discussed with him.

The meeting ended at 3:35 p.m.