

## Liberal Arts Council Minutes

17 June 2020 2:00 p.m.

Presiding: Dean Mary Brennan

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

Guests: Jeff Helgeson

Absent: No one

The meeting began at 2:01 p.m. and was conducted using ZOOM. All participants were present through their computer screens. The minutes of 6.3.20 minutes were approved without dissension on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. Kelemen.

Dean Brennan brought to the attention of LAC that office refrigerators and microwaves are prohibited outside of kitchen areas.

Dean Brennan noted that student organizations will be allowed to have Quad table events but cannot offer or sell homemade food. Masks will be required where social distancing is not possible.

In her CAD update, Dean Brennan indicated that

- Summer enrollment is up. The \$15.8 M from the federal government has been distributed to students re need. The number of fall freshman applications is higher than in the past few years. Registered transfer student enrollments are up. Graduate College still taking applications for the fall. Continuing graduate students are registering at lower rates than new students, but that disparity is declining.

Courses are face to face for summer II and the fall. It is unclear what will happen if Covid-19 numbers continue to spike in (central) Texas. The registrar will not notify students if a previously face-to-face course changes to on-line for summer II. Chairs will have to notify

students if the courses change; faculty must decide very quickly and chairs will be notified that faculty have approved modification requests.

- Faculty and staff modification criteria will be confidential. The documents will be held, in confidence, by the ADA coordinator.
- Faculty can require masks in their classes; students are required by the university to wear masks.
- Students can complete modification requests as well.
- Hand sanitizer misters and refills will be available to students. Regular cleaning of classrooms will happen.
- More details will be forthcoming from the Continuity of Education work group. Chad was congratulated by Mary for the many appreciative comments she has received about his work, especially providing a faculty perspective.
- Dean Brennan thanked Dr. Roundtree for contributions to Research work group, which Dr. Horton has said is moving requests and policies at a good rate.

The CoLA Faculty Modifications Policy was discussed. The College does not have discretion to make a policy for staff, although Drs. Kelemen, Harney, Erhart and others will work on a potential policy based in UPPS 04.04.01 for staff, to be considered by the administration. Faculty will need to complete the university form. If a faculty member does not meet the CDC criteria, chairs will have to evaluate requests and documents. A process of handling applications in the “other” category may have to be developed for the College. Dean Brennan will handle ambiguous situations. An appeals process has not been developed. A number of questions about specific department situations were raised.

Chairs will have to keep track of the number of on-line classes being offered. If a significant percentage of faculty want to move to on-line teaching, issues related to modifications will be revisited. Dr. Grasso moved and Dr. Hanks seconded consideration of the policy, which passed unanimously.

Faculty will have to wear masks while lecturing. Students will have to wear masks in class. Assigned seating is likely to be required to enable contact tracing. The Ballroom may be used as a space for students to be in a ZOOM class after coming from a face-to-face class.

Contingency planning for faculty illness will have to be developed by departments, by both chairs and faculty. Faculty should establish plans if being quarantine is required or illness occurs.

Dean Brennan noted that the University has only \$4.6M for temporary funding for the next academic year; \$1.25M of that is dedicated to instructional needs created by FDL and NTLWR. Dr. Kelemen requested information from Associate Provost Thorne to remind chairs about currently allocated temporary funding. Previously promised money for faculty development leaves will be available. CoLA requests will have to be reduced. Chairs must figure out ways to cut back. A College strategy for distribution of funds may be necessary. Workload reductions must be eliminated. Full classes cannot be eliminated. Small classes will not be allowed. Dean Brennan will talk to chairs individually.

Around the table:

Dr. Erhart asked about student travel money for the fall. Dean Brennan asked her to make the request to see what transpires.

Dr. Hanks reminded the Council that Friday is Juneteenth, and that the University is sponsoring a Day of Reflection.

Dr. Hart requested enrollment data.

Ms. Anderson asked about the staff morale survey. It was created by Dr. Roundtree and is anonymous. If anyone accidentally includes identifiable information, Dr. Roundtree will remove it. She will use qualitative analysis to find overall themes and concerns to share with the Dean and LAC. The survey link was sent only to CoLA staff.

The meeting ended at 3:50p.m.