

Minutes—Liberal Arts Council
January 22, 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, Bill Kelemen, Yongmei Lu, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez (late), Angela Murphy, Aimee Roundtree, Vicki Smith, Chad Smith

Guests: no one

Absent: no one

The minutes of 11.20.19 were unanimously approved by a vote of the Council on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. Erhart.

Dean Brennan announced that the COLA Research Expo will be held on Friday, 1 May 2020. The deadline for nominations will be February 24, and undergraduate students who were in class last semester or are in class this semester are eligible. Additional important dates related to the Expo are March 9 (Orientation for new presenters); April 6 (Poster workshop); April 10-(Deadline to submit presentation titles/poster titles); April 22 (Deadline to submit poster file).

Geography has consented to print posters with COLA supplying paper and ink. Each department or Center can have two posters presentations and one oral presentation. Dr. Harney asked whether posters had to be translated into English. Dean Brennan noted that judges would not be able to evaluate non-English presentations.

Dean Brennan reminded chairs about strategic planning. Their plans are due by 2.5.2020. This is not a major revision. “Hot” new fields are attractive, i.e., medical humanities; open access and saving students money are also attractive goals. COLA will discuss the College plan on 2.12.2020.

Ken Pierce is creating a committee to investigate Digital Signage issues. Only one Academic Affairs representative will be on the committee. Dr. Kelemen agreed to serve if asked; Dean Brennan asked chairs to send problems and issues to him.

Dean Brennan announced that electronic course fees will be swept from departments in February to make up the 1.9 M in salary shortfall. She distributed a memo from Dana Willett indicating amounts to be swept from each department. Much discussion ensued, none of which supported the process or the outcome, focusing on unintended consequences. They asked who will issue a PCR changing the cost center? Chairs noted that Dana Willett had met with the Distance Ed committee January 9, 2020, without disclosing this process. Departments will be informed “soon” about how much money they will receive in the summer and fall. Departments should be able to explain how they had planned to use the money if they want to get funds back. Dean Brennan will ask the questions about the process as provided by chairs. (The questions and Dana Willett’s responses are as follows:

Where is the money that is being swept going?

In FY 2019, Academic Affairs (AA) had a shortfall of approximately \$1,900,000 in faculty salaries. At the end of the year AA accounts have to be reconciled with university accounts. ECF reserves are being used to fulfill AA’s financial obligation to the university.

What are they to do about big projects (i.e. creation of new zoom rooms) that they had planned to use ECF to fund? Zoom technology will usually occasion an expenditure of about \$ 25,000. In most cases, sufficient balances remain in departmental ECF accounts to cover one-time projects. Where those balances are insufficient, we will ask that units make capital requests as a part of annual budget planning. We have planned for this in the guidance document that was circulated to those who manage ECF.

How will departments be able to encumber salaries for summer and fall if there is not enough money in their account? The departments will not be asked to encumber salaries for which there is not enough ECF funds to cover. University funds will still be used to pay faculty teaching online/hybrid courses and departments are being asked to use ECF funds as well.

What should a chair do if the amount on the handout does not represent what he/she thinks is in the account?
[Please contact me to review the account.](#)

Dean Brennan announced material on the marketable skills website will soon need to be approved by program coordinators.

Dean Brennan distributed a handout from the administration, contrasting CUPA faculty salaries with Texas State faculty salaries. She noted that departments are asked to hire at the CUPA level, despite the salary compression that ensues. Chairs noted that the data appear to be, at the very least, inaccurate.

Dean Brennan distributed a handout from Fernando Gomez, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel of the Texas State University System, citing an Assistant Attorney General ruling indicating that faculty are not obligated to provide access to their own PowerPoint notes.

Dean Brennan announced that some funding will be provided for those attending the Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education meeting in Dallas.

Dr. Audwin Anderson noted that he will be stepping down as Director of the Center for Diversity and Gender Studies and retiring at the end of July, 2020. He will return in a phased-retirement status.

Three chairs (Drs. Erhart, C. Smith, and Kelemen) announced that they would be stepping down as chairs at the end of summer of 2021.

Dr. Roundtree asked to be invited to departmental faculty meetings for branding discussions in January or February.

Dr. Murphy reminded chairs that reports of known Title IX violations must be made to The Office of Equity and Inclusion. Not to do so is a misdemeanor and may lead to dismissal. Ms. Anderson noted violations must be reported as Cleary violations to the UPD as well.

Dr. C. Smith said Canvas problems can be sent to him.

The meeting ended at 3:03.