

Liberal Arts Council minutes

Zoom Meeting 2:00 p.m.

26 August 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, John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, Aimee Roundtree, Chad Smith

Guests: Natalie Ceballos

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 12 August 2020 minutes were approved without dissension on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. Chad Smith.

The Honors College has a contract with the company Symposium to provide on-line conferences. We may partner with the Graduate College to consider using Symposium, as well. There are some limitations (External participants will be problematic.) and costs to the departments, so we will invite them to meet with LAC for explanation and discussion.

A committee is developing Friday workshops for chairs' training chairs. Dean Brennan circulated a suggested set of workshops and asked that chairs send suggestions for other topics. Topics should be sent to Dr. Brennan or Dr. Roundtree.

Costs associated with closed captioning were discussed. Dean Brennan took the issue to CAD, where the costs were discussed. REV.com accounts are department-specific; costs are about \$1 per minute. ZOOM captioning is not ADA compliant because it is not 99.9% accurate. IT is in charge of the REC.com contract, and CAD concluded that alternatives to REV.com should be found. Dana Willett is looking for short-term alternatives. ZOOM may be a good-faith effort. We must do what we can for students who need accommodations.

Associate Dean Day noted that she will no longer ratify grade changes from F to a grade with the justification "Student submitted final work." She indicated that the process appears, at best, to be a lazy way of awarding an I, then changing it to a grade and, at worst, a way of giving some students opportunities unavailable or unknown to all students. After discussion, there seemed to be agreement on the following aspects of the process:

1. Students should be given the grade earned at the time of grade submission.
2. If a student requests an "I" at the time of grade submission, the professor can agree with or deny the request. If the professor agrees with the request, appropriate paperwork should be filed with the professor's department and the Registrar.
3. The Registrar allows a professor to change a failing grade to an I grade within 2 weeks or so of grade submission if a professor admits that he or she erred in the grade submission.
4. If a student, having received/earned an F, requests, at a later date, to complete the course in order to remove the failing grade, the student must file a grade appeal explaining the extremely extenuating circumstances that justify an "I" grade; if the grade appeal is accepted by the professor and the chair, then the F will be changed to an I.
5. When the student submits work leading to a grade, the I can be changed to a letter grade. There is normally a time limit for "I" grades.

Susan Day asked chairs to send her any changes in their College Curriculum Committee representation or in Department Program Directors, those professors who oversee assessment of a program.

CAD Update

Enrollment is looking good. The University is down only 2.4% in UG head count; 990 students were dropped for non-payment. The largest decrease is in Pell-eligible students; our Pell-eligible enrollment is down from 12,000 to 10,000. Gary Ray is afraid we are losing a generation of poor students who will not be able to afford to attend. If we can expand Texas grant funds to assist students in the future, then we can reduce the gap for students from lower-income families. Graduate student enrollment is up 306 students from last year. The fall to fall undergraduate retention rate is approximately 76%.

No students have been reported for not wearing a mask. One faculty member has been reported for not wearing a mask. Bus drivers reported only 2 people left at bus stops because bus was full. In Flowers, bathrooms do not seem to have been a problem. There are approximately 1000 open rooms in residence halls. "Ghost" on-line sections are unacceptable. If a course is labelled face-to-face, it must be offered face-to-face. Faculty members must regularly interact with students

in on-line classes. Face-to-face events can include inviting guest speakers to campuses, but outsiders may not attend the lecture.

Spring schedules (last edits) are due on Friday (8.26); the administration wants schedules to be as accurate as possible, but they do not expect them to be perfect. Fall faculty modifications will continue to the spring. PC will discuss the spring schedules on 9.14.20.

Mary Ellen Cavitt is going to be new University College dean, when Dann Brown leaves in October, after she steps down as VP of Student Affairs. Until Dr. Cavitt becomes dean, Kambra Balch will be interim dean for UC.

Dean Brennan asked chairs to call her about her with questions to be asked at her meeting with Debbie Thorne.

Around the table/screen

Dr. Harney commented on the half-time language in the development leave documents.

Dr. Lu noted that the Book Store did not order enough books for some Geography classes, and that this is a deliberate and ongoing practice. Dean Brennan noted that this is a Council of Chairs issue.

Dr. Chad Smith asked whether GIAs are obligated to do remote working agreements. GAs must do such agreements. (In a follow-up email at 4:07 p.m. on 4.26.20, Dean Brennan wrote "According to Andrea [Golato], they 'ultimately decided late last night that during the pandemic (and during the pandemic only), graduate students employed as teaching/research/instructional/graduate assistants are *not required* by the university to fill out the remote working agreement, however, a chair can decide to require it for all or some graduate student employees (i.e, for graduate assistants when they are performing administrative duties normally in an office setting, since they then function more like a staff member. Again, though that is up to the chair)."

Dr. Martinez asked about the COLA week schedule. Dean Brennan indicated that there will probably not be a COLA week this fall because ZOOM can't offer a Quad-type experience .

Dr. McKiernan-Gonzalez announced a zoom conference, "Culture, Creativity, and COVID19" to begin at 9.1 at 4 p.m. Use this link to register: <https://www.txstate.edu/cssw/news-events/events/culture-creativity-covid.html>

Dr. Kelemen asked about ECF changes impacting funding for positions. Dean Brennan indicated that decisions have not been made.

Dean Brennan complimented the Advising Center's work with students for the summer and fall.

Dr. Roundtree asked about what happens when a student tests positive for Covid19. Dean Brennan indicated that Dr. Thorne had circulated a PowerPoint of scenarios and processes.

Dr. Helgeson reported that students are saying they are quarantining because of positive Covid19 tests. Dean Brennan indicated that professors can required documentation.

The meeting ended at 3:32.