

Liberal Arts Council Draft minutes

Zoom Meeting 2:00 p.m.

16 September 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, Toni Watt

Absent: no one

The meeting began at 2:01 p.m. and was conducted using ZOOM. Most participants were present through their computer screens, and all were present within 10 minutes.

The minutes of 9 September 2020 minutes were approved without dissension on a motion by Dr. Grasso and a second by Dr. Lu.

Dean Brennan announced that there will not be a LAC meeting on September 23rd.

Dean Brennan asked who would be interested in pursuing a contract with Forager One/Symposium. Sociology, Philosophy, World Languages and Literatures may be interested in the working with the Graduate College and Honors College to secure a contract with Symposium (ForagerOne). She asked that chairs to send questions affecting their decision to her.

Dean Brennan announced that Stella LoPachin has distributed a handbook helping faculty members who are candidates for promotion and tenure. Stella should be contacted by those who have questions about the process and the software; Chairs should send names of College Review members to Stella.

In CAD, the outside employment form was highlighted for other colleges; we have not had a problem in this area.

Faculty should be reminded to maintain their sick leave time accurately. Medical visits for self and family members should be recorded as sick leave, even if the visits do not cause faculty members to miss classes, as long as the visits are between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on week days. Dean Brennan raised the possibility of creating a College policy. Departments are encouraged to have their own policies to encourage faculty to record their sick leave. A show of hands indicated that most departments have such a policy, although Dr. Kelemen noted that it is difficult to hold faculty members accountable.

Mary noted that the COLA College Review follows appropriate voting for full professor, as described in the policy, which was an issue raised in CAD.

Dean Brennan noted the University is down 1% in head count and 2.5% in SCH. The freshman class is down 700 students, which may cause lower enrollment in future years. Scholarships for first-year students will be emphasized by the administration. It was again noted that the greatest decline is in Pell eligible students.

The spring schedule will go live on September 22nd. The administration wants to give students an accurate view of how classes will be offered in the spring .

Chairs must also think about summer and fall schedules. Scheduling for Summer 2021 will start with a roll over from summer 2020. Scheduling for Fall 2021 will start with a rollover from fall 2019, offering more face-to-face sections.

Additional contact tracers have been hired by the University; the goal is to get turn around down to 24 hours after diagnosis notification. No transmissions from halls and classrooms have been found; athletes and the Strutters are the sources of most of the diagnoses. Six students have been reported for noncompliance. The cost of testing symptomatic students will be billed to students, and Dean Brennan has learned that the resultant copays are problematic for students. Dean Brennan is considering the creation of a crowd funded site for soliciting copay funds. Hays County may put a free testing truck on campus. Dean Brennan noted that 45.3 % of classes are fully on-line; 54.7% are face-to-face and hybrid. Survey data from students report having problems with asynchronous classes because there is a lack of interaction between students and faculty. Faculty are encouraged to proactively solicit interaction. Faculty members report "fatigue" because of the demands of the new teaching methods and requirements. Inappropriate chatting on ZOOM can be stopped by directing chats only to the professor. Dr. Roundtree suggested midcourse student evaluations of classes to help faculty be more successful.

Dean Brennan raised the question in CAD: if the numbers are not down so drastically, then why do we have budget cuts. Dean Brennan was told

1. All SCH doesn't generate equal revenue;
2. Shift from ECF funding has undermined revenue;
3. Pandemic safety steps—equipment, structural changes to buildings—have been costly; and
4. President Trauth will present her annual budget update at University Assembly.

Spring/summer budget cuts will not be returned to our budgets, but the Administration is hoping current cuts will be enough when the Legislature meets in the spring. Dr. Roundtree noted the cuts did not seem to be equal across colleges and between departments. Dean Brennan suggested we should begin looking at our SCH to bolster arguments for avoiding future cuts.

Chair should examine their temporary funding requests for the year should be examined by chairs and justify spring funding requests. Chairs must consider what changes are required for spring classes. Classes must be “a good size” with higher enrollment caps.

Captioning services will come from department resources until the University gets a new contract. Dr. Roundtree suggested YouTube with corrected captioning by a teaching assistant. An alternative “inelegant” method would be to use a phone app, with voice-to-text running when the film is playing, to get captioning that will subsequently have to be edited.

Dr. Grasso noted that the Political Science Department's Constitution Day presentation will be on September 17, and will feature Dr. Mark Graber, from the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law. The presentation will be at 7 p.m. in Centennial 157 or by Zoom.

Dr. Kelemen asked about doing anonymous voting in Zoom Personnel meetings. Dr. Chad Smith indicated that anonymous voting can be done on Zoom. Dr. Lu indicated that votes don't always go through. Dr. Vicki Smith indicated that the English faculty recently used the process on Zoom, and it worked well.

Dr. Roundtree requested that the Department of Geography and Centers allow her graduate proposal-writing students to write white papers for proposals to solicit funding for those areas.

Dr. Roundtree will send a letter to all Liberal Arts faculty nominated for teaching awards as a way to solicit NEH Distinguished Professorship applications.

Guggenheim and ACLS applications are live; ACLS applications emphasize faculty who are not tenured and who are made vulnerable by the pandemic. Dr. Roundtree encouraged chairs to encourage their faculty to discuss applying. She can assist faculty who are interested in applying.

Dr. Roundtree said chair training will take place in mid-October. Sessions will be staggered on Thursdays and Fridays.

Dr. Mckiernan-Gonzalez announced that the Jones Professorship for the Southwest will solicit applications in the near future for the following academic year.

Dr. Hart raised issues related to the budget and asked for more transparency. He also asked about Liberal Arts enrollments, both in classes and majors (headcount and SCH), to avoid future budget cuts. He also wondered whether Hazelwood costs could be better predicted by the administration.

Dean Brennan announced that Dr. Natalie Ceballos won an R15 NIH grant for \$400,000 with Reiko Graham (co-PI) and Jean Hu (co-I).

The meeting ended at 3:21 p.m.