

MINUTES OF  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
December 8, 2020

The third Faculty Senate meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year was called to order by Assoc. Librarian Jill Dixon, Faculty Senate chair, at 11:46 am via Zoom.

1. Minutes

Minutes from September 29, 2020 meeting were approved.

2. Obituary Notices

Chair Dixon notified the body that Dist. Prof. Emerita Linda Spear, Psychology; Dist. Service Prof. Gary James, Anthropology; Prof. Michele Steinhauser, Decker; Prof. Emeritus Audrey Smedley, Anthropology; Prof. Bat-Ami Bar On, Philosophy; and Prof. Emeritus Louis F. McAuley, Mathematics, passed away. Chair Dixon asked for a moment of silence to remember our colleagues.

3. New Business

a. University Faculty Senate resolution "Racial Equity and Social Justice Curriculum"

Prof. Sara Reiter reported that this resolution was brought forward at the October UFS meeting and was unanimously passed. This resolution calls on campuses to work with those in charge of curriculum to develop course content on issues of racial equity and social justice, to develop and implement racial equity and social justice programs, and to educate undergraduate and graduate students on workings of systemic racism. The UFS is asking campuses to endorse this resolution.

The Faculty Senate Diversity Committee has reviewed the resolution and has two comments: 1) the BIPOC acronym used in the resolution does not adequately include Latinx persons and 2) it was felt this SUNY-level resolution was vague in what it meant to our campus (departments are in charge of curriculum) and what commitment we will be making. The Diversity Committee felt these were potential weaknesses in the resolution.

Prof. Reiter noted that this resolution has been endorsed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC).

Prof. Tina Chronopoulos, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, noted that we are trying to be anti-racist which can be very difficult when working within systems that are not organized to be anti-racist. What can we do as an institution and what can the Faculty Senate do to be anti-racist? This resolution works towards this goal, because being anti-racist also includes being anti-ableist. She stated that she had a handout on white-supremacy culture and that she was willing to share it. She did, however, note that she is happy to see that this action plan focuses not only on students but also on faculty and staff.

Chair Dixon noted that in September we passed a Black Lives Matter town meeting resolution and held a presentation by Prof. Anne Bailey and Prof. Sharon Bryant on the "Road to Reparation and Reconciliation". The Senate will continue to address this in the spring with ideas for more presentations on retention, tenure process, and the hiring

process. If anyone would like to be involved or would like more information, the following webpages are available.

<https://www.bupipedream.com/news/119650/auto-draft-714/>

<https://www.binghamton.edu/centers/harriet-tubman/trc-panel.html>

Motion was made and seconded to endorse this UFS resolution. After no discussion, it was approved by 54 in favor, 0 opposed, with 4 abstentions via a vote on Zoom.

b. Electronic Information Technology Accessibility Action Plan

This policy has been in effect since June 2019 when this policy was endorsed. We need to send our action plan to SUNY by the end of December 2020. This has been approved by FSEC. Information can be found at:

<https://www.binghamton.edu/faculty-senate/docs/12-8-2020/binghamton-accessibility-action-plan-draft.pdf>

<https://www.binghamton.edu/faculty-senate/docs/9-1-2020/electronic-and-information-technology-accessibility-policy.pdf>

Prof. Sara Reiter reported that the Diversity Committee has the opportunity to comment on any items being brought to the Senate. This falls into the framework of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, however, committee members felt they need to get some reassurances that this will not be a tremendous burden on faculty to implement and that resources will be made available.

Prof. Randy Scholtz, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, reported that faculty can work with liaisons to make their webpages accessible according to ADA requirements. He reported hearing that in order to reduce legal complications, we can make our public-facing pages campus-facing. That caused him concern.

Dean Kendrick addressed concerns from the Diversity Committee and noted that this is a process. It is too early to tell exactly what resources will be needed. The action plan calls for a liaison system as resource needs may vary school to school, department to department. The burden to faculty should be light and is contingent on what we are trying to accomplish and what kind of activity is required. This is a process and will be individualistic. We are trying to bring support to people (technology, human-facilitated support) and hope to be successful to raise resources. We already have technology in place to support this initiative.

Dianne Gray, Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), reassured everyone that her department and the Faculty Senate are real partners in helping faculty members accomplish the goals of the plan. Sensus Access software, which can upload any document to make it accessible as a pdf, braille, mp3, or audio file, is available to everyone to help students to be independent. Ms. Gray agreed that this is a partnership and process and our goal is to be 100% compliant.

Dean Kendrick commented that SSD does a tremendous job, and we are working towards going beyond the legal obligation. We need to think of the equity issue with everyone having full access to the education they are entitled to.

Prof. Natalia Mijatovic, Art, asked about publically accessible digital content and copyrighted performing arts (audio). Is there any conclusion on how to make those files accessible without violating copyrights? For example, for blind students, how far can we go in making visual works accessible? If some of these cannot be made digitally accessible, would we have to take these down from our webpages? These are on a website where we promote our students' work, making it accessible to the public (some video and performance works). Ms. Gray responded that we could describe the works and put it behind the picture (alternate text). If it is an audio file, describe what this is (for example, music). Dean Kendrick added that as far as copyright is concerned, there are some re-formatting provisions depending on what the situation/file is. Any public-facing material has to be accessible. If we have a plan in place on what we are doing, we will be in a good position showing good faith. Regarding legacy content that is not accessible, we need to come up with a set of priorities on how to deal with that content.

Prof. Tina Chronopoulos mentioned that she realized how inaccessible her course and course content was when we went online in March. It is appreciated that we are doing this. Many community colleges tend to be better as far as inclusivity.

Prof. Randy Scholtz reminded members that this is a journey. Two points in the plan document are escape clauses which can be applied as exemptions so the provision is there.

Prof. Myra Sabir, CCPA Human Development, asked if anyone wanted to access their websites/technology, could the Center for Learning and Teaching help. Ms. Gray answered 'yes'.

Prof. Natalia Mijatovic noted that fine arts and performing arts pay close and personal attention to students as far as accessible content is concerned, and hope to find ways to comply with this requirement and our scholarly requirements. Prof. Candace Mulcahy, CCPA Teaching, Learning and Educational Leadership, and faculty representative to the Technology Accessibility Advisory Group (TAAG), noted that this is an ADA requirement.

Ms. Dixon commented that there needs to be future discussion as Dean Kendrick has noted.

Prof. John Zilvinskis, CCPA Student Affairs Administration, reported that one third of students diagnosed with disabilities do not register with SSD and many try to navigate on their own. Ms. Gray reported that students in K through 12 may have a stigma, and this fuels their desire not to register. It is different in higher education. We would love to show that BU is at the forefront.

The motion is to endorse the EIT Accessibility Action Plan. It was approved with 54 in favor, 1 opposed, 7 abstentions via a vote on Zoom.

a. Reports

a. Prof. Scott Craver, chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, reported on the activities of the FSEC for the fall semester. The FSEC met weekly starting August 28, except when the full faculty senate was in session. The semester's business included the filling of committees. In addition to approving those assignments made by the Committee on Committees, the FSEC assisted in the following:

- Filling the selection committee and chair for the Campus Citizens Review Board (CCRB),
- naming five members for the new Micro-Credentials committee, including the vice chair,
- filling vacancies on the Diversity Committee,
- filling a vacancy on the Roadmap Steering Committee for strategic priority #3,
- naming members to the Distinguished Service and Distinguished Teaching Professor Committees,
- naming two members for the Common Read book selection committee, and
- naming four faculty members for the Harpur Dean search committee.

During the semester, the FSEC held conversations with several members of the administration. We began the semester with a conversation with President Stenger and Provost Nieman. Throughout the semester the FSEC met with Karen Jones, founding Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; James Pitarresi, Vice Provost of the Center for Learning and Teaching; Donald Loewen, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Enrollment Management; interim Harpur Dean Celia Klin; Library Dean Curtis Kendrick; Niyazi Bodur, Chief Information Officer; Paula Russell, Center for Learning and Teaching, and Dianne Gray, Services for Students with Disabilities.

Issues discussed included:

- The cyber-attack on campus, which resulted in a meeting scheduled on short notice with Niyazi Bodur, who provided information about the attack and its impacts;
- the Faculty Senate statement in support of Black Lives Matter and the subsequent organization of Faculty Senate town hall meetings;
- a number of curricular items, including the blanket 4+1 program, and the Watson College proposal to officially designate Watson programs with SUNY as distance learning;
- changes to the Bylaws respecting committee makeup, including the University Personnel Committee, owing to the removal of the Graduate School of Education as a separate unit;
- discussion of the EIT accessibility action plan, which resulted in two meetings -- one with Dean Kendrick, and a second with Paula Russell from CLT and Dianne Gray from SSD, to discuss various aspects of the accessibility policy; and
- finally, the FSEC endorsed University Faculty Senate resolution respecting Racial Equity and Social Justice Curriculum.

b. Prof. Sara Reiter, University Faculty Senator, reported that the UFS met virtually on October 15 to 17, 2020. Meeting reports and slides from UFS President Gwen Kay and Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Tod A. Laursen can be found at <http://www.sunyufs.us/fall-2020-post-plenary-report.html>.

One of the main topics of discussion at the meeting was unresolved issues between the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the UFS regarding the procedures (no formal search) used for the appointment of Chancellor Malatras.

Other discussions of interest included:

- The committee charged to revise Gen Ed requirements has not met since COVID but plans to start meeting soon.
- The goals of the SUNY Online program and how it relates to online programs of the various campuses continues to evolve. Marketing costs are apparently the biggest barrier to expansion. The ultimate goal of the SUNY Online program is still stated as capturing the market of New York citizens who are finishing degrees at other online institutions.
- In the current very unclear budget environment, it is often difficult to know what campus choices versus SUNY mandates are. There was discussion regarding students returning home at Thanksgiving and plans for startup of the spring semester.
- Distance education policy waivers at the state level continue through the spring semester but federal policy waivers are not expected to continue beyond the fall.
- The PRODiG program is ongoing.
- The new Chancellor Malatras answered a number of questions. He had no advice for campuses suffering from long review times at State Ed. Regarding the political/budget prospects for SUNY, the Chancellor is not optimistic -- "It is critical to make the argument for public higher education, given national forces that are devaluing public institutions. Given the recent change in control of the New York State Senate, more higher education focus may be directed to CUNY, and less to upstate SUNY campuses. And higher education in general takes a back seat to K-12 education when it comes to funding and policy as well. Arguments around TAP Gap and other jargon-laden issues do not resonate with the general public and many legislators. We need to make clear arguments around student access to higher education, and that public funds should support public campuses."  
<http://www.sunyufs.us/fall-2020-post-plenary-report.html>. He also wants to make sure that SUNY expertise is utilized first, rather than going to out-of-state experts.
- The Chancellor has announced an initiative to provide student access to mental health services <https://www.suny.edu/suny-news/press-releases/10-20/10-4-20/mental-health.html> and more recently called for input for a "System-Wide Action Plan to Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and to Combat Racial Inequality and Division" <https://www.suny.edu/suny-news/press-releases/10-20/10-30-20/diversity-action-plan.html>. Subsequent to the meeting, UFS senators and Campus Governance Leaders were given the opportunity to sign a letter to Washington about the recent executive order on diversity training.
- A legal panel presented on the particular difficulties faced in relation to free speech issues because we are public institutions.
- The resolutions passed at the meeting include: a resolution relating to changing curriculum and promoting other Black Lives Matter/diversity programs (appearing before this body for endorsement at this meeting), search procedures that should be followed for Chancellor appointments (there is no current policy or procedure in place), a vote of no confidence in the political members of the Board of Trustees for not using a search committee process to appoint the Chancellor, a resolution relating

to a faculty governance problem at Albany which was postponed, and a resolution on updating faculty governance policies to cover the emergency situations we are facing (which has been forwarded to the Bylaws Review Committee).

c. Proclamation in honor and recognition for Michael McGoff

Prof. Scott Craver introduced a proclamation (attached) from the FSEC to honor and recognize Michael McGoff who is retiring after 50 years of service to the University.

5. Other Business

Prof. Aaron Beedle, Pharmacy, asked if we would be having some break days in the spring semester. President Harvey Stenger responded that we asked the Student Congress to select dates for three rejuvenation days in the spring semester. These have been sent to President Stenger and Provost Nieman and have been approved. There will be an announcement soon about these three days (one in March, and two in April).

<https://www.binghamton.edu/news/story/2799/inghamton-university-to-add-three-rejuvenation-days-to-spring-calendar>

After no more business, the meeting adjourned at 12:57 pm.

Present: Saligrama Agnihotri, Seden Akcinaroglu, Jeffner Allen, Laura Anderson, Nathanael Andrade, Allan Arkush, Michael Armstrong, Serdar Atav, Aaron Beedle, Christopher Bishop, Kimberly Brimhall, Yulia Bosworth, Sharon Bryant, Subimal Chatterjee, Paul Chairot, Stephen Capobianco, Scott Craver, Sidney Dement, Marilyn Desmond, Jill Dixon, Patrick Doyle, Anthony Ephirim-Donkor, Alex Feingold, Mark Fowler, Jeroen Gerrits, Neyda Gilman, Jennifer Gordon, Madhusudhan Govindaraju, Kevin Hatch, Norah Henry, Robert Holahan, Dikran Karagueuzian, Anja Karanein, Anushree Karkhanis, Clarice Kelleher, Blazo Kovacevic, Jonathan Krasno, Alistair Lees, Cynthia Marasigan, Richard Mattson, Natalija Mijatovic, Ralph Miller, Nagendar Nagarur, Donald Nieman, Kirsten Prior, Sara Reiter, Joshua Reno, Myra Sabir, Paul Schleuse, Andrew Scholtz, David Schuster, Thomas Sinclair, John Starks, Harvey Stenger, Ozlem Tonguc, Ruth Van Dyke, Andrew Walkling, Bruce White, Wei Xiao, Sarah Young, John Zilvinskis

Excused: Leon Cosler, Elizabeth Tucker

Absent: Nancy Applebaum, Anne Bailey, John Baust, Ana Maria Candela, Hwan-Sik Choi, Sung Chung, Leon Ciu, Lois Einhorn, Salvador Fajardo, Nicole Fenty, Guy German, Thomas Glave, Khaleel James, Michael Lawler, Katherine Martineau, Ronald Miles, Richard Naslund, Kevin Santiago Valles, Antonio Sobejano-Moran, Thomas Wilson, Michelle Withers, Lijun Yin, Yan Zhang, Zhongfei Zhang