

Minutes of the CAS Faculty Senate Meeting of March 15, 2021

Monday March 15, 2021, 4:00-5:03 PM

Attending: Coleen Popp, Robin Morgan, Steven Sidebotham, Alan Fox, Lydia Timmins, Bernard McKenna, Talley Ridgeway, Jenny Lobasz, Kimberly Clark, Gunner Taylor, Nonie Bell, Kimberly Schroeder, John Pelesko, Edward Lyman, Phill Penix-Tadsen, Dominique Guillot, Deni Galileo, Zhenghan Qi, Dilia Lopez-Gydosh, Erin Cassese, Peter X. Feng, Thomas Rocek, Jon Cox, Christine Grogan, Mark Greene, Eynat Gutman, Shawna Vican, Jia Song, Neal Zondlo, John Morgan, Patricia Burt, James Angelini, Adele Hayes, Darryl Flaherty, John Jungck, Jason Hill, Jennifer Barker, Lawrence Duggan, Arild Hestvik, David Satran, Nina Owczarek

President Alan Fox began the meeting with a technological introduction and poll of senators to ensure the presence of a quorum, which there was.

Those present and eligible voted to approve the agenda.

Those present and eligible voted to approve the minutes of the February 15 meeting.

Alan Fox then thanked Provost Robin Morgan for attending the meeting.

Alan Fox then introduced Dean John Pelesko. The Dean noted that 367 days had passed since UD had transitioned to remote/online teaching/interaction. He indicated that UD still faced long-term challenges. He added that there were more students on campus and in class than last semester, but that this had resulted in a spike in COVID-19 cases on campus over the last few weeks. He emphasized that UD had to manage a return to normal campus life while moving to phase two of the crisis.

Provost Robin Morgan then discussed the hard science vs. soft science of the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that one of the identified COVID hotspots on campus was the Caesar Rodney Dining Hall. To address this problem, UD moved from seating students to a “grab and go” dining option to minimize student interaction. She emphasized the importance of a positive attitude and hard work during the pandemic.

Provost Morgan noted that UD was working on the possibility of vaccinating people on campus, especially graduate students. However, UD has no access to vaccine at present, but vaccinations are available at various locations around the state. Provost Morgan expressed optimism about the possibility of vaccinating, eventually, all students over the age of 18.

Provost Morgan also noted discontent expressed by students and parents towards online teaching. She said that decisions by UD administrators about online vs in-person teaching take into consideration safety and academic continuity. She indicated that UD was striving for a return to normalcy

Provost Morgan could not predict whether fall 2021 teaching would return to normal or would continue online. Likely, it would be a combination with more in-person classes than since the start of the pandemic.

Provost Morgan observed that another hotspot for COVID transmission was in laundry rooms. She did not know if COVID variants (e.g. British, South African, Brazilian) had been detected on campus. However, she did indicate that the current vaccines appeared to be effective against the variants.

Provost Morgan then addressed some concerns of the graduate students. These included time lost towards degree resulting from the pandemic and issues of stipends. Graduate student fees have increased. Another concern was support for grad student parents with care giver responsibilities.

Provost Morgan then fielded miscellaneous questions from some of those present.

One noted that the university's sustainability manager had departed, but it remains unknown when that position might be filled. Another question was about student interfaith centers.

There was a question about class sizes and the differences in effort between teaching in person vs. online. Classes exceeding 100 will be online in the fall; currently, classes of 50 or more are online.

Another representative reminded those present to respect the recuperation days now set for Tuesday March 30 and Monday April 19.

There was another query about when adjunct professors would receive vaccinations.

There was a final question about teaching format (online/in-person) for courses during summer session. Provost Morgan indicated that there would be a combination.

The meeting then returned to Alan Fox and the agenda.

John Morgan pointed out that there were two or three vacancies on the Educational Affairs Committee and that it would have a heavy workload in fall 2021. There were other vacancies to be filled on the Advisement and Retention Committee.

John Jungck had nothing to report from the P&T Committee.

Those present and eligible voted to approve a single item on the Consent Agenda: the BA in Japanese Studies.

Those present and eligible to vote approved items on the Full Agenda.

Under new business, Deni Galileo asked that agenda items in the future be numbered or lettered to facilitate identification.

John Morgan observed how CAS had lost seats in the University Faculty Senate due to the creation of the Biden School as an autonomous entity. He also noted that the University Faculty Senate required additional full time and temporary full time faculty members.

There were no additional items of new business and the meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM