

University Senate Meeting
Wednesday, March 25th, 2020

1. Call to order at 2:40pm

2. Roll Call

In attendance via Zoom: Abrams, Alleyne, Alvares, Bal, Bellum, Berger, Berisha, Billings, Brennan, Carr, Collins, Connolly, Coutras, Curnutt, Dinour, Emery, Field, Fleming, Friedman, Gaynor, Gingerich, Sharps for Gurskis, Halaby, Hood, Jacobson, Judge, Wallace for Kay, Kelly, King, Korotkin, Kurze, Lemons, McDermid, Misra, Murray, Panorkou, Pennington, Peterka-Benton, Spitz, Sullivan, Temoney, Trubatch, Vernon, Wolfson

3. Report from the Administration

Gingerich: Thank you for the staff that have to continue to go in and take care of us. I'd like to listen to you this time, of course things that are giving you trouble. The Pass/Fail option, questions on how that applies and how does it go into effect- we are working on a communication to faculty.

a. **Kurze:** Getting a number of questions on the Pass/Fail policy.

Gingerich: What I'd like to hear is what specific things do you want to see addressed in a memo for clarity.

Kurze: It would be nice to have a landing page on the website so students know things will continue to function.

Sumner: There were separate communications to students, the information that went to all faculty/staff and teaching instructors tried to address these issues. Faculty should continue to grade as they are, but with the many stressors our students are dealing with they can choose the Pass/Fail option on a course by course basis up until May 4th.

Temoney: If you are a student that had taken a class in which you failed but you are retaking it now we want to clarify if they will pass/fail will that replace the fail. An advising question is what courses to take Pass/Fail and how will it affect chances to get into graduate school?

Gingerich: Those specific questions wouldn't go in the memo, but we will definitely point them in the direction of their advisor for advice.

McDermid: Since they have a very long time to make the decision I would suggest that the top line should be "you have a lot of time to make these decisions and consult with your advisors in these decisions."

Paterka-Benton: Verify if a Pass grade is a D or better.

Trubatch: As an instructor, when you go to enter final grades in Banner you choose Pass or Fail, so the D is kind of guidance but it will come down to your best judgement.

Gingerich: Yes, David is correct. We want students to know in advance that some courses will not be allowed to do Pass/Fail

Misra: Can a student change their mind after they have signed up for Pass/Fail can the grade be entered after the fact?

Gingerich: That will not be allowed, and invite a certain amount of chaos.

Temoney: Now will Pass/Fail, how will it affect those who request an incomplete or to withdrawal?

Gingerich: That was one of the considerations, we didn't want students quickly dropping out of courses because of the difficult time. We didn't discuss changing any of those dates, but I'm not sure there is a need for it yet.

Trubatch: The date for Withdrawal for a W without an impact to GPA and no money back is April 7th.

- b. **Trubatch:** A few things on communication- not everything needs to be sent to faculty/staff but some bigger decisions such as this Pass/Fail or students being asked to leave the dorms should include faculty/staff. These announcements should be memorialized on the website for future reference. We have a web-based commendium for policies so I urge that any new policies be posted there, and that in the messages to students, faculty and staff that they can refer to that page for policy updates.

- c. **Trubatch:** College of New Jersey had a Structured review process. taking a moment to have a structured review can be helpful.

- d. **Jacobson:** The memo to students should say that the expectation is that students complete all their assignments. So instructors will have some leverage for any potential grade grievances.

Trubatch: Yes, that is a good point and everyone should review their syllabi to make sure it works for the rest of the semester.

Lemons: We are probably their number one contact with students right now, they are contacting advisors directly. The importance of documented communication for advisors is very important. Many questions are not written with black and white answers, advisors need something in writing to clarify these questions.

Kurze: There is a lot of useful information that we are gathering here, we all understand we are in the midst of a crisis, can we use Google Drive for this with regards to the policy or other documents.

Trubatch: Ken Sumner has been doing a tremendous amount of work, many students have questions that fall into certain buckets, people may not read a very well written FAQ, but it would be helpful to develop one.

- e. **Gingerich:** Does anyone have a comment on the delivery process, on Canvas or Zoom?

Misra: I had two undergraduate classes and about 10 students were missing from each class but the remaining 26 students or so had issues with sound. They could hear me but I could not hear them.

McDermid: I've received great support from the ITDS team, thank you Candy. Canvas had a blue note announcement which was taken off successfully, but asked for the ITDS team to put a new announcement on attendance and recording sessions.

Panorkou: I have used Zoom, every single student was there but I had to work in advance to make sure students would be there. We did a sound check and dedicated two-hours in a meeting to check on students as they came in to check the camera, sound, and their overall well being. Many of them mentioned that they missed my face, and that many professors are just using discussion boards on Canvas, but it would be nice if students were able to interact with their instructors once in a while.

Gingerich: Are the adjuncts getting the support that they need?

Korotkin: It varies from department to department but IT has been very helpful with communicating and assisting adjuncts.

- f. **Alvares:** Many of our students have complicated personal lives and challenges during this time. I have told my students to please talk to me about issues they're having or if they're overwhelmed. I think faculty need to be especially cognizant of this right now.

Gingerich: That is a very important message, the students need support and encouragement.

- g. **Sullivan:** I had a class yesterday where only 4 out of 30 students showed up. Many students are not around or are really struggling how to get through the semester.

Gingerich: How many of you are finding significant no shows?

Trubatch: We will need to be clear in communicating with the students about what we expect from them in video conferencing. We will need to make adjustments for those who cannot make it.

McDermid: I've been contacting students and have gained support from the Dean's office about how to support faculty and students at this time. Dean's might think about how to communicate resources to adjuncts in particular.

Wallace: I have not received any major issues from any of the adjuncts in terms of getting their courses online, they are receiving a lot of support from faculty and Deans with resources. Things seem to be working as well as they can for adjuncts who have never done this before.

- h. **Trubatch:** With all the changes, a lot of paper forms have moved electronic but can you talk to these kinds of systems in our large scale operation?

Fleming: We use a tracking service called Service Now, that many other offices on campus are using. Things are tracked electronically, there are reports, and different units can jump in to resolve issues. IT Service Desk, the number of incidents on Monday was several hundred but they are all getting addresses and resolved remotely; the service desk is still open 7am-midnight during the week.

Trubatch: For OIT it is very visible that the Service is being used. Users all get an email with a ticket, but it is not clear that this is happening in the Registrar's Office.

Fleming: If there is feedback such as that that you want to give us offline please do that. I will follow up, they may not be using the service for everything. I'll take any comments or suggestions for getting improvements.

Bellum: The tracking for schedule changes in the Registrar are very messy, we will get several emails on the same change request and a lot of confusion.

Cote-Bonano: We are talking about two different things. The Snow process in the Registrar's office is internal, Red Hawk is external, and scheduling is not on the Snow ticket right now but we should look into adding it.

Gingerich: Yes, the current system is not working as efficiently as it could be. Please remember that we've put a lot of new pressures on the Registrar's Office: Everyone is on quarantine right now, they are working with a new grid, they are transitioning from semester by semester scheduling to year long scheduling. We do have expectations that the entire process will be streamlined but it will take time.

4. Academic Affairs Report

McDermid: The UUC and Grad Council are conducting their meetings online. The Grad Council meetings are open to anyone so you can reach out to Lisa Lieberman for the Zoom meeting links. The library was charged with preparing the State-mandated report on OER (Open Educational Resources). Academic Affairs and Academic IT Facilitator stand ready to help.

Trubatch: What is the status of OER Report? Has the deadline for submission changed?

Gingerich: A written request for a 60-day extension was made by the NJLA to the State, but there has not been a reply.

5. Administrative Affairs Report

Bellum: The University procedure for designation Gender Neutral bathrooms has been posted. A lot has been put aside during this pandemic. A few new items include: recommend that the new common period can generally include two non-overlapping meeting times; navigate instructor comments were being shared generally and not specifically and students were not getting the comments they thought they were communicating.

Alvares: Many students and instructors are doing online classes when they haven't before and we could gather information on how these folks react. It could be the beginning of something that is paradigm changing.

Gingerich: Yes, we've thought about that, Emily Issacs is working with two faculty in Sociology to put together a brief survey from student reactions and their experiences in this new environment.

6. Student Affairs Report

Misra: All issues we were working on are on hold. Feedback from my undergraduate students is that they are overwhelmed by the communication from the Administration. They are also happy about the online instruction.

Sullivan: We need to remember that a lot of us are doing the best we can and giving compassion to our students. I'm not sure that taking a poll of students will be as accurate, we are just trying to get through and not have the academic rigour that we normally would.

Lemons: Some positive feedback from students, my team of advisors were meeting and students are loving the option of meeting via Zoom with their advisor and we have a live chat available. Students are giving positive feedback in these abilities.

7. NAL Report

Curnutt: We are working to ensure all of our employees are now in safe working situations and all raises were in last week's checks- except for specialists. If you have any questions about the new pay please contact HR first.

Misra: HR has not been responsive via phone and it takes forever to get a response. They need a tracking system.

Trubatch: They do have a tracking system as we heard from Candy, but some things are not in the system. Does someone from the administration want to respond now or take it as input and move on.

Gingerich: We take that information but have no comment right now.

Vernon: Service Now is in place and actively in use for Human Resources. I am committed to HR providing the highest level of customer service. Ram, or anyone who is not satisfied with the service received from anyone in Human Resources, should contact me.

8. Elections Committee

Field: We have six elections running right now and on Wed April 1st we will open up nominations for Executive Board Elections.

9. Report from the University Senate President

Trubatch: Tomorrow is Giving Day, it is a one day event where we ask for donations to support MSU.

Trubatch: There is a URL on Canvas with further information. The Garden State Film Festival is streaming all of their films, one of the films is called *Hungry to Learn* about food scarcity among university students which MSU is featured in.

Trubatch: The executive board met with President Cole and Provost last week, most everything has been reported on already. Would like to highlight that the Commendium does post the new budget and scheduling policies.

10. New Business

McDermid: We have no definitive decision about Commencement but do we have a date for when we might have a decision.

Gingerich: We do not have that decision yet, no other University has put together a timeline yet. We will celebrate as soon as we can, but we don't know when that will be.

11. Adjournment

Gaynor: Move to Adjourn
Adjourned at 4:15pm.