

**UNIVERSITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
 April 15, 2020

**Attendees**

Paul Caron  
 Michael Feltner  
 James Gash  
 Rick Gibson  
 Gary Hanson  
 Keith Hinkle  
 Connie Horton  
 Sara Jackson

Lee Kats  
 Rick Marrs (chair)  
 Marilyn Misch  
 Tim Perrin  
 Pete Peterson  
 Phil Phillips  
 Jeff Pippin  
 Steven Potts

Greg Ramirez  
 Mark Roosa  
 June Schmieder-Ramirez  
 Michael Shires  
 Nicolle Taylor  
 Deryck van Rensburg  
 Helen Williams

**Absent**

Lisa Bortman  
 Rick Cupp  
 Darren Good

**Observers**

Danny DeWalt  
 Ildiko Hazak  
 Jonathan See  
 Jody Semerau

**I. Call to Order and Devotional**

Provost Marrs called the University Planning Committee meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. on April 15, 2020 by Zoom Meeting. Pete Peterson presented devotional thoughts.

Marilyn Misch and Helen Williams moved and seconded approval of the minutes for January 15, 2020, which were adopted.

**II. EOC Update**

Phil Phillips presented an update on the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC). Pepperdine has an emergency for a duration that the University has never seen before. The EOC is addressing every aspect of the emergency. The EOC discusses issues like what is going to happen in the fall if Pepperdine cannot get on ground classes going. For that reason, the EOC members agreed that

the steering team had to be involved. The EOC is meeting once a week. The steering team meets once every two weeks. The EOC and the steering team are trying to forecast what might be the scenario in the fall. Each dean and each school is working on scenario plans for the fall. The issues are the following, what if Pepperdine cannot start the semester right on time because the orders for social distancing aren't lifted, what if Pepperdine has to delay the start of the semester by two weeks or more than two weeks and what if the virus comes back in the fall. Pepperdine needs a plan to go back to social distancing even if the University is on ground at that point.

On the community front the EOC continues to work with the Pepperdine Student Health Center. Phil Phillips commented that Rebecca Roldan, the director of the Student Health Center and Dr. Lucy Larson, the medical director of the Student Health Center, have been incredible from the beginning. They have been addressing every member of the Pepperdine community who may have been exposed to the virus. There are thirteen cases in the community and eight of those are from the London program. There were a few cases that had been on the Malibu campus prior to moving out. Pepperdine has made some notifications to close contacts of the community members who were exposed to the virus. There was one case from the West LA campus, but that individual had not been on campus. Phil Phillips commented that Pepperdine has lost Dr. Wayne Strom from complications associated with COVID-19. Dr. Strom was a retired professor from Graziadio Business School.

### **III. Academic Update**

Provost Marrs presented the academic update at Pepperdine University. Provost Marrs commented that Seaver College has 1,449 courses of which 131 were international programs. Seaver has faculty from international programs who are teaching the students remotely. The grad schools have about 1,223 courses. There are a total of 2,672 courses for the university. Provost Marrs commented that moving all those courses online is very challenging. There were a number of faculty at grad schools that were already teaching online. Seaver experimented with online classes during the Woolsey fire. Provost Marrs commented that teaching online for a week or two or teaching online for a semester is very different. Provost Marrs thanked Jonathan See and his team to step up and help faculty through TechLearn. Provost Marrs noted that he heard from the faculty how responsive the IT department has been. Also, the Pepperdine Library has been doing some creative things to help out faculty. Provost Marrs was meeting daily with the deans by teleconference to see what the issues were. The schools made very quick decisions regarding the issues of credit, no credit. Provost Marrs also noted that Pepperdine had more faculty grievances than it had in quite a few years. The University didn't have enough faculty available for panels. Provost Marrs commented that each of the schools elected additional representatives quickly, so that worked out well.

Provost Marrs commented that the genius of American higher education is diversity. One of the articles he has looked at was, "What every provost should be asking at this time?" These questions were in the article: How do you think about the new requirements for instructors when you have faculty now largely online versus face-to-face? How do we evaluate faculty work? How do we meet the co-curricular needs of students when we are online? What are the long-term implications of online learning? What is the emotional and physical well-being of our faculty during this crisis? How do you manage the personal, physical, medical, financial and psychosocial issues? How will we think about our educational experience? Among the five schools, there have a very common vision about the Christian mission and academic excellence. Pepperdine has become much more aware of how diverse the constituencies of its five schools are and the delivery systems. Communication is a challenge for the University at this time. Provost Marrs commented that he thinks that Pepperdine is in a good position, but there are challenges ahead and the University will keep working on them.

#### **IV. Thoughts and Comments**

President Gash commented that the academic side of Pepperdine continues to deliver excellence even in difficult situations. President Gash shared a few words of gratitude. What the Pepperdine community is doing right now is nothing short of heroic. Education at Pepperdine involves face-to-face personal interaction and mentoring. The Pepperdine community has turned this traditional interaction into something that it was not expected to do. President Gash commented that he gets emails regularly talking about how excellent the faculty is right now and how well they are developing new material and adapting their old material and adapting to this new mode of delivery. President Gash commented that there are employees who are unable, to no fault of their own, to work for Pepperdine right now. They are eager to be part of this community but their jobs don't allow them to be on campus. President Gash has been on numerous calls with colleagues around the country. He saw the difference in how Pepperdine handled this situation. The Pepperdine community wants to protect its colleagues. As Pepperdine looks forward to the 2021 fiscal year, the University had to sacrifice the merit pool, the 3% that the University has allocated for raises, so that Pepperdine can ensure that it is serving its students well.

President Gash commented that it is possible to do remote education. Pepperdine can deliver content and the University can show students what they need to learn about a particular subject in a remote format. President Gash commented that he encountered the idea of faculty governance to be potentially suspended during this time. President Gash had students and parents coming to him and say that the Law school and the Business School had made different decision. They told Jim Gash that he is the president and he needs to change the classroom requirements. President Gash commented that he had the opportunity to say that actually, now

more than ever, Pepperdine needs to ensure that it is empowering and entrusting the leaders of its institutions to do the jobs they have been trained to do and entrusted to do. These questions are school decisions. These school decisions have been made in conjunction with faculty members. President Gash saw the schools rise to the occasion. The schools are going to step up and they are going to own these decisions and they are going to make the decisions in the best interest of their students.

President Gash commented that almost all scenario planning is done for the summer. Pepperdine still has to decide whether Seaver College can do an on ground program in June and July. The focus now has turned to the fall programs. There are a lot of articles regarding what will potentially happen in the fall. There is only one school that had made the decision so far to go fully online for the fall and that is Boston University. Pepperdine will not make a decision in the first half of April about what is happening in August or September. President Gash is working with the provost and the deans. The deans are working with the faculty. The question is: What are the implications of each possibility on the finances of the university? President Gash commented that Pepperdine continues to meet with its various boards. Yesterday Pepperdine met with the University Board which is an advisory board led by Sara Jackson. There is a call with a Board of Regents, the governing board. Pepperdine has nothing but complete support and confidence from all of these boards.

Provost Marrs closed by saying that he appreciates everyone. The ultimate goal is that everyone wants what is best for the students and deliver an outstanding education for them.

## **V. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m. The next meeting of the University Planning Committee will convene at 8:30 a.m. on May 20, 2020 by Zoom Meeting.