

**UNIVERSITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
 May 20, 2020

**Attendees**

Paul Caron  
 Rick Cupp  
 James Gash  
 Rick Gibson  
 Darren Good  
 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**

Michael Feltner

**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 8:32 a.m. on May 20, 2020 by Zoom Meeting. Dean Helen Williams presented devotional thoughts.

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

**II. University Planning for the Fall**

President Gash presented an update on the upcoming fall program. He commented that Pepperdine is moving closer toward finalizing schedules for the fall. Each of the deans will send out a more definitive plan for the fall. The health and safety employees are working very diligently to come up with the plans, protocols and procedures. The restoration plan is incomplete and it is still in the early stages. President Gash noted that they will continue to solicit feedback from all of

the members of the Pepperdine community. There is an important decision to be made for the summer regarding summer blocks 2 and 3. Governor Newsom made a statement yesterday that he expects the universities to be in Stage 3 in June. That makes it possible that Pepperdine will be on ground in July. President Gash also noted that they are looking for a decision from Seaver in early June about the July summer school. The international programs for the fall are still very much up in the air. Each particular location is giving daily, on the ground feedback of what is happening in that location. Some of the locations are more difficult than others. For example, Argentina posted that there are no international flights allowed in and out until August 31. That will present a lot of challenges. Italy will open up all international flights in early June. The decisions regarding international programs are still a month away from now regarding the fall. The university is looking into coming up with processes and procedures to ensure that those who are at risk (faculty, staff and students) are being considered carefully as Pepperdine plans for the opening of its academic programs and student life this fall.

Rick Marrs presented an update from the academic perspective, including what it means to be a Christian university. Provost Marrs commented that he is currently reading N.T. Wright's book, "Paul: A Biography". N.T. Wright is his favorite new testament scholar. N.T. Wright, in this book, attempts to show that Paul is trying to do something that has never been done before and take what many has said was a Jewish phenomenon and articulate its implications, what it meant for gentiles. Wright attempts to show that Paul was wildly successful but sometimes he had bitter failures. Provost Marrs asked, "How is this relevant to Pepperdine?" What Wright shows is how Paul was incredibly sensitive to the multiple contexts in which he functioned, whether they were social, personal or theological. That is the challenge, dealing with something that is unique. Pepperdine has never experienced anything like this. Provost Marrs also read an article called, "Online Risk". It articulated compellingly why not opening face to face in the fall would be a disaster for most of the undergraduate schools. The data clearly shows that undergrads want to be face to face. Another article he read was titled, "The Case Against Reopening" and another one was titled, "Colleges Are Deluding Themselves". Both of these articles communicated in a fairly comprehensive manner why opening face to face could be so problematic. What they showed was why students want to be face to face. The communities which the students are a part of do not want them to be face to face. Students want the community experience, they want to be together and they want to socialize. That is exactly what makes communities nervous: students' failure to social distance and to take COVID 19 seriously, their risky behavior and the inability of colleges and universities to control their primary population. It is a reminder how different constituencies can view the same phenomena and have a solution for it. The good news is that at the time when universities are losing their luster, and being seen as expensive waste of time, it is overwhelmingly what universities provide that is being repeatedly discussed: the sciences, the nature of viruses, how science works towards vaccines, the social sciences, modeling, how statistics works, the

liberal arts or religion and philosophy. Provost Marrs asked the following questions, “How do we make hard moral choices? What value do we place on human life? How do we balance the pain of economic hardship with the loss of life?” Provost Marrs commented that these are no longer theoretical discussions. This situation is overwhelmingly a first world problem right now. It may get to the third world, but it is ironic that the greatest nation on earth is the epicenter of the problem. The question he keeps returning to, “What is the relevance of that for Pepperdine as a Christian University aspiring to academic excellence?” Provost Marrs commented that the analytical tools are most valued currently and most needed at this time. Pepperdine, as a Christian university, is dealing with issues that have significant theological and ethical importance. Provost Marrs asked, “What it means to be human? How do we understand the quality of life and all of its dimensions?” That is at the heart of a Christian university aspiring to academic excellence. Provost Marrs commented that there are no optimal or perfect solutions right now. There are suboptimal options. The task is to decide what the best option is of those suboptimal options.

Phil Phillips gave an overview of the projects his department is working on. Regarding physical classrooms, all the deans are working on figuring out what they need in terms of seats when students have to social distance for 6 feet. Social distancing requires additional classrooms. Phil Phillips asked, “How can we supply some additional classrooms?” They are looking at existing spaces that are not classroom spaces right now but can be easily converted. Regarding faculty and staff protection, Provost Marrs and Dr. Kats are working on what process might guide how the university is protecting those who are vulnerable in the community. Lauren Cosentino and Mark Goodman are also working on that. Phil Phillips noted that there is a restoration plan that was posted online. The restoration plan talks about cleaning protocols that will be implemented in the fall. Lee Kats and Jonathan See are leading this huge effort to make sure the university has the right technology in the classrooms. Connie’s team is working on the residential side. They are working on answering questions like, “How could we have the students in the residence halls and keep them safe? How do we provide food? What kind of food do we provide? Where do we provide food?” Regarding testing and tracing, Connie’s team and the Student Health Center have been great. They are very knowledgeable. They are working with the infectious disease expert who is a consultant from UCLA. Testing is one of those areas where there is no real plan out there. Phil Phillips said that they questioned what the testing regime will look like. For instance, are they doing surveillance testing where they test everyone or test some large group on a regular basis, or is it something where they only respond with testing? All of these options are being considered, but there is no consensus right now in the medical communities regarding what testing is going to look like in the fall. For testing, the university is going to pursue two different routes. They are going to pursue a type of test that can be conducted on ground here at Pepperdine on the Malibu campus. Pepperdine will have a partnership with Urgent Care for the graduate campuses. This kind of testing can be done very rapidly. At the same time Pepperdine is pursuing a more scalable option

that can be sent off to laboratories. Testing and tracing will be managed out of the Health Center. The university needs one group that sees the whole picture. When someone is tested positive the university needs to know who they have been in close contact with. Pepperdine has to make a notification to all who have been exposed and ask them to quarantine. The university has to prepare for isolation in quarantine spaces on campus and off campus. Regarding financial scenarios, Greg Ramirez is working on figuring out the direct costs that Pepperdine is going to incur and also the cost of lost revenue. Finally, Phil Phillips gave an update on Supply Procurement. Pepperdine is procuring supplies since the beginning of March. They have not been able to get some of the things that the university is going to need.

### **III. Questions and Answers**

Provost Marrs asked if there are any questions from the UPC members. Dean van Rensburg replied that one question came up from faculty and staff, "Will we require testing for all students and faculty prior to the beginning of the fall term?" Phil Phillips responded that this is undetermined at this time. This is a question that they are still debating on. Phil Phillips asked whether they should test everyone to get on campus. Phil Phillips continued that even if they figure out logistically how they would do this, they could test everybody one day. The problem is if they are asymptomatic, they may already have the virus and it will not show up. The very next day symptoms can onset or the very next day someone can go to the grocery store and pick it up. That one test does not provide a very good protection. Connie Horton commented that they are discussing the protocols. They will be doing some kind of a screening that many students will have. Dean van Rensburg asked, "Will students need to provide a self-disclosure to some extent?" Connie Horton responded that they are in a process of developing the forms and questions. June Schmieder-Ramirez asked a question regarding faculty, "Is there an actual faculty member who is part of the committees who are walking through the classrooms and determining the issues on operations?" Provost Marrs responded that Seaver has gone through the classrooms. They may have had a faculty member with them. Marilyn Misch asked how faculty members would be managed who are at risk. Provost Marrs responded that he and Dr. Kats have met with Lauren Cosentino and Marc Goodman yesterday. They are putting together a criteria. California is providing a lot of guidance as far as employee guidelines. The plan is in a draft form. Faculty would apply if they consider themselves at risk. When a person applies not to be face to face in the classroom, then they will have a committee that will review that and make a decision. Provost Marrs would chair that committee. It would be a combination of faculty representatives and administrative representatives of the appropriate people. They are working out the process right now.

Marilyn Misch asked how concerned is the university about the finances for Pepperdine? President Gash responded that the institution budgets conservatively. They have budgeted this fiscal year 21 a contingency of 2%, which is roughly \$11 million. They have now created a COVID contingency which is made of the merit pool sums that they froze, that's roughly about \$5.7 million. They don't know what is going to happen to the classes at each of the five schools. The schools are feeling optimistic. But there could be a declaration from the State of California that the university cannot be on ground. Then the university's financial situation will change dramatically. The enrollment will change dramatically. The fundraising team is deepening relations right now. Part of Pepperdine's budget is dependent on fundraising success. Pepperdine does have some reserves. President Gash believes that the hit the university is going to take will be a short-term hit. At this point he doesn't predict that this is going to bleed into fiscal year 22. The expenses perhaps will continue to go up and there will be a change in pattern for enrollment. The university is not predicting in engaging in a reduction of the workforce. Pepperdine will however will be maximizing its expense optimization protocols. The university is trying to ensure that it is acting conservatively and prudently. Some of the construction projects are being delayed. Much of the travel that employees and staff engage in won't happen. Marilyn Misch commented that she knows that a lot of faculty members are concerned about reductions. She asked President Gash, "Can we weather the storm?" President Gash responded that Pepperdine intends to weather the storm and hitting dry land as soon as spring, in terms of getting things back to normal. Provost Marrs added that the Seaver numbers are looking pretty good. Seaver has a big chunk of classes committed. Provost Marrs concluded that he appreciates what everyone does at Pepperdine.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m. The next meeting of the University Planning Committee will convene in September 16, 2020.