

University Faculty Council Meeting (Held Remotely)
Friday, January 12, 2024, 9am to 11am
Zoom link: <https://pepperdine.zoom.us/j/82502798885>

Attendees: John Mann, Jennifer Vaughn, Kindalee Delong, Kiron Skinner, Darren Good, Mark Scarberry, Jay Brewster, Reyna Garcia Ramos, Jay Goosby Smith, Thomas Knudsen, Jim Gash, Chalak Richards, Lila Carlson, Stephanie Williams, Stewart Davenport, Elizabeth Smith, Melissa Espinoza

MEETING MINUTES

1. **Opening Prayer:** John led a Christian meditation based on Psalm 46:10
2. **Discussion of Legal Impact of SFFA**
 - a. Dr. Goosby Smith - offered clarity regarding the role of the Office of Community Belonging as well as the term “DFIB” (Diversity, Fairness, Inclusion, Belonging) using the metaphor of a garden with different kinds of plants. She recommended looking at the “why” for pursuing diversity initiatives and carefully considering what exactly we are looking for when hiring.
 - b. Dr. Mann – What is the best way to move forward in search committees in light of SFFA?
 - i. Dr. Richards - Elucidate how what we are looking for will advance the goals of the institution. Why is it essential to our institution that we have qualified people with these types of experiences, educations, etc. How does this fit within our Christian mission?
 - ii. Dr. Goosby Smith - Previous solutions have been band-aids that haven’t tied to the mission of the school or the core values of the school. Recall that diversity is not always visual and which dimension of diversity is relevant differs based on the department and school.
 - iii. Dr. Vaughn - Consider whether there is a core value/theme across the experiences that we are looking for. How can this be weaved into the job posting or interview questions?
 - c. Dr. Garcia Ramos - Students have expressed not feeling supported in their work and not seeing faculty that share their social identities. These students are often supported by someone of a similar background.
 - i. Dr. Goosby Smith: Need to look at reward systems because faculty who have all these student connections tend to be underrepresented. What are the processes we have in place to support faculty members and make it easier to connect with students?
 - d. Dr. Knudsen - SFFA cases only had to do with use of race/ethnicity in admissions.
 - e. Dr. Davenport – Requested clarification regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity classification
 - i. Dr. Knudsen – affirmative action employer requires that we state specifically, or have a policy that specifies, why we are searching for a specific person to remedy a past issue of discrimination. Equal opportunity means we do not unlawfully discriminate based on race, gender, ethnicity, etc.
 - ii. President Gash – affirmative action plans are designed to eliminate discriminative policies. They need to be in response of a recognized problem with discrimination in order to correct it.

- f. Dr. Garcia Ramos – Requested clarity was about regarding the types of processes that are in place for admissions across schools
 - i. Dr. Knudsen – as a result of SFFA, a survey has begun to determine how the admissions process works across the 5 schools. All 5 schools do take in race/ethnicity information, so they need to ensure that this data is not they accessible by admissions officers for making decisions. Coupled with this will be training on how to use/manage data if it is shared through other means.
 - g. President Gash – Pepperdine’s department of education was previously investigated by the office of civil rights for scholarship programs that give plus factors or specifically identify certain race/ethnicity requirements. The rationale behind the supreme court decision is relevant to this as well, even though it was not the subject of the ruling.
 - i. Dr. Knudsen – we cannot consider gender, race/ethnicity for scholarships.
 - h. Dr. Skinner raised concerns about issues specific to SPP, wherein there is a reputation for being conservative. None of the other schools have politicized themselves in the way SPP has. The issue of admissions and recruitment of faculty/staff will be different in a school that has specified a political perspective. Makes it less likely that the student body will be diverse here.
 - i. Dr. Richards - Many have these concerns about long term impacts. Have had many questions from faculty/students where what they are asking is getting to “what is the environment of students going to be when they come here” and part of that is “how do you feel about this decision” and “are you still putting an emphasis on why it is important for people of diverse backgrounds to be represented here?”
 - ii. Dr. Skinner - Viewpoint diversity, when made a cornerstone of the school, is a fatal flaw that sends a bad message to students of color. This will contribute to challenges with having a pipeline of diverse students.
 - iii. President Gash - The reason for having diversity is to bring viewpoint diversity, rather than everyone having the same experiences and perspectives. Getting people with different views/background into a room to talk about things instead of having them hear only one viewpoint on a particular viewpoint.
 - iv. Dr. Williams – it is a more complex issue than just pointing towards one particular statement (i.e., viewpoint diversity)
 - v. Dr. Garcia Ramos – when you narrow diversity down to viewpoint diversity, you aren’t including some of those factors that have traditionally kept certain groups out of these discussions and members of some groups may not feel safe in these environments.
 - vi. President Gash – the role of this group isn’t to decide how SPP does its marketing nor how other schools do their marketing. This is a conversation among faculty interacting with administration to talk about big/important things. Having a conversation about whether the concept of viewpoint diversity is a good thing is a good thing.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Deferred to next week as we don’t have quorum of voting members.
 4. **AI and Web-Based Resource:** re-visiting from last meeting. Syllabus language was emailed to UFC members, but it may be more helpful to have a permanent parking space for this information.

- a. Dr. Garcia Ramos – we need to have a university-wide approach. As new students/faculty/etc. come in, we need to house this in a central location that is not split by school or program. General guidelines on how to use and share this information.
 - b. Provost Brewster – AI taskforce documents and resources
 - i. Issue with a university-wide policy is that each school is diverse and has different needs.
 - c. Dr. Smith – what has been provided is a good starting place. But it is more complicated than this. Is there the potential to provide subcommittees to spend time thinking about how to do this by school/department? Or is the taskforce already doing this by school/department?
 - d. Provost Brewster – will ask the deans how the provost office can work with them to develop and support subcommittees in collaboration with the AI taskforce.
 - e. Dr. Scarberry – agrees with the idea of having centralized information. Agrees that a centralized policy would not be the most helpful/effective.
 - f. Dr. Carlsen – can add a webpage to connect all relevant pages/resources into one place.
 - g. Committee agrees that this would be helpful.
5. **In-Person UFC Meeting Planning** – considering the feasibility of an in-person UFC meeting in the second half of the Spring 2024 semester.
- a. Dr. Mann will coordinate efforts to have an in-person meeting. Look out for email re: location, date, time, etc.
6. **Provost Updates**
- a. Academic Freedom Statement – all 5 schools have approved the statement (with the parenthetical statement addition). Next step is institutional discussions about how this moves forward. Discussed with board of regents in summer. Next step is figuring out how to beset manage the movement of this document into policy. This is moving forward into conversations with the regents. Current academic freedom statement exists in the university tenure policy (not the individual school tenure policy).
 - i. Board will decide whether to replace the existing statement with the new one. Provost Brewster doesn't think it would make much sense in the tenure policy. Anticipate it will be a June Board of Regents conversation.
 - b. Allied Health Analysis – took the concept of a school of nursing to the board in December. Asked for permission to begin planning about facilities and a feasibility student.
 - i. School of Nursing under a college of Health Sciences
 - 1. BS Nursing - 56 students per year; Seaver College. Would take Seaver classes for their first 2 years.
 - 2. Master of Nursing
 - 3. Some of the things being considered in addition to nursing: physical therapy, physician's assistant, occupational therapist, speech and language pathology
 - ii. Hoping to have a dean of nursing in place by summer
 - iii. Potential start date of Fall 2025
7. **Adjournment** - Dr. Mann adjourned meeting at 11:01am