University Faculty Council meetings ordinarily consist of discussion of issues of university-wide importance. These minutes may identify issues that have been discussed and may record viewpoints or opinions held by one or more UFC members. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, these minutes do not reflect the views or opinions of the UFC as a body and do not indicate that any consensus was reached among UFC members.

University Faculty Council Meeting (Held Remotely)
Friday, September 22, 2023, 10am to noon
Zoom link: https://pepperdine.zoom.us/j/89155205577

Attendees: Mark Scarberry, Jennifer Vaughn, John Mann, Jay Brewster, Stephanie Williams, Brian McGilvray, Reyna Garcia Ramos, Stewart Davenport, Trey Childress, Jim Gash, Donna Nofziger Plank, John Mooney, Elizabeth Smith

MEETING MINUTES

1. **Opening Prayer:** Jim opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Brief introductions of new and continuing members were shared.
3. **Error in Founder's Day Speech:** President Gash offered apologies for the inadvertent reading of a 2021 revised version of George Pepperdine's speech at this year's Founder's Day. All copies of the revised version have since been deleted, consistent with the goal of ensuring we always act with integrity by not changing the words of historical documents.
4. **Consideration of April 2023 minutes**
   a. The chair posed a question to the council regarding whether or not April 2023 minutes should be updated to reflect GSEP's additional vote to approve the (slightly modified) Academic Freedom Statement. Council decided this update should be recorded in the current meeting minutes.
   b. Minute Approval: John Mann moved to approve April 2023 minutes. Seconded by Trey Childress. All in favor of approval.
5. **Election of officers completed**. All officers elected unanimously
   a. Chair: John Mann
   b. Vice Chair: Brian McGilvray
   c. Secretary: Jennifer Vaughn
6. **Academic Freedom Statement Next Steps**
   a. Since the last meeting, GSEP faculty re-voted to consider the Academic Freedom document. The middle portion was approved by 93% of the faculty and the entire document was approved by more than a majority, with the condition that a parenthetical be added ("which is neither a statement of University policy nor a prescription of any kind of orthodoxy").
   b. President Gash shared that the parenthetical addition is superfluous in that it confirms what is already true of the document, but he understands why it was suggested as an addition. He does not feel that the Board will object to this addition as it simply adds more contextualization to the policy itself, which is the 2nd page of the document.
   c. Provost Brewster affirms that the 2nd page is the focal point for the policy, which serves to describe the protections provided for faculty. Pages 1 and 3 are not the policy – they provide context for it.

d. GSEP representatives added additional context about the re-voting by GSEP and the discussion as to whether other schools would want to re-vote given the new addition.
   e. Council consensus was that a re-vote by each school would need to be completed.
      i. Note that since SPP rep was not present at the meeting, they will need to voice their opinion on the matter as well.
7. **Artificial Intelligence Policy:** Consideration of policies with regard to student use of artificial intelligence and whether the University would be offering a general policy.
   a. Representatives offered insight into how each school has been handling policy related to AI. Acceptable use of AI appears to exist on a continuum that ranges from encouraging use, limiting use, to forbidding use.
   b. Some faculty have introduced class activities that help students to explore how AI can be used as a tool. Others have offered different resources to start conversations about use of AI and learn about best practices in using AI (e.g., reflections, workshops, discussions, etc.). Council emphasized the importance of sharing resources across faculty and across schools so we are not starting from scratch.
   c. Overall, the decision for/against AI use has been left up to individual professors to make at this time.
   d. With regard to developing and implementing a university-wide policy:
      i. President Gash is not opposed to a university policy but is hesitant to have it be developed by university leadership. Rather, he would prefer it be developed from a faculty level (likely within this council) where it could be voted on.
   e. AI Taskforce: Provost Brewster reminded council of the AI taskforce that was developed last year and developed an AI statement for the Provost webpage. Council was asked whether it would be beneficial for the taskforce to continue their efforts. General consensus was that this would be beneficial.
   f. Faculty Conference: Provost announced that there will be a speaker presenting about AI at next week's faculty conference.
8. **Committee Liaisons:** To facilitate direct communication between this Council and other university committees, liaisons were selected for each of the following committees/councils. The liaison's role will be to contact the chair of the other committees and review their meetings in order to identify and communicate any relevant information to UFC.
   a. University Academic Council (UAC) – John Mann
   b. University Management Committee (UMC) – Donna Nofziger Plank
   c. University Planning Committee (UPC) – Reyna Garcia Ramos
   d. University Tenure Committee (UTC) – Jennifer Vaughn
   e. University Diversity Council (UDC) – Jennifer Vaughn
   f. Advancement of Student Learning Council (ASLC) – Stephanie Williams
   g. Shared Governance Sub-Committee – John Mooney
9. **Other Topics of Discussion**
   a. Pepperdine is in conversation about adding a 6th school that utilizes on the off-site campuses (Calabasas, Irvine). There is no commitment at this time other than developing a proposal. This item will be added to a future meeting agenda for discussion.
   b. Groundbreaking of the mountain: Occurred Wednesday September 20th
   c. Challenges related to university tenure policy and special cases clause: Specifically, this was in regard to providing tenure to someone who is coming to the university at

a senior level (e.g., dean). As was committed to in the meeting, Provost has been working with the UTC who have provided a few sentences that they feel would be helpful to add to the university tenure policy. The policy is controlled by the Board and will likely be placed on the agenda for discussion in December.

    d. <u>Affirmative Action and the Supreme Court Ruling:</u> Concerns were raised about what this means for Pepperdine, particularly for endowed scholarships that are designed for diverse and marginalized students.

        i. President Gash has had initial conversations with senior leadership and general council regarding this issue. The scholarships being alluded to were the subject of a civil rights lawsuit against Pepperdine (happened prior to the supreme court decision) related to preferential awarded status based upon race/ethnicity which is in conflict to the supreme court legislation. General council will need to meet to let each school know how Pepperdine is responding and how to move forward. There have been meetings with the deans and donors to ensure that we could continue to award these scholarships in a manner that is in alignment with the legislation.

        ii. Provost Brewster is in the process of auditing admissions procedures to assure that we are managing things appropriately relative to this decision. There are no dramatic changes to the procedures. With regard to scholarships, the strategy of pooling and then awarding is in alignment with the supreme court decision and will allow us to continue to award these scholarships.

    e. <u>Engaging Online Students:</u> In what way should we be engaging online students who are not present at any on-ground campus? To potentially be added to a future meeting agenda.

    f. <u>US News World Report Ranking:</u> Pepperdine fell 21 spots and the article said this was a matter of recalibrating their algorithm. Concerns were raised about having a clear narrative of what happened and whether there was a response being developed that could be shared.

        i. President Gash shared that this drop was a factor of several changes to in the algorithm wherein they deemphasized areas that we emphasize, such as small class sizes, and introduced components that they had not previously used, such as research (i.e., number of publications, impact factor of journals). Conversations are being had about what can be done to improve our ranking without changing who we are as a university. He added that a date has been set for a Seaver faculty meeting to discuss the ranking in depth.

10. Plans for format of future meetings

    a. The council decided to move forward with using Zoom for future meetings to be efficient and convenient for all involved.

    b. President Gash would like to explore having 1 in-person meeting per meal with lunch provided by the Office of the Provost.

11. Adjournment

    a. Reyna Garcia Ramos moved to adjourn the meeting and Donna Nofziger Plank, seconded. All in favor of adjourning the meeting.