

University Faculty Council Minutes

Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Time: 1:00-2:30 pm PST

Place: ZOOM meeting

Members in Attendance

Seaver = Chris Doran, Matt Joyner, Jennifer Smith (secretary), Hollace Starr

PGBS = Mark Chun, Bob McQuaid (chair), Richard Walton

GSEP = Veronica Kuhn, Dennis Lowe

CSOL = Shelley Saxer, Mark Scarberry

SPP = Ted McAllister (absent)

Admin (ex officio) = Jim Gash, Rick Marrs

Guest = Phil Phillips

MINUTES

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.

1. **Prayer.** Rick Marrs provided a brief prayer.
2. **Review minutes.**
 - a. Disclaimer: "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."
 - b. 7-day comment/correction period from initial distribution to UFC members. Revisions sent out on day 7, 3-day final approval periods repeatable until final.
3. **COVID-19 Vaccine.**
 - a. **Phil Phillips/Jim Gash Administrative Summary**
 - i. **The Issue.** The institution is currently seeking community feedback in order to develop a vaccine policy for the Fall 2021 semester. There are two main options: 1) Require the vaccine, like our current MMR policy with an exemption option, and 2) Strongly recommend the vaccine, like our current flu policy. The current survey results with ~400 respondents shows a 50-50 split.
 - ii. **Approval Process.** The administration is soliciting feedback from the community, including faculty, staff, and students, and will also consult with the Board. UMC is the campus-wide committee that adopts policy.
 - iii. **Timing.** Right now, the two vaccines that are approved are approved under an emergency use authorization and we cannot legally mandate the vaccination

under that emergency use authorization, likely early to mid-summer. While the distribution is limited by tiers, there cannot be any requirement for a vaccine.

- b. **Discussion by UFC Members.**
 - i. **Campus Reaction.** If we go with the required vaccine, but some people choose to apply for the exemption, then they should be required to practice some additional safety protocols. This is not a childhood vaccine like MMR. The goal would be to have an environment where there is herd immunity, but this is not a childhood vaccine and so we cannot compare potential Covid-19 vaccination rates to MMR vaccination rates.
 - ii. **Population Requirements.** If we were to require the vaccine, who would be included? Staff and faculty are not now required to submit vaccination records for employment. Should there be a university-wide policy or should there be a separate policy for each of the schools, which operate according to very different means and which pose different kinds of risks to the community? International students would need to know about that kind of requirement by May.
 - iii. **Potential for New Knowledge.** There will be much more data by the end of the summer; however, the data gathered will not contribute meaningfully to what is already known about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. The unknowns are about long-term safety and safety for pregnant women, and these cannot be known by summer. However, even if there's not meaningful new knowledge, people may be more willing to get vaccinated by the end of summer. And we may know more about immunity from natural infection as compared to vaccine.
 - iv. **Request for History/Precedences.** Multiple UFC members asked for a history of the MMR vaccine policy.
 - v. **Policy Development and adoption.** Policy adoption should start several months in advance and include:
 - a committee or working group to assemble draft policy
 - debate of draft policy by community stakeholders
 - revision of draft policy
 - return of draft policy to community for debate
 - incorporation of feedback
 - release of final policy for comments
 - policy approval by community
4. **Covid Leave Policy.**
 - a. **Rick Marrs.** We have a policy that's approved and posted but it never went into effect because we went all online.
 - b. **UFC Member response.** The policy would become re-activated in the Fall if we went back to in-person teaching. It may need to be amended on the basis of the Covid vaccine policy.
5. **Stimulus fund discussion.**
 - a. **Jim Gash.** We are entitled to \$5.54 million. 1/3 is student-focused and the other is for losses occasioned by Covid. We fully expect to get it. President's office and student affairs will be responsible for allocating funds. It should be easier to distribute than in the past since there are fewer restrictions about where funds can be deposited. The

funding, however, falls far short of the losses occasioned by Covid. For example, our losses on housing alone are at \$18 million/semester.

6. Old Business-Peterson.

- a. **UFC Member response.** There is a lot of discussion still happening at Seaver and GSEP, including questions about what the DEI strategy is for the school. There has not been as much discussion at PGBS. The response has been varied and there is an ongoing need to structure conversations on the subject.

7. Academic Freedom discussion.

- a. **Pathways.** If we decide that we want to create a university-wide statement, we need to figure out if we want to a) adopt an Academic Freedom statement (like AAUP Statement) or b) a freedom of expression statement (like Chicago Statement). Once we have decided that, we also need to decide if a) we want to adopt one of the pre-existing statements or b) write our own. In any event, we must decide a) whom should be included and b) what limitations or responsibilities accompany such protections. If we write our own, we must also consider how our CofC heritage might speak to this subject.
 - b. **Our Current Policy in the University Tenure Manual**—There is ambiguous or confusing language in our University Tenure Policy Statement.
 - c. **Jim Gash**—Grateful for the investigation. Keep in mind accreditation requirements as well as institutional risk if a statement is written to include adjuncts and the like. Hiring practices may need to become much more rigorous and there should be concern about the potential dilution of the university mission.
8. **Action items.** Phil Phillips will find out what the history of the MMR policy adoption is.
9. **Next meeting.** Next meeting will be devoted to Philosophy of Christian Mission and Academic Excellence as framed in university planning documents and Academic Freedom.

-JatS