

Academic Assembly: Special SessionMarch 23rd, 2020

2:00 – 4:00 pm, Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Attendance: Pat Buschel, Mark Taylor, Terri Clark, Nalini Iyer, Sarah Bee, Michael Ng, Frank Shih, Dylan Medina, Chris Paul, Kate Koppelman, Kirsten Thompson, Marc Cohen, Patrick Murphy, Gregory Silverman, Margit McGuire, Felipe Anaya, Angie Jenkins, Russ Powell, Clara Cordova, Katie Oliveras, Mimi Cheng, Shane Martin, Yancy Dominick, Kathleen La Voy, Nicole Harrison

Minutes Taken by Lindsey Nakatani

I. Provost Update**2:05 – 2:36**

- a. Seattle University finds itself in an unprecedented situation. Unprecedented not only for higher education but for the world community. When the announcement mandating remote/virtual teaching was made for the remainder of the WQ, the administration received a wide variety of feedback and reactions. Feedback included opinions ranging from Seattle University was not doing enough in reaction to the situation to the university was severely over-reacting. However, as the situation has progressed, it has become increasingly apparent that the institution and the world community cannot be proactive enough. The Provost and the university leadership recognizes that this situation has caused great turmoil and challenges for faculty, staff and students alike. Seattle University must also navigate the added complication of being an institution on a quarter system.
- b. What do we know right now and what is being done?**
 - i. The university has asked students, who are able, to vacate residence facilities. There is an operational process in place to assess and allow for exceptions to this response. It is estimated that there are 200 students who will need to remain in the residence halls through SQ. This situation, coupled with losses for food service and fees, will result in loss revenue for the SQ that could possibly reach \$7 million dollars. That does not account for any revenue losses if there is a drop off in Spring enrollment. Food services, residence hall crews and student advisors will still be present to provide essential services to students.
 - ii. The university has closed all food services excepting the central university kitchen. Food can only be ordered for take-out.
 - iii. Every decision being made, is being decided with the best interests for the health and safety of the students, faculty and staff as the primary concern. The guiding principles for the Office of the Provost Team during this crisis have been to keep everything running and moving forward, together and to provide the greatest possible flexibility for students and faculty while maintaining Seattle University standards. Fr. Sundborg's video message spoke to these same principles.
 - iv. Flexibility remains a key component of the university's response to the current situation. The university is willing to discuss suspending or waiving general practices and rules as needed. And decisions will be made in consultation with the Deans Council and the faculty at large via the AcA. The Provost will consult the AcA President when the larger AcA body cannot be convened in time to respond to an emergent situation.
- c. Issues Being Discussed by the POLT (Provost Office Leadership Team) – the Provost would welcome the AcA membership's input and feedback on these issues:**

- i. **Academic Calendar** – a re-examination of all standard dates and deadlines is being conducted with an emphasis on flexibility for faculty and staff. POLT is working on a proposal in coordination with the Registrar.
- ii. **Credit/Fail Grading Options for SQ** – many other institutions are moving to a pass/fail or credit/fail grading system for the SQ. Seattle University uses CR/F as our system. Students may petition for a CR/F. More details on this to come.
- iii. **2020 Commencement** – No decision on commencement has been reached yet. The administration is leaning towards *cancelling* the traditional commencement ceremony. Leadership is exploring virtual options as well as possibly moving commencement to the fall of 2020. Law School Commencement – it is looking increasingly likely that this event will have to be canceled (currently scheduled for May 16th). There would be an estimated ½ million dollars in savings if Seattle University were to cancel its commencement ceremony. (This figure was later revised to \$200,000).
- iv. **Student Safety** – The Provost’s Office continues to receive and field calls from parents regarding the safety of students. Student Government representative, Nicole Harrison has been reaching out to the undergraduate student population to gather their input on the current situation. Clara Cordova, Graduate Student Council representative, will also be reaching out the graduate student population.
- v. Washington State Governor, Jay Inslee, has called a special press briefing for 5:30 pm today. It is speculated that a “shelter in place” order will be given late this afternoon to the state of Washington. Such an announcement most likely would pose no immediate changes for faculty or staff from our current guidance but will inform future decisions. The Provost would like to highlight the express need for collaboration, communication and unity between all university community members in this time of uncertainty. The entire Seattle University community must work together to see the university safely through this time of crisis.

Comments/Questions:

- d. Faculty members would like to express their sincere appreciation for the work of the university leadership and the CDLI, in this time of crisis. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has had discussions on the question of moving to pass/fail grading for the SQ. The majority opinion is in favor of the pass/fail option. However, concerns were raised surrounding student motivation, requirements for scholarship students, etc.
 - i. The Department of Education has issued guidance for allowing and accommodating flexibility around education policies. Department of Education approves and works closely with the accrediting agencies, so there will be flexibility from accrediting bodies as well. Seattle University has been in touch with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and has been communicating on how to offer flexibility while maintaining standards.
- e. *Summer Orientation – at what stage is the discussion surrounding this event and how will this event be handled virtually if necessary?* Re-structuring the summer orientation event was a previous goal of the university administration. The current plan is to construct a virtual orientation in the event and in-person event is not an option. In addition, Enrollment Management has quickly scaled up its virtual recruitment process, virtual tours for prospective students and is working closely with high school guidance counselors to recruit students.
- f. *Would cancelling commencement potentially offset the shock/loss of SQ revenue?* Cancelling commencement would save some money, and students and families are asking for a decision soon.

Many students/families would be traveling from far away to attend commencement, especially now that many students have returned to their homes in other states and even other countries in response to the pandemic. Students and their families are asking for as much notice as possible to make travel arrangements IF commencement moves forward. The decision will have to be made within the next week and a half due to the time restrictions of planning.

- i. The SGSU has polled undergraduate students on its Facebook page. Students were given three options for commencement, so far the rankings are as follows: 1) Delay commencement until December 2020 2) No ceremony of any kind, simply send diplomas via mail 3) Send commencement care packages (including caps, gowns, diplomas etc.)
- g. *Thus far the performance of students in online courses has met all normal university standards. Would it be possible to give faculty the ability to decide how they would like to grade their classes? Would it be possible to let faculty choose, rather than mandate one grading system to the entire faculty? For specific programs the quality of work suffers when grades are simplified to pass/fail.*
 - i. Leadership is considering all options but is thus far most interested in amending standing university-wide grading policies and would be less enthusiastic about letting faculty decide independently. Other institutions have been enacting one default grading procedure. If necessary, students can petition to for a different option.
 - ii. Students and their families are suffering through a multitude of challenges independent of their concerns regarding education, i.e. financial hardships, health concerns, mental stress etc. A grading policy decision cannot be based solely upon course work. Making a clear choice and then allowing students to petition that choice gives the students agency in their own education and allows them to choose an option that fits their personal needs.

II. Temporary Bylaw Amendment

2:36 – 2:38

- a. **Motion** – The Academic Assembly moves to temporarily amend the assembly bylaw to allow for 1) voting on AcA motions via e-mail, 2) recognize Zoom (online) meetings as official AcA meetings, 3) allow executive AcA Leadership authority to approve meeting minutes. These temporary measures are being taken in response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.
 - i. **Majority approves.** Motion is passed, bylaws are temporarily amended per the above.

III. COVID-19 Response: SQ Closure Effect on Faculty, Staff and Students

2:38 – 3:07

- a. **Faculty Well-Being Check-In:** (Parking, Chartwell Meal-Plans, Student Evaluations etc.)
- b. Allow for faculty to opt-in or opt-out of ongoing tenure proceedings, with no prejudice towards either choice being held against the faculty member later.
- c. *How will student evaluations be handled for the WQ and the SQ?*
- d. Faculty are concerned about the consequences of their SQ course-enrollment falling below minimums due to the pandemic. *Are faculty in danger of having their courses canceled?* Classes with affected enrollment will be managed in real-time and on an individual basis. A multitude of resources are being made available to faculty to combat any potential fall in SQ enrollment. Many faculty will be teaching virtually and synchronously to their regularly scheduled courses. The CDLI is presenting guidance and instruction on remote teaching resources. For faculty teaching students in different time zones, or who need to meet the specific needs of students, the Zoom platform has tools that faculty can use to record lectures and post them for students to access at their convenience.

- e. The NTT faculty are concerned about their continued role within the university and how their roles and courses will be affected during this time of crisis. It is, unfortunately, too early to clearly answer this question as the university is still monitoring spring registration. Currently Spring quarter registration is on track to match last Spring quarter, however there are concerns about how the numbers will change after the break and through the add/drop period. Task forces and teams are preparing a range of contingency plans for enrollment short-falls or other complications in the SQ. The university leadership is dedicated to protecting all faculty as much as possible.
 - i. *For faculty who are currently pursuing tenure and promotion, could the requirements for the number of peer reviews be relaxed considering the current circumstances?* We will take this recommendation under consideration. The university is also exploring the possibility of giving faculty the option to suspend their tenure proceedings for a year and pursue tenure later.
- f. **Staff Well Being Check-In:** (Cleaning, Facilities, Food Services, etc.)
- g. Concerns regarding some staff who currently not allowed on campus and therefore cannot perform their job duties. *How will the university continue to address the safety of staff who must remain on campus? How will the university support staff who must remain at home and cannot work remotely?*
 - i. The university has not laid off or furloughed any staff, to date. In collaboration with its third-party vendors, the university has taken all extra precautions to meet the cleanliness guidelines of the CDC and state health departments. Some universities have been laying off staff and closing programs. Seattle University will not take this action unless it is necessary.
 - ii. Student workers are being paid through March 31st. A contingency plan for beyond March 31st is being constructed. State laws and regulations mandate that Seattle University must have agreements with each individual state from which they hire employees who work remotely from that state. The university is working on getting agreements in place with states that have a high number of students who wish to work remotely, such as Hawaii. More guidance for student workers will be available by the end of the week.
- h. Staff Council is receiving feedback from staff that they feel they are taking a back seat to planning for the students and faculty.
- i. The Office of Learning Assistance Programs currently employs 80 student employees who are supporters/tutors. They will be working online through the end of WQ, however it is unclear who will be allowed to work through SQ. These student workers are essential to retention and a continued, consistent, student experience.
- j. *Have classrooms all been deep cleaned at this stage?* Yes, each classroom, lab, common space in all university buildings has been deep cleaned, disinfected and sanitized. Third party vendor cleaning schedules have been moved to daytime operations and are continually working to maintain the sanitization guidelines of health organizations.
- k. If faculty need to get into their offices, with no one else present, are offices going to be deep cleaned even if the primary occupant is the only one going in and out? With proper notification, yes offices will be cleaned. Please send a note to your Dean or supervisor to clarify if faculty will be access their offices. If faculty need items from their offices, they are welcome to get them but the administration asks that faculty members report their presence so that cleanliness guidelines can be maintained. All faculty who access their offices should maintain social distancing and sterilization requirements.
- l. **Student Well Being Check-In:**

- i. Survey questions will be sent out to undergraduate and graduate students via the university Facebook pages.
- ii. Student Petition Summary: students are petitioning for reduced tuition due to the SQ being taught online. Students believe that Seattle University should match the prices of other online institutions. Some fees have been waived but are not yet reflected in online pricing. Fees for services rendered will not be collected. Any technology fees will still be collected as the university is utilizing technology more than ever (laptops for students, increased support from CDLI, software upgrades, webcams etc.).
 - 1. Rationale for Decreased Tuition – There is a petition to reduce tuition for SQ. The rationale presented in the petition states that virtual instruction does not have the same merit/quality as face-to-face instruction. The request is that the university match the prices of online institutions, such as the University of Phoenix. This petition is a point of contention and debate. University leadership maintains that the value of a Seattle University degree is of high quality. Students can continue to expect high levels of faculty engagement via the university’s virtual tools and the same excellent educational quality. However, it is understood that students and families will be very hard hit by the COVID-19 crisis. The university is establishing a fund to assist students and their families. Fr. Sundborg is actively pursuing sponsorship from donors and university benefactors. Funds will be available for housing assistance, food assistance and school expense assistance. The university is not planning a reduction in tuition.
- iii. SGSU is working on setting up virtual consultation hours for students.
- iv. There is a lot of confusion and questions surrounding commencement. Graduate attendance at a virtual commencement is anticipated to very low.
- v. Would it be possible to move commencement one-year to summer of 2021?
- vi. Graduate students’ responses to campus announcements and e-mails has been high.

IV. Online Instruction Related Issues

3:07 – 3:27

- a. NTT Faculty and Student Evaluations for the WQ and SQ: Many schools have suspended student evaluations for the remainder of the AY. There are concerns regarding the important role that student evaluations play in the NTT faculty contract renewal and the NTT promotion process. There is also concern regarding how evaluations given during a time of crisis could negatively affect faculty who are on the tenure track. *Would it be possible to suspend student evaluations for the SQ?*
- b. Any measures taken regarding student evaluations must be carefully considered. Faculty may feel pressured to include student evaluations despite the evaluations being given under duress and unusual circumstances. The faculty would appreciate clear guidance from the Provost’s Office on how the tenure and promotion processes will be handled moving forward. *Will tenure/promotion process and evaluation questions be decided at the college level or will there be a university-wide policy mandate?*
 - i. University leadership is considering making WQ and SQ student evaluations as formative, since both quarters will have unusual circumstances. Possible to negotiate with accrediting bodies on how student evaluations should be considered for those specific programs that have evaluation requirements. There is concern about suspending evaluations for the SQ. The entire university has never been asked to move to entirely virtual teaching. *Is there some other type of*

abbreviated evaluation that could assess the university response to this unprecedented situation? This evaluation would not go on faculty records, it would be informative for the university.

- ii. Under these exceptional circumstances, evaluations would be helpful to assess the university response and to learn how to better improve future response measures. However, these evaluations should not be part of formal processes for rank, tenure, promotion or merit reviews.
- iii. *Would it be possible to send out Qualtrics survey to each program/department at the end of SQ to assess the crisis response?* This will allow the university to learn from the evaluations, but they will not be conducted on a student to faculty individual basis. This measure would also mitigate the already harmful biases inherent in the student evaluations. It would be valuable to know what different approaches to the current situation are being conducted across the university.

iv. Volunteer Group to work with Provost's Office on how to move forward on evaluations:

- 1. Volunteers: Dylan Medina, Michael Ng, Nalini Iyer
- c. The traditional Inter-Library loan system has been suspended. Remote library access is available, and publishers are offering books online for free for the SQ. *How will library continue to meet the needs of students who will remain on campus for the SQ?*
 - i. The library's 24/7 space could be made available for students by card access to accommodate studying needs.
- d. *Will counseling still be offered to students either virtually or remotely?* Yes, CAPs is working with a provider to offer counseling remotely to students in need. Working on a secure platform to meet confidentiality requirements. Should be ready for roll-out in SQ.
- e. **Course Packs, Super Copy/Reprographics, Library Access:** What procedures are being put in place? What services are still available? How can teachers assist students when the library is closed? How can faculty take into consideration and approach the stress on families and students? Super Copy is still making course packs available in paper copy format. The campus store has offered free shipping of course packs to students. Text books can also be returned in the mail, free of charge.

V. Potential SQ Revenue Losses and Projected Enrollment Fall 2020 Class

3:27 – 3:33

- a. Possible \$7 million-dollar loss in revenue from dorm/residency income (\$5 million for residence hall revenue and with the addition of food service fees etc. potential shortfall could reach \$7 million-dollar loss). Cancelling commencement would save the university about \$500,000. (This number was later revised to \$200,000).
 - i. Thus far there has been no drop in, enrollment for SQ. However, concrete numbers will not be available until two weeks into the SQ. CFO Wilson Garone, is modeling a range of contingency plans for enrollment shortfalls.
 - ii. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the university had been modeling budget cuts and now the university is facing an even larger financial crisis. University leadership is aware that continued reductions to programs will not cover potential shortfalls. Any options under consideration by the university are dependent upon the length of this crisis. University will continue to monitor the situation and will make determinations as regulations from U.S. government officials continue to change.

- b. *Are there any projections for potential shortfalls in enrollment for Fall 2020?* It is too early to make projections for fall.
- c. *Should the Academic Assembly move to have weekly meetings for as long as needed to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic?*
 - i. Weekly meetings of the AcA will be called for at least the first two weeks of SQ. These additional meetings will begin with the first meeting scheduled April 6th, 2020 and will continue weekly until no longer needed.
 - ii. Faculty is concerned about how much extra work additional AcA meetings would add to their growing workloads. Online teaching for the entire SQ will require an increased amount of preparation. *Would it be possible to video or audio record the AcA Meetings for members unable to attend, to access later?*
 - iii. **Motion:** Move to hold weekly AcA meetings starting April 6th, 2020 until AcA deems them no longer necessary.

1. **Majority Approves.** Motion is passed, weekly meetings approved.

VI. Budget Decisions Prior to COVID-19 – Update

3:33 – 3:37

- a. Work on the budget situation of the university prior to the pandemic has continued but the current Covid-19 situation has been the priority. However, the Budget Advisory Group has continued to meet. Prior to the outbreak, the Budget Advisory Group had constructed a process that asked the various divisions/departments and programs to utilize the ranges provided by the group to propose cuts. The work has shifted to include and focus upon the budget implications introduced by the COVID-19 situation. Thus far there is very little knowledge about how the current situation will inform the previous budget process.

VII. Presidential search update (5-10 min)

3:37 – 3:40

- a. The AcA met virtually with the consultants from WittKieffer. There was robust and productive conversation. WittKieffer is looking to solicit broader campus engagement despite the challenges posed by the ongoing crisis and engagement opportunities will be forthcoming. The consultants will draft a candidate profile after completing drop-in sessions with the SU community in early April. Campus-wide announcement will go out this week to announce dates/times for drop-in sessions.

VIII. PRC and ConC Update (5-10 min)

3:40 – 3:55

- a. **Program Review Committee Update:** Update on the PRC Advisory Taskforce: This taskforce has been examining the PRC's role regarding fiscal implications of program creations and program revisions. Opinions have ranged from, PRC should have no role in financial decisions to the PRC should strongly consider financial implications. There are concerns that the PRC should not be involved with financial decisions because the committee carries no administrative power. The committee is advisory to the AcA, which in turn is advisory to the Provost. The committee only has the power to ask questions, request information and make recommendations. The committee has no power to demand fiscal justifications. Suggestions have also been made that reviews should be happening more frequently to ensure compliance with PRC recommendations.
- b. Academic Portfolio Review – The PRC was invited to participate in this process to assess long-term, strategic budget implications of the university curriculum, however this process has been stalled by the COVID-19 situation.

- c. PRC has invited Dr. Galligar to provide insight and to give input into the committee's conversations. Dr. Galligar's knowledge has provided valuable insight on the budgetary concerns of pending proposals.
- d. All pending proposals are continuing to be considered and work on during the break and the ongoing crisis. Any fiscal information pertaining to a pending proposal, that the committee gathers, will be presented to the AcA.
- e. **Committee on Committees Update:**
 - i. The ConC is working to create a database to track participation and service of faculty on all committees. The ConC has begun work on spring recruitment and a call for volunteers. The ConC will be reaching out to every campus committee to assist in crafting the calls for volunteers. The ConC has been working on structuring and updating the committee's website. ConC will be creating a questionnaire to be sent to each committee. This questionnaire will help the ConC draft a template charter that all committees will be asked to fill out.
 - ii. The AcA needs to collectively determine when spring committee elections will occur and when AcA elections will occur.
 - 1. Spring Elections will be subjective to how quickly the ConC receives responses to its questionnaire. The ConC is hoping to have elections the first week of May 2020.
 - 2. *Would it be possible for the Deans to recommend their AcA nominations at the same time?*
 - iii. Agreement that all committee elections should occur during the same window. Suggested that the ConC reach out to David Lance (University Council) who has worked on committee bylaws.
 - iv. The Provost will send a letter to the faculty highlighting the importance of the role of faculty in governance and the importance of faculty service to boost volunteer participation.

IX. Long-Term Planning

3:55 -3:58

- a. The university has been asked and will explore the possibility of allowing the use of its vacant dorm rooms for quarantine needs. There are challenges to allowing use of the dorms. Some students departed quickly from the university and left belongings and items in the rooms. If it is possible, SU would like to assist with this, but a full inventory and situating of remaining students needs to be met first.
- b. Question for all to consider: What can we do now, so we are ahead of the curve?
- c. Harborview Medical Center has also reached out to ask the university for use of the main parking lot for their trauma unit workers. The university is able to do this.
- d. Student needs must be met first, and then SU will gladly assist the community in any way possible.

X. Free Conversation

3:58 – 4:00

- a. The students have been very responsive and very helpful in transitioning to online teaching. Faculty are continually examining ways to improve student engagement. There is hope that all new students in April will be as accommodating of these necessary changes.
- b. AcA President thanks everyone for their participation, dedication and continued flexibility in the face of this unprecedented situation. We will get through this as a community. AcA membership

encouraged to continually check the AcA Canvas for updates and memos. Meeting minutes will be edited and circulated to the AcA membership as soon as possible.