Franklin College Faculty Senate

Minutes of the Special Session meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. via Zoom videoconference call, Jennifer Rice presiding.

Members Present: Brian Binder, Peter Brosius, Tom Cerbu, Katie Chapman, Brian Condie, Gauri Datta, Suzanne Ellenberger, Lisa Fusillo, Chris Garvin, Timothy Gupton, Cindy Hahamovitch, DeLoris Hesse, Steve Holland, Richard Hubbard, Betina Kaplan, Caner Kazanci, Kristin Kundert, Gary Lautenschlager, Vera Lee-Schoenfeld, Tianming Liu, Alisa Luxenberg, Kendall Marchman, Soroya McFarlane, Chris Peterson, Chris Pizzino, Khaled Rasheed, Nancee Reeves, Jennifer Rice, Cassia Roth, Rohan Sikri, Leslie Gordon Simons, Anne Summers, Michael Usher, Hang Yin.

Proxies: Mark Farmer for Silvia Moreno, Cindy Suveg for Emily Mouilso.

Members not present: Yohannes Abate, Michael Bachmann, Josh Bynum, Alison Farley Raffle, Sidney Kushner, Jordan Pickett.

Guests: Numerous visitors attended the meeting.

President Jennifer Rice's Remarks

- It was requested for all participants to change their Zoom screen name to add Senator, Proxy or Visitor after their names.
- Jennifer presented logistical remarks to explain the purpose of the meeting which was triggered by a petition signed by more than 100 Franklin faculty members for a new version of a proposed resolution to the USG policy from July 6, 2020 (usg.edu/coronavirus).
- The resolution is a discussion item and there will be a subsequent Faculty Senate meeting convened to vote to accept any resolution. The meeting purpose was to ensure incorporation of feedback from Senators and visitors and is important in the deliberate process of the Senate.
- It was noted that members of the press were present and all were advised that comments were public.
- The facilitated discussion consisted of comments from Senators and then by visitors. The procedure was to enter a question mark in the Chat box. Senators and their proxies were to be given the first 30 minutes of discussion and limited to 2-minutes each, followed by 10 minutes of comments by visitors limited to one-minute each.

Introduction of Resolution by its Sponsors

Janet Frick (Presenter): This petition originated with faculty in the Math Department and thanked them for writing it. She had been in communication since early June with numerous faculty and staff and student representatives from the 26 institutions across the USG. She emphasized that statements made in the resolution affect not only UGA faculty, staff and students but those across the all of the USG community.

Joe Fu (Presenter): Briefly described the history of the resolution which was initially the USG would not require face masks but that later changed. However, many important issues remain unaddressed. The four main points are:

- USG should require masks
- Details not provided for testing and contact tracing and reporting cases on campus
- The need to train faculty, staff and students to be able to protect themselves and their family members
- The need for faculty, staff and student inclusion in the plans to deal with the pandemic

Discussion Among Senators

Cindy Hahamovitch and DeLoris Hesse (facilitators for the discussion)

- Chris Pizzino: Thanked the Mathematics faculty for writing the petition. Raised a few questions and comments. (1) the wording or the intent of the last sentence in item 3, "Furthermore no faculty or staff member shall be fired, laid off or furloughed if they have a job that cannot be done remotely". Confused about the relation to earlier points. Someone could draw the erroneous conclusion that a person may announce that they wish to work from home, knowing in advance that the job they wish to do from home is a job they can't do from home. He would want to understand the employee's reasoning and what could be done for them. (2) More weight should be given to voices across the University community and especially to expert voices. Questioned what a good channel or mechanism would look like but suggested that if, after further discussion, a model could be discerned, that language could be put into the resolution.
- Pete Brosius: Commented on point four of the proposed resolution. He suggested that more direct language be used regarding the structure of decision making. There has been an extraordinary amount of top-down decision making. He asked, in the event of non-implementation of contact tracing, if there has been any discussion relating to the question of waivers releasing USG from liability or responsibility if we catch COVID-19.
- Joe Fu, Cindy Hahamovitch and Janet Frick response: Agreed about the importance of the lack of representation from people who are experts in epidemiology. Asked both Chris Pizzino and Pete Brosius for suggestions of wording to add to the resolution. The concern about lack of representation of teaching faculty, staff, graduate students on the nine working groups that produced the re-opening policy. Regarding the wording in item 3, if we are given the option to teach online or if there is an outbreak and we are required to go online, there are some jobs that cannot be done remotely. If students are sent home, what will happen to dining hall workers or custodians? It was suggested that someone help make the wording clearer to emphasize that these workers continue to be paid. The waiver question needs to be examined because it has not previously been addressed.
- Soroya McFarlane: Would like to eliminate the requirement for the face to face component of teaching in the fall removed and have that reflected in the resolution.
- Joe Fu: Faculty governance has been neglected in recent decades. As faculty, we have the imperative to stand up and support all staff at the University.
- Cindy Hahamovitch: Objected to asking other faculty members, or especially graduate students, to teach a face to face component in classes while the main instructor teaches online.
- Kristen Kundert: Agreed with the objection of asking graduate students to replace a faculty member to teach a face to face class component. Stated that there are no members of the working groups from the Arts and the faculty from theater, music, dance, and art are unsure how to conduct their classes.

- Gary Lautenschlager: On July 4, he was working at a Georgia Public Broadcasting session; the title of the session was “Georgia Tech Professors Revolt Over Re-opening. They Say Current Plan Threatens Lives of Students and Staff”. They made four points similar to the four points in the Franklin Faculty Senate proposed resolution. The link to that session is now empty. Comparison of the points may be beneficial for the present discussion.
- Cindy Hahamovitch: Since we are not permitted to vote during the current meeting, there is ample time to suggest wording changes.
- Mike Usher: Suggested that part 3 of the resolution be modified to say that faculty may have the ability to move their classes entirely online.
- Chris Mojock (President of Mary Frances Early College of Education Faculty Senate): Thanked everyone for the invitation and indicated that his Senate has approved a similar resolution. Also stated that the Mary Frances Early Faculty Senate is considering joining the Franklin Faculty Senate for a joint resolution if the current resolution is approved by our Senate.
- Anne Summers: Inquired about joint resolutions from other Colleges—Law, Agriculture, and others.
- Joe Fu: Asked if a poll would be possible so Senators could vote on what they would like modified in the resolution.

Discussion Among Non-Senators

- Aaron Meskin: Requested that the Faculty Senate investigate the statement that the Provost was committed to no more than 3-4% of all classes be online.
- William Graham: Indicated that if the statement about only 3-4% of classes are to be online, it will be concerning and difficult to manage. The administration needs to allow Departments to manage this but if the upper administration manages this there will be problems.
- Janet Frick: Stated that faculty have the right to decide whether attendance is required in class and they also have the right to decide to not use a penalty for nonattendance. If we don’t require attendance that provides protection to students who prefer not to come to class.
- Barb Biesecker (Chair-elect to the University Council Executive Committee): The by-laws say that it only takes 20 signature of University Council members to call a meeting of Faculty Council.
- Phaidra Buchanan (undergraduate student, College of Education): Inquired when/how will the University know when it’s time to close?
- Cynthia Tope (graduate student, Chemistry Department): Asked about pushing face to face teaching onto “sacrificial lambs” or graduate students and that they should be able to opt out of teaching. She also referenced the letter by a group of graduate students to the USG Board of Regents that outlines what they stand for regarding the re-opening of the University: https://forms.gle/91Lor2HzRfGaRCqule
- Anne Summers: The population of Athens, Georgia will increase by 30% when UGA students return to campus. There is a denial about the epidemiological realities about how this will affect the community.
- Cindy Hahamovitch asked Jennifer Rice if Dean Dorsey would like to comment on the proceedings of the meeting

Dean Dorsey’s Comments

- The plan is to minimize fully online courses at the University, but provisions are being made for faculty and graduate assistants with approved accommodations
- 4% of fully online classes is fairly accurate based on the number of COVID-19 related accommodation requests
- The hope is that classes that are not fully online will have a face to face component ideally that is 50% but could be a little as 20-30%
- In the hy-flex model, students would receive 33% of the instruction online, it would be less, more like 20%, if the room cannot accommodate that many students
- Most classrooms can accommodate 15-30% of the scheduled occupancy
- Betina Kaplan: asked about the face to face component and if the instructor would be present in each class.
- Khaled Rasheed: Asked if office hours and Zoom meetings would count as face to face interactions
- Dean Dorsey: The way the face to face component would be determined is if students were in class two days per week and received online instruction one day per week, that would be the 33%. If we go fully online, the hope is that some if the instruction would be synchronous. This would emulate, to the extent possible, a face to face interaction for pedagogical reasons. Clarification of hy-flex model: students would get a face to face experience once every three days of class. What it would look like for the instructor depends on how the instructor would set it up.

Additional Questions

- Vasant Muralidharan: Asked how the athletic department is dealing with the pandemic
- Anne Summers: Asked if students would be compensated if they are not able to graduate on time. Inquired if money can be reallocated so tuition will be lower so faculty will not be furloughed. She also stated that labs need to be face to face, hands on, but they could be deferred to another semester.
- Joe Fu: Suggested new quotas be set for face to face classes.

Polls

- Should the statement address governance as a general principle?
  97% (33) yes; 3% (1) no
- Should most classes be online?
  91% (30) yes; 9% (3) no
- Should the statement include more specific language to guard against shunting of risk onto non-tenured faculty and graduate students?
  94% (31) yes; 6% (2) no

Closing Comments

Jennifer Rice thanked everyone for their time and indicated that revisions will be made and another meeting would be called to vote on the new resolution. A date and time is to be set in the next 1-2 weeks.

Jennifer thanked Sherry Gray for facilitating the meeting; DeLoris Hesse; Joe Fu, Pete Clark, Dan Nakano; Cindy Hahamovitch and Janet Frick.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Ellenberger
Franklin College Senate Secretary and Senator for the Chemistry Department