

Faculty Council Agenda
August 25, 2021
3:00-5:00

Members in attendance: Baber; Berg; Blackmond Larnell; Brown; Cornelius; Dahari; davis; Dentato; Devery; Dong; Dunderdale; Elsky; Gawlinski; Gupta-Mukherjee; Haske; Holschen; Johnson; Jules; Kang; McGuigan; Moran; Nicholas; O'Rourke; Ohsowski; Patel; Pope; Raghavan; Rosenblatt; Shoenberger; Silva; Tangarife; Todd; Waller; Heer (ex-officio)

Guests: President JoAnn Rooney, Provost Margaret Callahan

Jules convenes the meeting and welcomes President Rooney, noting that she held a productive meeting with the Executive Committee the day before. Rooney begins by discussing the campus reopening and the COVID protocols in place. It is an exciting time to be resuming in-person instruction. The university is moving forward with a capital campaign in connection with the new strategic plan. She acknowledges the issues with Aetna health insurance.

President Rooney emphasizes that communications are important in handling the university's management of the ongoing pandemic. The vaccination rates of students, faculty, and staff are in the high 90-percent range, which is cause for some optimism. There is no particular tipping point for when in-person instruction might be replaced by distance learning, but she notes that the university will have to abide by any mandate that the city government might set.

The President turns matters over to Provost Callahan. Callahan engages the issue of the university's decision-making structure during COVID. She suggests that a response to the Council's concerns about marginalizing faculty in decision making would be to place Council members on the standing committees of the Management, Policy, and Command structure implemented during the pandemic. The university had emergency committees planned before the pandemic hit. She emphasizes that there are 340 members on the committees, including some faculty, and that Council members arriving now would have to understand that they have been in operation since the pandemic hit and have done a lot of work. Callahan urges faculty to watch the webinar about the university's COVID policies. In response to a question about testing vaccinated people, she emphasizes high level of vaccination at Loyola. There is no mandatory randomized testing, but the university is asking people to be voluntarily tested, so that it can determine whether there are asymptomatic cases in our population. We might go back to mandatory randomized testing. They are prepared and have sites in place, so will be able to ramp up quickly if needed.

The few unvaccinated community members (who have, for example, been granted religious or medical exemptions) are testing several times a week. The bottom line is that the university has a plan in place so that people expected to be

testing will in fact be testing. In terms of non-compliance with testing mandates, the university is ready to cut off IDs and initiate disciplinary proceedings with students, and parallel processes with faculty and staff. The administration expects student to communicate with faculty if they test positive; LUC cannot share personal health information. Faculty may be contacted if contract tracers reach out to us. The university will not be giving information about vaccination rates in particular classes; given extremely high rates of vaccination, that would not be a useful deployment of university resources. In terms of working in groups outside classroom, Callahan stresses that we should not change class expectations because of COVID. Faculty should follow guidelines about masking, testing, and social distancing. There will be masks in classrooms, along with sanitizers and wipes. Masks also available at testing centers and information desks. One Council members notes that students can be asked to leave classroom, but if they refuse, what does one do? Callahan suggests avoiding disruption, but filing a report with the office of student conduct. Any student refusal to follow directions should be noted in the report. It is not appropriate to call police, a report should be stressed. She closes by stressing the importance of watching the webinar.

A member asks whether turning over an attendance sheet to a third party would violate FERPA. Callahan is not sure, but clarifies that the university is not asking faculty to keep attendance, only a seating chart. If somebody becomes ill, contract tracers will call and ask for the seating chart. Tracers are LUC employees; they cannot tell you which student tested positive, that would come from advisor or student themselves. Asked about office hours/meetings, she says stay distant as possible, both keep well-fitting masks on. She has heard from deans that students have appreciated online meetings with faculty.

A Council member expresses concern about using wi-fi logins to establish a presence on campus; they have been incorrectly blamed for non-compliance with testing requirement on this basis, even though they were simply downtown and did not enter university buildings. The concern is echoed by other members. Callahan confirms that contact tracing will reach out to employment places as well. Asked about faculty and staff and gym access, she does not know but will report back.

Callahan agrees that a survey from Human Resources about Aetna insurance needs to happen in the fall. A member asks about the handbook and bylaws, expressing concern that waiting on the shared governance report will mean that neither gets updated this academic year. President Rooney indicates that she addressed this, and that it will be a stepped process. The first step is to engage with the shared governance report, once we do that we would then move into a process to revise the handbook (which is indeed outdated). She says that we can move forward this year and get it done, before another President comes in. She is also working with us on bylaws for the Faculty Council. It will take at least a few weeks to get through the report just received, but they are committed to moving this forward. Callahan adds that she regrets the task force report took so long, but is glad to have it. She indicates that some recommendations, like giving more power to Faculty Council will have to be figured out. Echoing the president, she states that she is committed to having revised version. The board will need a finalized,

complete document, not piecemeal. She sees no reason why this cannot be finished in next eight months, fully and completely.

Jules moves into the agenda, says most of his updates have been covered in discussion so far. He urges members to look at the COVID protocols video, since colleagues will be asking questions; we are setting up our own COVID committee. He asks for other committee volunteers on COVID committee. He does not want us to take too long, and need credibility with administration. The committees should be up and running, and every Council member should serve on a committee. At the end of last year, the Secretary sent a letter praising service on the Council and describing it to every member's department chair or dean.

One member says they hate to kill the joy, but it is time to forward on the agenda. Jules thanks the member for killing the joy.

The chair of Academic Affairs Committee refers to the resolution about student evaluations to be discussed later. One committee member is conducting research about how student evaluations are being incorporated into annual reviews of faculty. They have met with University Core director Dana Garbarski. The structure of the core is not being changed at this point in time. Instead, Garbarski is working with faculty on more specific issues. The Council should invite her soon. Garbarski indicated that faculty feedback on the Core proposals was very helpful, and made it easy to go back to administration with feedback. The rushed timeline was a major issue, as was the way in which the focus on social justice was articulated. There was substantial faculty support for students taking foundational courses earlier in their college career. Humanities and social science faculty particularly do not want to reduce the size of core, and she sees no reason to do so. The proposed capstone was not supported at all, and there was a consensus that revisions would have actually harmed interdisciplinary aspects of the curriculum. She does see the need for more writing requirements, different than the current writing intensive mandate. The working groups are underway, and Garbarski is trying to make them a bit more diverse without imposing an undue burden on faculty of color. She wants to think about diversity designation for core classes; right now students can get through core without taking a diverse course.

The chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee offers two updates. First, the committee is interested in working on the retention of faculty from underrepresented groups, in conjunction with Vice Provost Badia Ahad. They are encouraged on this count. Second, the plans for an ombudsperson to help resolve faculty disputes with one another and with administrators has hit a roadblock. Early the past summer, a suitable person was found and hired, but subsequently, changes were made about who would have access to the information in conversations between an ombuds and faculty member. This is an important matter and needs to be worked out. Jules suggests that they also look into the proposal for sabbaticals advanced under the previous provost and whether that will be moving forward.

The chair of the ad-hoc Handbook Committee takes the floor. They welcome the commitments stated earlier by the Provost and President to securing revisions

this academic year. They remind the Council that according to the provisions of the current handbook, the Council may initiate revisions. The current handbook is on numerous counts out of line with the current structure, practices, and values of the university. Some areas in need of greatest revision include: descriptions of academic leadership, which has now been centralized in one provost; the weak and out of date nondiscrimination policy; the need for new language on affirmative action; improved procedures for the discipline of faculty and the resolution of faculty grievances; discussion of the collective bargaining agreement with Faculty Forward in the College of Arts and Sciences; and the incorporation and recognition of Arrupe College and library faculty. He describes the two years of work put in by the committee, and its membership (which includes both Council members and non-members from across the university).

The Chair of Service and Communications takes the floor. They indicate that a faculty member of the year has been selected and notified. The committee will also be administering the faculty evaluation of Deans. Jules and the Provost have a back and forth about these evaluations will work, and whether the new structure put in place under the last provost will continue.

Discussion changes to the proposed resolution from the Academic Affairs Committee. It reads:

Whereas:

- All faculty were required to transfer existing curricula to online methods of instruction in Spring 2020 semester.
- Almost all faculty were required to adopt either online methods of instruction or hi-flex methods of instruction in the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters.
- Faculty were required to adopt these new methods of instruction while navigating life during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Students experienced these methods of instructions—often new to them and to the faculty—similarly while navigating life during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Student evaluations of faculty should be expected to be impacted by the demands placed on both students and faculty during this period.
- This impact is necessarily not consistent with data collected prior to Spring 2020, thus rendering interpretation of these data using Loyola's accepted standards improper.

Be It Resolved That,

1. The Faculty Council recommends that student evaluations collected during the period of Spring 2020 through Spring 2021 be excluded from the annual performance reviews of all faculty.
2. The Faculty Council recommends that the application of student evaluations in faculty performance be placed on hiatus, until the COVID-19 pandemic no longer impacts Loyola's students and faculty.

The chair says that the resolution speaks for itself – faculty should not be penalized for a new method of instruction in an emergency situation. The committee discussed the possibility of an opt-in for those with strong evaluations. One member in the Faculty Forward union indicated that CAS leadership conveyed an understanding to them that evaluations in these circumstances would be anomalous, that might be helpful. Another member says faculty who maintained

strong reviews should be rewarded for that achievement. The chair says that that could be included. Another member asks about access to evaluations, which would presumably continue even if this resolution were passed. A different member expresses support for revising to have an opt-in option, but worries about the “false choice” of presenting opt-in option. They read the resolution as an honest of a lack of trust in the evaluations of faculty, and would have preferred to see additional request for evaluators to be mindful, rather than to wipe evaluations off of the table and remove from consideration. So they are ambivalent about the resolution itself. Other members suggest they share this perspective.

A member asks if Academic Affairs would be open to reconsidering the approach, and substituting a letter urging understanding of the conditions under which these evaluations were conducted. The chair suggests that there is some urgency in terms of timing, but sees the substance of the points raised. It is agreed that the Executive Committee could will revise along these lines and convey that document to chairs.

The ad hoc Committee on COVID is the next item of discussion. A member indicates the committee is not meant to supplant the work of the MPC structure, but rather to handle information and formulate decisions on such measures for the Council. The Provost asks for faculty feedback about surveillance testing. One member indicates mandatory testing would be good, but not everyday as in the summer. A different member indicates that even at the medical center, there is no surveillance testing, so vaccination and mask mandate makes this seem unneeded. Other medical faculty echo this point. A different member asks about where testing takes place, and possible exposure to nearby staff members. The Provost indicates that this will be examined, and expects testing would be in limited numbers, and they want to limit exposure of staff. Different locations would be selected. The Provost indicates that voluntary testing could supplant the need for mandatory testing. Another member points to the arbitrary nature of some tests in the past, which expired quite quickly. The question of organizing booster vaccinations for students, faculty and staff is raised. The government has not yet approved such boosters, and when it does, it is likely that faculty and staff will be referred to local providers. We are unlikely to experience the same lag in supplies as with the initial vaccination. Students in the dorms might be targeted for this; this has been discussed but no decisions have been made.

Jules indicates that an update letter should be sent to the faculty. He thanks the Council for its time. The meeting is adjourned.