

**Faculty Senate President's Meeting Notes**  
September 14, 2020

**Submitted by K. Craven**

**Members Present:**

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Jeremy Blair, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Wei Tsun Chang, Kris Craven, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Steven Frye, David Hajdik, Tammy Howard, Janet Isbell, Brian Jones, Christy Killman, Nancy Kolodziej, Matt Langford, Susan Laningham, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Chad Luke, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Mark Melichar, Holly Mills, Lachelle Norris, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Sally Pardue, Richard Rand, Jeff Roberts, Lee Ann Shipley, Troy Smith, Sandra Smith-Andrews, Barry Stein, Holly Stretz, Daniel Swartling, Lenly Weathers, Robert Wilbanks, Zac Wilcox, Kimberly Winkle, Russ Witcher, Jeannette Wolak

**Members Absent:**

Troy Brachey, Yun Ding, Ann Manginelli, Mary Matthews, Joseph Ojo, Anthony Paradis, Mike Rogers

**Guests Present:**

Lee Wray

**Call to Order**

Senate President Stretz called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

**President Oldham's Opening Remarks**

The President believes that we have responded to COVID-19 well so far and thinks that we are in a good place compared to other campuses. He also complimented various groups on campus for their outstanding job.

COVID-19

**Concern about Tracking and Numbers:**

Some of the issues raised on this topic relate to the tracking of cases and various reporting strategies. Senator Rand pointed out that a person cannot self-report on weekends, that no one is there to answer the phone. There are definitely problems with cases not being self-reported, but there is not much that can be done other than to continue to encourage students and others to self-report and include what is known in the numbers appearing on the Dashboard. There are 9 trained trackers working as fast as they can. There is a desire to hire at least one more, especially to help with weekend reporting. President Oldham also discussed how the university is working with the hospital, Putnam County Health Department, and other entities to continue to keep everyone informed and as safe as possible.

**Concerns about Student Organizations and Activities:**

A concern was raised around social events and activities planned by some student organizations and the need to approve requests. There was some discussion about the role of the Faculty

Advisor to evaluate the plan for the event and decline to approve an activity that is not practical under the current conditions. The organizations are required to submit a safety plan to the Student Affairs office when they are requesting approval and that office is scrutinizing these plans and they can also deny approval based on the submitted proposal. President Oldham also indicated that there have been a few instances of organizations known to have not followed the plan and these groups have been disciplined but did not say what disciplinary measures were taken. He says this will continue to happen if it is necessary.

### **The Employee Pre-Screening Questionnaire:**

There is a general desire to know who should be completing it, who actually is completing it, and who is monitoring the data. One concern is the location of the link to the questionnaire. Employees who do not use Express on a daily basis may not even know about it. Can it be made easier to complete, maybe have it as an app for phones or other more accessible locations. Lee Wray indicated that this has already been suggested. Human Resources are monitoring it and contacting employees if/when there is a concern that needs to be addressed. Another issue is the questions that are being asked on the questionnaire, are they appropriate and complete enough or personally intrusive? President Oldham indicated that it was originally developed from information from the CDC and the Health Department and has been modified since the original version to keep up with new information. Another question was regarding pre-existing conditions. When it is first completed, HR will contact the employee and take a record of these conditions as they can affect the answers.

### **What will trigger moving to completely online delivery?**

President Oldham indicated that this would only occur in the most extreme instance, but gave no definition of 'extreme'. Although the campus and the faculty responded and performed excellently during the Spring semester, shutting down did create significant problems. A big concern is what to do with students if we shut down, again; the latest advice is not to send the students home. Oldham said the situation is hard to predict, and that there is no single measure that would trigger this decision. The decision would only be made in the event that it is determined that we have reached a capacity where we could no longer manage the situation with the students remaining on campus.

### **Budget**

### **What Happened to End the Villages in the Residence Halls?**

President Oldham says that it is an ongoing concern that finally had to happen due to budget cuts. He also said that the efficacy of the program was in question and there was concern that it was not meeting expectations, but he did not say what the expectations were, nor did he share data. Several Senators responded that this was the first they were hearing that efficacy had ever been in question, that Village Heads had not been asked to submit data to defend efficacy.

### **Will the Spending Directives be Relaxed?**

Since our enrollment didn't fall dramatically as expected, do we have sufficient surplus to change direction. Yes, there is a memo coming to open domestic travel, with caution, and includes other lifting of restrictions. President Oldham did request discretion and consideration of good choices before deciding what to spend. There was a question about cuts to the Center Stage program. President Oldham's belief is that it was not intended to be a permanent cut. This will have to be confirmed. In regards to other budget considerations, the President urges that deans and chairmen continue to discuss their needs with the appropriate offices on a regular basis and faculty should communicate questions and concerns through the deans.

### **General Budget Discussion:**

President Oldham reiterated some of the information presented previously regarding the situation with the Bonds, the new Engineering Building plans, and the basic budget process. There is no current plan to build a parking structure. The new Engineering Building planning is underway and the projected date for breaking ground is summer 2021. The president asserted that faculty input to the budget is tricky. There are 3 budgets in a year and the process is continual throughout the year. The question of the uncertain future was raised. President Oldham indicated that the results of this current situation with COVID-19 has never been tested, but he feels that we are in decent shape although there is considerable uncertainty.

### Spring Semester Plans

### **Teaching Considerations:**

A question was raised about some of the planning that went into the Fall semester and would similar planning be used for the Spring semester. There was a survey sent out by the CITL to gather data about the planning, implementation, and satisfaction for the Fall semester so far. The intention is to use the results of this survey to inform the planning for Spring. All faculty are encouraged to complete the survey. Currently, the Spring semester is expected to work very similarly to the Fall semester. Senators voiced complaints about limiting departments from allowing too many online courses and forcing faculty to teach in-person. President Oldham indicated that faculty with specific needs regarding course delivery should go through Human Resources and obtain an accommodation. He said that it is not the intent to put anyone in harm's way, but the administration believes that the students prefer in-person instruction and we are trying to honor that preference.

### **What About Adjunct and Temporary Faculty?**

Oldham says that we are collecting data and that departments should be working on ways to fund what is needed and keep going. President Oldham gives credit to everyone for responding and making it the semester work under such conditions, and he feels that it worked well. He said that the permanent reduction in the workforce did not include Adjunct faculty. He also said that there were sufficient funds to cover the required faculty promotions, but no administration raises or promotions were given. Although we are not currently searching to fill positions, there are other ways they can be covered. Examples include changing the job function of existing employees to

cover needs and filling from within. It was noted that the Provost must approve the hiring of Adjunct faculty, but the funding does not come from that office, it is up to the department to find the funds. As for the current situation with Administrators teaching this fall, President Oldham feels that it is a good practice occasionally, but should not become an expectation for every semester.

### **What About Falling Attendance?**

Some senators reported that attendance in face-to-face classes has fallen. Senator Wolak shared a plot of attendance in freshman general education class where out of 150 students she is lucky to have a dozen attending the lecture, and that levels have fallen to this over time. Other Senators indicated that it is a mixed bag. Students seem to say they want a combination of online and in-person instruction, but is that what they really want? Other students want the traditional in-person instruction that is just not possible now. How to handle group projects and maintain social distancing is a real challenge. President Oldham recognized that last Spring and this Fall the planning was done quickly and possibly not ideal. There was a concern that the survey from CITL didn't capture the issues, that some of the questions were not well posed and the options for answers were not inclusive. The hope is that we will be able to reflect and adjust for the Spring semester.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Approved: October 26, 2020