**Faculty Senate Executive Council Minutes**

January 17, 2023

Via Microsoft Teams, 3:00-5:00 pm

***Present:*** Hilary Hungerford, Ben Moulton, David Frame, Dianne McAdams-Jones, Evelyn Porter, Jaden Muir, John Hunt, Jon Anderson, Jonathan Allred, Laura Ricaldi, Nizhone Meza, Sandie Waters, Skyler Simmons, Wioleta Fedeczko

***Excused or Absent:*** Wayne Vaught, Kat Brown

***Guests:*** Talatou Maiga

Call to order: Hilary Hungerford called at 3:05 pm

**FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT**

* Hilary Hungerford: A situation happened last week that we would like to talk about. One of Wioleta’s colleagues submitted an early alert and the system sent an email to the student and to the faculty member. The letter was written in the first person and looked like it was signed by the faculty member, so it was really problematic. I need to check on the status of it.
* Wioleta Fedeczko: This person does not use her first name with students. UVU can’t send emails pretending to be them.
* Hilary: This must be new. We have submitted early alerts before and haven’t got an email like this. Maybe they’ve gone to students before and now they are copying us?
* Jon Anderson: There was a setting in the past that had an option of sending the email to the student, but I made sure it was off and went through retention mentors. It’s not an easy system to navigate or to use. What is concerning is where is the training/conversation being brought into the loop? There are some really good best practices for contacting students.
* Hilary: I talked to Wayne and he said no one should be sending emails posing as faculty. We talked to David Connelly and Michelle Kearns and they said they were on it.
* Laura Ricaldi: I sent these last year and never paid attention. This is the same email, using my first name as well though I don’t use that with students. This isn’t new.
* Hilary: The students are probably getting a couple of these and they are really generic.
* John Hunt: I have a similar concern. I’ve received four accommodation letters. This were limiting academic freedom in the classroom. Two of the letters say students can miss as many days as they want to. The other said students could turn their papers in late. We need to discuss how to improve as a group and discuss how to have standards. These are connected to SRI’s and connect to a lot of things of professors who have standards. This won’t fly in the real world.
* Sandie Waters: Anything that changes the ethics of our profession or the way our profession runs, we are not expected to make accommodations for those students. I think more of a conversation does need to happen.
* David Frame: My department considers these things optional based on what is reasonable.
* Sandie: We need to cover everything. I have this in writing but we need a current one that states you accommodate to the best of your ability and what you will accommodate.
* Hilary: It sounds like this should be a conversation in Senate and not just with us.
* Wioleta: It seems that the Accessibility Office is handing out accommodations and not paying attention to student needs. Student complaints have increased in my department.
* Sandie: It used to be extended time for tests, but now it has gone further and there is a long document. I just wrote back and said that not all of it is feasible and I would take the top three.
* Hilary: We might be able to fit this into the Senate agenda next week. I will invite Tara and Ivy.
* Ben Moulton: I have two kids that have accommodations and they are trained in their secondary, primary, whatever to learn how to self-advocate.
* John Hunt: One question I get asked with grad-school students is will this student have the maturity to finish a PhD? That’s why I don’t write letters. I believe in accommodations and don’t mind giving them extra time to finish tests, but not for missing class and late papers.
* Talatou Maiga: I’ve had to deal with many cases but my understanding that the letter that comes from Accessibilities to faculty is what accommodations are expected. I refer these cases back to the accessibilities counselor and they say they have sent a letter back to the faculty with the guidelines.
* Hilary: Some of the guidelines say they can miss as much class as they want to.
* Talatou: This is news to me.
* Hilary: John Hunt, if you can redact the names for me, I will send those to the Accessibilities people before they come.
	+ John Hunt: I will tonight.

**UVU Ombuds**

* Hilary: There has been some faculty issues over the last few years. We want an ombuds, someone who will mediate these discussions and troubles we are having. We would like you to explain your position and what you do.
* Talatou: It’s recommended that the ombudsmen get training. We are guided by principles of confidentiality, informality, neutrality, and independence. We have a Utah ombuds group that updates each other on what’s going on with other campuses. Our office helps students with any form of communication conflict whether it is student-student, student-staff, and faculty. My offices deal with a lot of personalities on campus. Students come to us when they have policy questions. If we can’t answer these questions, we send them to the Policy Office. We also help students find resources on campus or housing. We support students when they face difficulties as well. In some cases, there are issues that come up and we notice it’s worth reaching out to either the faculty and definitely to the student and share some information or resources. Department chairs have reached out to consult with us on issues. I’m the only ombuds, but I have back-up with colleagues. Our section is called the Office of Students’ Right and Accountability.
* Sandie: I’m curious if your conversations ever go to students being accountable where you haven’t shown up to class or you haven’t turned your work is on time. Is there any coaching that goes on in your department that helps students take responsibility?
* Talatou: Yes, it depends on how the issue is brought to us.
* Sandie: I don’t ever complain about my students no matter how difficult they are. I figure my job is to help these students through my class. My philosophy is if you don’t want to learn in this class, that’s your choice as an adult. Am I always behind because I’m not initiating the issue?
* Talatou: Let’s take the curriculum one. The students will be the one to initiate the issue. They will come to me or the department chair and submit a complaint through the ethics point. The first thing I start with is this not mentioned in the syllabus? If this is in the syllabus, it’s basically like you signed up for the class and now we ask multiple questions depending on how they frame it. We ask if they have spoken with the teacher and many are uncomfortable doing this. Throughout the process, there is some form of conduct involved.
* Hilary: I think a lot of faculty are concerned with having someone to talk to about things outside of the classroom. They feel like someone in the Office of Academic Affairs won’t be neutral or there may be retaliation. Can faculty go to you with those things?
* Talatou: Right now, this is part of what I call faculty consultation. The conversations are almost always confidential.
* Hilary: A lot of faculty have had bad experiences with HR.
* Talatou: I’m not very much involved with HR, but at times we do work together. The issues are really separate though.
* Hilary: Faculty have felt that their deans and supervisors don’t have accountability and they don’t know where to go. There is no mechanism for us to get resolution. We’ve worked with the Provost a little bit but people want more than that. Is that something you can help us with?
* Talatou: Absolutely, yes, we can explore what the issues are.
* Hilary: It sounds like maybe some of us will follow up with you. Can we advertise this to faculty? Do you have the compacity?
* Talatou: Maybe we should have a little more discussion about this because of the capacity part. I think we can definitely do some exploration. Plus, I need to inform my dean.
* Sandie: I’d like you to also think about the fact that some faculty will feel that you work for the University and how do you protect the University while protecting the faculty? Maybe you can think about it before we chat again.
* Talatou: I’m taking notes.
* Wioleta: I feel like in the conversations we have that the faculty feel that with the ombuds being listed as student affairs, they feel like it’s not for them and they don’t trust HR. They are feeling like they need an ombuds specifically for them.
* Hilary: What do you think of having a faculty position instead?
	+ Comment/Sandie: Anything is better than the current state of affairs.
* Hilary: I would love to do something like this.
* Wioleta: It would have to be faulty who really understands and is specific to our profession. Having an ombuds for students is a whole different thing.
* Hilary: Let’s think about it and ask Wayne about it. Laura, would you reach out about how you get certification to be an ombuds?
* Sandie: No one is there for faculty just for faculty
* Skyler: If the problem is administration doesn’t listen to faculty, then if we put an extra title on a faculty member, does that solve it?
* Hilary: I think of it as more like “let’s study policy and see if you have any recourse”.
* Wioleta: I think it’s being comfortable talking about things and helping things before they get worse.
* Nizhone Meza: I can tell them what’s available to them and what I can do to help them.
	+ Sandie: How do we help new faculty have the confidence in you having the backs of faculty?
* Nizhone: My job isn’t to side with the administration, but you do have a good point because I am in the Office of Academic Affairs and my boss is Kat.
* Wioleta: Where would this position be housed?
* Hilary: I think it would have to be Academic Affairs, but we are more independent because we have tenure and they just can’t fire us. They can hate us, but they can’t easily fire us. Let’s meet with the ombuds person from the U. If you want to be part of that meeting, let Laura know. Folks with tenure should be advocating and using the protection that we have to be advocating for faculty.

**Senate Inclusion Committee**

* Hilary: Rasha said she would like us to have an inclusion committee in Senate and that it would be helpful. Should we have it be senators?
* Jon Anderson: We try not to overload the senators with all of these committees. We should have a senator chairing it. We can have the junior faculty on it and the senators can start being more senior faculty.
* Dianne McAdams-Jones: This is very exhausting work and we need people who don’t feel threatened with their tenure where their work is concerned. We are already running in some ways upstream. We need people who wish to do this kind of work.
* Hilary: It sounds like we can ask next week who is interested and then build from there.
* Wioleta: What is it exactly we are asking this committee to do? I’m worried about people who are separate but do the same thing. Also, we have a senate rep. I know Rasha is concerned on who works on DEI issues and it’s predominantly women.
* Hilary: In my college there is a college committee and in each department there is a DEI. Rasha thinks we need one and she can set the agenda for us. I’m not quite sure what the Senate Inclusion Committee will do.
* Sandie: I think what is missing is the bridge between Rasha’s group and the faculty itself. In my opinion, this is where it will come in.
* Dianne: While we do have many schools and departments doing good work, we also have departments where there is nothing happening. I believe Rasha is concerned that we have senators involved from that standpoint to get information to the departments. Faculty need to be on board to support the departments so they can support the schools.
* Sandie: I think that the University needs to make this not a brown issue, but a people issue.
* John Hunt: My concern is a lot of universities embrace these issues for face value. If I was going to be on a committee, I want to make sure it has steam and bite.
* Hilary: I’m happy to co-chair it or be a part of it.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

* Advancement of Teaching/Jonathan Allred:
* There is a question by a department chair about adding department chairs to be candidates or nominees for the Faculty Excellence Award. There is a debate on whether or not they can or should be. It’s a large enough issue that I want to bring it Senate. We should revamp the FEA’s to better define the standard. In the procedures that passed through Senate it says they can’t be a chair. If we change it, it needs to pass through Senate.
	+ Hilary: We may not have time to talk about it this Senate, but it may be worth opening up.
	+ We have a teaching and learning symposium in March. My committee will be reviewing proposals for this.

**Senate Agenda:**

* Digital Transformation
* International Travel
* Academic Scheduling: They want to move to a centralized control of classes
* Wioleta: Right now there is nothing in policy or written down that is affecting student success rates. Laurie Sharp wants to be more careful in how things are handled. She wants things in actual wording so faculty and Scheduling have a reference to go to.
* Hilary: We will invite the accessibility people to ExCo before bringing them to Senate.
* The annual review template.
* Sandie: We have some elections coming up that are difficult or beefy. We need to start thinking about nominees. I don’t want it to be last minute like it is sometimes.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**:

* Hilary Hungerford: There are some good MLK events happening on campus this week.
* Skyler Simmons: I will be presenting a global presentation in Wilmington, NC.
* Ben Moulton: My daughter got her learner’s permit. She’s the last one to teach how to drive.

Meeting adjourned at 4:48 pm