

**Deans' Council Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2020**  
**2:00 pm–4:00 pm**  
**Virtual Meeting Space**

**Attending:** Ravi Krovi, Brad Mortensen, Eric Amsel, Bruce Bowen, Andrea Easter-Pilcher, Bret Ellis, David Ferro, Kristin Hadley, Timothy Herzog, Wendy Holliday, Brenda Kowalewski, Leslie Loeffel, Matthew Mouritsen, Brett Perozzi, Julie Rich, Yas Simonian, Scott Sprenger, Brian Stecklein, Norm Tarbox, Yimin Wang

**Excused:** Bret Alexander

**1. Approval of [February 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)**

- a. The meeting minutes were approved as written.

**2. Provost Updates**

**a. Meeting structure:**

- i. Ravi presented a plan for structuring Deans' Council meetings. The role of the Dean's Council is to serve as an advisory body to initiate and review policies that impact the academic and administrative operations of WSU colleges and library. Broad areas will include (but are not limited to): Academic planning, institutional effectiveness, budgeting, curricular and administrative issues, academic policies, initiatives to enhance student and faculty success.
- ii. He hopes to further conversations between the academic deans and provost, and will hold new meetings titled "WALT," or Weber Academic Leadership Team meetings. He hopes to coordinate these meetings with Deans' Council, moving Deans' Council meetings to approximately 4 times per semester rather than twice monthly. He suggested that this will best leverage time spent with other division vice presidents and with President Mortensen, and hopes that this will ensure that this group engages with the most significant issues. He presented a sample Deans' Council agenda and asked for feedback. The agenda would include updates from the Provost, institutional updates, and standing reports from Senate liaisons and other student success groups. The agenda would also include discussions on academic and academic support issues. The group discussed the plan, including summer scheduling of meetings and ensuring Faculty Senate participation.

**b. Announcements:**

- i. Ravi congratulated Dean Simonian and the faculty and staff of the Medical Lab Services program for a successful accreditation review by the National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

**3. Standing Reports—Faculty Senate Liaison Reports**

- a. **Environmental Issues Committee (Julie Rich/Brenda Kowalewski)-** The Intermountain Sustainability Summit has been moved to a virtual environment and keynote webinars will be held on March 19-20, 2020. The committee announced the change through registration contact information and through WSU's campus

announcements. The Summit is attended by an international audience, supplemented by WSU students. Brenda will send more information to Deans' Council as it is available.

- b. **SBBFP (Kristin Hadley)**- The committee is developing a report discussing merit pay, but will conduct further analysis before sending the report to the salary negotiation team. The salary negotiation team will meet with the WSU administration on March 24, 2020. The committee had a preliminary discussion about instructor career ladders, and SBBFP, in collaboration with other faculty senate committees, may suggest this as a faculty senate agenda item.
- c. **CRAO (Yas Simonian)**- The committee is discussing adding a non-voting adjunct seat at faculty senate. Although instructors are represented at faculty senate, adjuncts are generally not represented in any administrative body. Many colleges try to directly solicit adjunct input.
- d. **APAFT (David Ferro)**- The committee is drafting a position to accommodate faculty in the tenure and promotion process impacted by COVID-19. Faculty are concerned that the mid-semester change to virtual delivery will impact scholarship opportunities and student course evaluations. The subcommittee revising the student evaluation form will run a pilot program during summer semester. The subcommittee hopes the new instrument will reduce bias and will focus on the classroom environment, rather than on teaching ability.
- e. **SERTS (Matt Mouritsen)**- The committee reviewed the advising plan for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The college will update their plan using the committee's suggestions. The plan represented the advisor, student, and faculty expectations, and explained how Starfish is effectively used to encourage appropriate interventions. The committee is aware of possible Starfish fatigue, but hopes that the data will encourage participation. Deans' Council also discussed the frequency of faculty Starfish feedback and if additional training is needed. They concluded that the advising plans are helpful in determining needs.
- f. **RSPG (Brenda Kowalewski)**- The committee received more than 50 proposals, and were able to fund 45 at approximately \$130,000, with a mix of research and teaching projects. They also developed travel policy guidelines at the beginning of Spring Semester in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Awarded RSPG funding will be held for next year if faculty are unable to travel due to COVID-19 restrictions.
  - i. **Student OUR Travel**- Deans' Council discussed the repercussions of COVID-19 on student travel. Brenda explained that cases are being evaluated on an individual basis.
- g. **Curriculum Committee (Wendy Holliday)**- The yearly curricular change push has been accomplished, and the committee will continue their work throughout the semester.
- h. **GEIAC (Eric Amsel)**- The Diversity requirement is now included as a General Education requirement, and GEIAC is working with departments on how to move forward. The committee will soon present the assessment protocol they have been developing to Faculty Senate. The assessment reports will be distributed with biannual course assessments. The WSU Courses program cost analysis will be presented at Faculty Senate along with a summary of last year's courses.

#### **4. Assessment of COVID-19 Efforts – Discussion**

- a. Deans' Council discussed the recent COVID-19 efforts, including faculty feedback and continuing needs. The group applauded the work of RC Callahan and the WSU Online team. They also noted the grace with which faculty are rising to an incredibly difficult

challenge, and noted that they recognize the gravity of the situation. The group expressed thanks to all of the faculty, deans, and staff for their abundant collaboration and devotion to students. The group discussed making sure that adjunct faculty are included in communications. Wendy thanked Deans' Council for their support in quick decisions made to close areas where necessary, and reported her confidence that WSU will be able to accommodate student technology needs while encouraging social distancing. She asked that deans help spread the message that the physical collection is unavailable at this time, but that the Library is ready and willing to make as many digital resources available as necessary.

## **5. Managing Retention Efforts in Current Environment- Discussion**

- a. Enrollment Services is working to contact the approximately 3,000 students who haven't enrolled in a following semester, and the 500 students who dropped in the first 3 weeks of spring semester. Bruce noted that student recruitment events are extremely limited due to the closing of the Union Building, and announced that an electronic marketing campaign will begin next week. Deans' Council discussed virtual options for student engagement and how to overcome possible retention and enrollment issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Brett Perozzi explained that all Student Affairs services are available online. Bruce strongly encouraged deans to make sure that the college advisors are able to access electronic services as the top question for students attending an in-person orientation is how to finalize their schedules. The group discussed efforts to make sure students feel prepared for Fall semester, the need to be connected to students to help them overcome registration fears, and encouraging new and creative engagement efforts in addition to leveraging Starfish flags as they activate a cadre of helpful resources. Dean's Council discussed data collection that might be helpful to assess the impacts of the current situation, and how to maximize our ability to meet the needs of those seeking higher education during a potential economic downturn.

## **6. Other Business**

- a. Yimin announced a change to visa policies that allows international students choosing to return to their home country to continue in their classes now that the university has moved to virtual instruction.
- b. A USHE announcement states that commencements will be postponed until after the health crisis.
- c. Campus buildings will be closed to the public to promote social distancing, but faculty and staff will still have access through their prox cards.
- d. The Faculty support during transition group will continue for now. Brenda asked that Deans' Council continue to pass along needs and concerns.