

**Deans' Council Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 1, 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

**Guests:** Gail Niklason

**Excused:** Bret Alexander

**1. Approval of April 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

- a. Approved as written.

**2. Provost Updates**

- a. Ravi and Brad thanked everyone who was involved with the Credit/No Credit work across campus.
- b. The deans described their colleges' plans for graduation celebrations. Some colleges plan to hold virtual celebrations, and some have chosen to postpone their events. Each college will encourage students to participate in the university graduation scheduled in August. Students expressed their desire for information about a university celebration in the town hall event held March 31st. The Wildcat Store is distributing regalia to graduates. The university commencement committee will meet on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Ravi will pass along Deans' Council's request for university-level communication to students about graduation celebrations.

**3. Institutional Updates**

**a. Faculty Senate Liaison Reports (Deans)**

**i. Academic Resources and Computing Committee (currently empty)**

- a. ARCC met recently to address next years' grants. They had excess funding this cycle but were unable to support all of the applications since some of them didn't fit the ARCC guidelines. Deans' Council discussed asking ARCC to realign their criteria to include computer software and support. Bret Ellis offered context to the group learned by IT during the recent pandemic. He suggested that IT has learned that desktops are not the right tools for faculty and suggested that ARCC, as well as colleges, focus on purchasing mobile devices that best serve faculty needs over desktops

**ii. Environmental Initiatives (Julie Rich)**

- a. The Sustainability Awards were presented to the authors of "Utah's Air Quality." The EIC has a Canvas course in progress that will help faculty qualify their courses for the SUS designation. The committee will hold a retreat for new committee members. The Solve Climate 2020 Webinar was recorded and will be available on the EIC website.

**iii. GEIAC (Eric Amsel)**

- a. GEIAC presented results of an analysis of WSU programs, including cost/benefits, to Faculty Senate Executive Committee. They are designing a process to get feedback to make the WSU program permanent. GEIAC also discussed the standardization of a CR/NC decision across Core Gen Ed classes. The diversity credit discussion continues, and Eric hopes that a proposal will be ready sometime in fall. The committee plans a signature assignment analysis over the summer, and are looking at signature assignments in Concurrent Enrollment classes. They are also analyzing General Studies graduates looking backwards, and are collecting assignments to do a longitudinal backwards study, with a forward-looking study also planned. They are planning a small pilot of Fast Start classes online in fall, and have found Learning Assistants (peer mentors) have been helpful to keep students engaged during the transition to virtual presentation of spring semester.
- iv. RSPG (Brenda Kowalewski)**
  - a. Brenda reported that RSPG decided to use funding previously earmarked for summer travel to support two other projects that weren't fully funded this spring.
- v. SBBFP (Kristin Hadley)**
  - a. SBBFP is meeting this month to focus on budget priorities. Norm has agreed to meet with the committee 4x/year in hopes of increasing transparency in the budgeting process.
- vi. TLA (Andrea Easter-Pilcher)**
  - a. TLA is reworking the annual new faculty retreat in response to COVID-19. They have planned a virtual faculty onboarding in summer, culminating in a retreat held Oct. 15-17. More details will be shared as they are available.
  - b. Deans' Council discussed the next steps for changes to TLA/TLF. A recommendation from the TLF program review to create a teaching center and 2 committees will be discussed in Faculty Senate Executive Committee held 4/2/20.
- vii. SERTS (Matthew Mouritsen)**
  - a. Matt explained that SERTS was formed as an ad hoc committee, and that they are meeting to discuss how to carry forward their momentum into next year. He described the two college advising plans presented to SERTS, and explained that the committee suggests developing an advising plan template. Deans' Council discussed some of the logistics of this process and determined that this could be a discussion for a future Deans' Council meeting.
- viii. Course Fees (Yasmen Simonian)**
  - a. Yas announced that the committee will continue working over the summer as the process is still in flux.

#### **4. Academic Agenda/Policy Discussions**

##### **a. Strategic Priorities in Immediate Planning Horizon**

- i. Deans' Council discussed strategic priorities in context of the current environment. Ravi noted that WSU's pandemic planning stretches back to the mid-2000s. It includes business continuity planning, annual Strategic Planning Reports, and university-level strategic planning as is currently underway. The Council discussed admissions/retention efforts, ensuring that faculty have time to pedagogically prepare for fall semester in the event of continued social distancing restrictions, and the

- critical need to plan for high-touch academic experiences. A subcommittee was formed to explore efforts for developing online competencies in teaching experiential activities. Brenda, Kristin, Julie, Tim, and Matt will begin the subcommittee.
- ii. Deans' Council also discussed the needs of concurrent enrollment students, how to promote a sense of belonging among incoming freshmen, and how to best help other incoming students. Enrollment Services is moving forward on many of these fronts.
  - iii. Student technology needs and access were also discussed. Bret Ellis strongly encouraged Deans' Council to request that faculty communicate specific technology needs to their students at the beginning of classes so that students can get equipment that meets class needs. He suggested that faculty consider including required technology in their syllabi.

**b. Strategic Planning, Accreditation, and Mission Fulfillment**

- i. Eric and Gail spoke with Deans' Council about these topics. They explained that accreditation is different this year due to updated [NWCCU standards](#). WSU will be one of the first institutions to go through the accreditation process under the new standards. Eric & Gail will be writing the university's accreditation report. They explained the current plan, including demonstrating WSU's integrated and targeted budgeting process and providing examples of our strategic planning and initiatives. WSU's strategic plan will help tell the story of what we're doing well and how we're addressing our challenges.
- ii. Deans' Council also discussed the current university strategic planning process. Tim explained that faculty are concerned about the timing of strategic planning, and Deans' Council, along with Brad, reaffirmed a desire to ensure that they are included in the process. Brad will send out a follow up email with a survey containing the same questions used in the focus groups so that anyone who was unable to participate can still provide feedback. The survey results will be shared with the consultant.