

Deans' Council Minutes
Wednesday, March 3, 2021
2:00 pm–4:00 pm

Attending: Ravi Krovi, Brad Mortensen, Adrienne Andrews, Eric Amsel, Bruce Bowen, Andrea Easter-Pilcher, Bret Ellis, David Ferro, Kristin Hadley, Timothy Herzog, Wendy Holliday, Brenda Kowalewski, Betsy Mennell, Matthew Mouritsen, Brett Perozzi, Julie Rich, Yas Simonian, Julie Snowball, Amanda Sowerby, Brian Stecklein, Norm Tarbox, James Taylor, Deborah Uman, Yimin Wang

Guests: Richard Hill, Holly Hirst, Gail Niklason, Melissa Neville Norton, Jessica Oyler, Tim Wheelwright

Excused: Ben Ferney

1. Approval of February 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- a. The minutes were approved as written.

2. Provost Updates

a. Updates

- i. Ravi, along with Deans' Council, expressed condolences to the friends and family of Professor Desiree Cooper Larsen.
- ii. Julie Snowball updated the group on the progress of possible legislative funding for enhanced dual enrollment efforts.

b. Commencement

- i. Brad offered updates about commencement plans and thanked those involved in the planning process. He expects that an email with more information will be sent out to faculty and staff ASAP.

c. Updates (Ravi Krovi)

- i. Ravi hopes to complete the PCP process by the end of this week.

d. Canvas Support (Brian Stecklein)

- i. Brian reported back about the move to Level 1 Canvas support provided by Instructure. He spoke about the 24-7 support available to faculty/staff/students, progress on improving wait times, and how WSU Online interfaces with Instructure. Deans' Council asked for qualitative data, and requested more communication before large-scale changes are implemented.

e. Chitester Migration (Brian Stecklein)

- i. Brian updated the group on the RFP process and on the plans moving forward. He also spoke about a pilot group that is being formed.

f. NW Accreditation Update (Eric Amsel)

- i. Eric asked for and received support for WSU to move to the updated [NWCCU standards](#), gave a progress update, explained plans going forward, and offered information about opportunities to provide feedback.

g. Weber Welcome/Student Feedback from Advisors (Bruce Bowen)

- i. Bruce announced a targeted marketing effort that will be happening in summer semester. He also shared anecdotal information gathered from advisors about students' perception of their experiences with virtual and face-to-face classes, mental health challenges, scheduling difficulties, and their desire for a traditional college experience juxtaposed with students' comfort with the current situation.
- ii. Bruce spoke about plans for Weber Welcome in fall semester, including moving toward mandatory attendance in 2022. He proposed holding Weber Welcome in person starting in May, and explained that college participation is vital to ensure success of the events. Deans' Council was not supportive of moving to in-person Weber Welcome events in May. This topic will be discussed further in the next WALT meeting.

h. Standardizing Course Templates, Other Updates (Brenda Kowalewski)

- i. Brenda spoke about the Faculty Development in Online Teaching & Learning Task Force and their work in standardizing course templates in response to student requests. She explained that these efforts focus on how students navigate within Canvas courses, not on the course content. Deans' Council offered feedback on these efforts as a guideline on the program level and/or in gateway courses. Deans will speak with chairs to gather feedback
- ii. Brenda announced the Faculty Symposium and Digital District Reveal on March 23rd, and thanked the deans for supporting the upcoming Intermountain Sustainability Conference.

i. University Advancement Update (Betsy Mennell)

- i. Betsy spoke about Marketing & Communications' "Ever Upwards" campaigns. She also spoke about donations received in the last month, and about the development director hiring processes. She congratulated Yas on winning a Dixon Award and announced that Kelly Stackarack was the staff awardee. She also announced the upcoming Wildcat golf classic.

3. Academic Support Discussions

a. Immigration Discussion (Richard Hill & Tim Wheelwright)

- i. Tim, Richard and Holly offered an overview of the Employment-Based Green Card process. Tim highlighted the timelines associated with this process and spoke about the importance of stating in job postings that the university will accept ABD candidates, as applicable. Deans' Council suggested including this language in job posting templates. Rich further emphasized the extended Department of Labor processing time, which necessitates the need to start the process within 6 months. Tim also discussed the EB1/EB2 processes and their potential usage.

4. Academic Agenda/Policy Discussions

a. Visiting Assistant Professor Appointment (Ravi Krovi, Tim Herzog, Melissa Neville Norton)

- i. Tim & Melissa spoke with the group about the Visiting Assistant Professor (VAP) employee designation. They explained that this is not an official faculty designation identified in PPM, and as such, VAP are not represented in Faculty Senate. Ravi will speak with Legal Services about how to best serve existing VAPs. Deans' Council encouraged charging APAFT with determining how to best move forward.

b. Diversity Boost Program (Adrienne Andrews)

- i. This item will be tabled until the next meeting.

c. Prioritizing Data Analytics Efforts (Eric Amsel)

- i. Eric spoke about the current data centers on campus and the divisions to which they report. Each of the centers has participated in the University Data & Analytics Committee (UDAC), working on such projects as Report Gallery. UDAC expects a very large increase to data needs to support the upcoming strategic plan and is discussing big W needs and prioritization, compared with their capacity. President's Council supports forming a prioritization group. The group plans to hire a Data and Communication Manager to help with this work.