**Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

**June 9, 2020**

Senators in attendance included: S. Fouts, S. Sauro, T. Yamashita, T. Olson, W. Blake, V. Sipe, T. Robinson, A. Everhart, M. Rathinam, J. Liebman, A. Rubin, R. Lambert-Bretiere, C. Menyuk, H. Schreier, K. O’Dell, M. Jones-Lewis, C. Viauroux, K. Omland, M. Fagan, M. Nance, D. Flint, B. Bickel, A. Ekas-Mueting, A. Sofie-Clemmenson, B. Kaufman, D. Alonso, E. Durham, E. Muson, J. Kogan, J. Kestner, K. Kein, K. Sullivan, T. Patton, M. Castellanos, S. Pitts, Orianne Smith, and S. McDonough were in attendance.

1. **Call to Order**

President Smith called the meeting to order. She welcomed the senators and thanked them for attending the June meeting. President Smith introduced herself for those where were new in attendance, noting that

“Susan McDonough, Vice President, will serve as timekeeper and will monitor the “chat box” to assure that all questions are brought forward. She will announce when time limits have been reached and will take note should there be queries regarding our process and procedures.

The chat function is for those interested in posing a question or comment during the Q/A. Dr. McDonough will recognize senators in the order in which these requests are made.”

President Smith noted too that the Senate had invited the leaders of the Fall Planning Work Groups to join the meeting and also that the meeting would be recorded to assist in the preparation of the Faculty Senate minutes. She added that the minutes for this meeting will be will be available prior to our next special summer meeting.

President Smith thanked the senators who participated in voting on the proposed slate of members for the Faculty Board of Review. The voting concluded at 5 p.m. on Monday, June 8, and Dr. Rathinam, senator from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics formally recused himself.

Thirty senators voted in the affirmative, zero senators voted against the slate, and zero senators abstained. The slate of members for the Faculty Board of Review was approved.

The senators had received a copy of the proposed agenda prior to the meeting; the agenda was approved unanimously.

**II. President’s Remarks**

President Hrabowski congratulated the senators and all members who have been elected to their position on the Senate. He noted UMBC’s number one priority is to maintain our guiding principles of protecting our academic mission and safeguarding the health and safety of our community. He mentioned that, as the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee will confirm, the majority of our classes will continue to be online.

President Hrabowski stressed the uniquely conservative approach that UMBC is taking in regards to reopening the campus and his commitment to job security for the faculty and staff at UMBC. He also mentioned that information on the budget and its impact on our campus will not be available until July.

President Hrabowski concluded by thanking the faculty senators for attending this special summer Senate meeting.

1. **Provost’s Remarks**

Provost Rous addressed the senators. He thanked the faculty and their departments for their continued spirit and diligence through the pandemic.

The Provost discussed the process that UMBC is implementing to decide which courses should be allowed to be offered in a hybrid or a face-to-face format. He mentioned his appreciation for the work done by department chairs and faculty in filling out the risk assessment documents that were being reviewed by the Risk Assessment Committee. He also emphasized the point that a course proposed as hybrid or F2F will only run if the instructor is willing to teach the course.

1. **Fall Reopening Update from the Academic Work Group**

Dr. Antonio Moreira, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, began this update with a presentation for the senators. The presentation outlined the membership structure of the Academic Work Group co-chaired by Dr. Moreira and Sarah Shin with representation from all three colleges. Each of these groups has a senate representative in addition to other faculty members chosen by the deans of those colleges. He noted that there are also working groups for other academic units with an instructional component.

The presentation also outlined the criteria for F2F course offerings: courses that cannot be reproduced in an online environment; courses for students who need to complete a research project or creative activity by doing in-person work; courses with final projects that must be completed on campus and courses that foster a sense of community for new students.

The presentation included tables and data regarding the proposed courses for F2F or hybrid delivery, pointing out that only 10% of all of the courses that UMBC offers are being considered. The timeline and the decision process were outlined as well: departments and programs will submit their risk assessments during the week of June 8 and the review by the Risk Assessment Committee will begin immediately. Along with Provost Rous, Dr. Moreira similarly reiterated the point that the ultimate decision to run a course F2F or hybrid rested with the individual faculty member.

The final slide of the presentation invited senators to provide feedback on the possibility of a flexible academic calendar for the fall semester. Senators were asked to weigh in on four scenarios: a normal start date, an early start date, fully remote after Thanksgiving or finishing classes at Thanksgiving.

1. **Q/A from Senators for the Academic Work Group**

Concern – “I have concerns about an early start date colliding with those who are teaching one or two classes. That’s a significant crunch and incredibly burdensome on faculty who are heavily burdened with teaching large class sizes.”

Question – “I have a follow up question specifically about the presentation. What was said about the ultimate decision on face to face classes resting with the department and the Faculty. If in fact, a class passes the risk assessment that was mentioned in the presentation and there will be feedback to the units on face to face, what will the feedback include? Questions having to do with financial remuneration or increase in budgets in in fact running face to face classes cost extra money? I’ll give you one example from my own department and this is totally hypothetical, but we have a photo lab, twelve and larger, where students can be six feet apart. Perhaps there can only be three in there at a time. That means running that to our class four times during the day.

There will be a registrar questions in terms of scheduling but there will also be cost involved questions in terms of remuneration for extra adjuncts. And for those who have to do the sterilization of all of that equipment in between, if you could shed some light on the finances involved in the feedback to the departments as they are making their ultimate decisions?”

Dr. Moreira – “We are reviewing the risk assessment in terms of the feasibility of running the class. So, for instance, things like the physical distancing, the kind of PPE to use, the class has to be broken down into several sections of any lower density. For instance, there were some courses today that were requesting or saying that they were using plexiglass dividers to again provide separation. This will be another cost. Obviously, if you need to do those things it’s not going to be cheap. We made that recommendation back to the program.

Also, there’s an issue with being able to actually provide the dividers even if it wasn’t the cost, it’s the cost and time involved to have them manufactured and procured.

We’re looking at those from that point of view but, when it comes to the resources for offering the courses and having to hire additional instructors or teaching assistants or whatever, that is a conversation for the Deans to have with the Department Chairs.”

Question – “I don’t mean to sound critical because everyone is completely maxed out on labor and brain bandwidth but, the language is very important here.

Ultimately, the decision is not going to rest with the department because there will be financial considerations that are involved.”

Dr. Moreira – “The intention is a decision in terms of the outcome of the review committee. They will provide feedback and that feedback can be accommodative.”

Question – “It was unclear to me what you meant when you were talking about the face to face classes. It sounded like you were indicating that the faculty were going to set the standards for safety in their class (i.e. whether masks would be worn and those things). I was wondering if you could clarify whether that is going to be a university level standard or whether that is going to be a faculty level standard.”

Dr. Moreira - “The risk assessment form does ask for the department and the faculty to indicate, if known, what safety measures will be in place but the experts on the Risk Assessment Committee will review and make a decision based on the standards and recommendations of the CDC, OSHA and the best available scientific data.

Question - “So, do we know these university safety standards and have them announced?”

Dr. Moreira – “There has been mention of these standards, but there are other working groups that will be providing all of that information in detail to campus.”

Question - “What percentage of students will be living on campus? What will the relationship between students who are in face to face classes and those who are living on campus?”

Provost Rous – “We don’t know the answers to these questions yet but, the answer is, it’s being worked on.

The process of choosing courses for a F2F or hybrid platform is being conducted alongside the process of deciding how many and which students should be allowed to reside in on campus housing. One of the reasons we don’t have an answer on housing right now is because it is contingent on the classes that we are offering on campus.”

Nancy Young – “I can say a few words here. We have been working with Lucy Wilson (Professor, Emergency Health Services and a member of the FPCC) and our Emergency Health Department and looking at the state and government guidelines as well as the recommendations/guidance from the University System of Maryland to make the decision about student housing. Residence halls are considered as one of the potentially highest transmission areas for infection on a campus and this decision is one that must be carefully weighed. I can say that at this point we have decided that all students will be housed in single rooms and that limits the number of students we can bring to campus. At this point, the percentage of students that can possibly be considered for on campus residency ranges from 22% - 48%. The percentage decided upon will be informed by the decisions that come out of the risk assessment process conduct by the Academic Work Group and further consideration of the safety of the bathroom facilities.”

Question – “One of the overarching themes that I’m interested in is how we’re going to make sure that all of the students have the necessary access to computers and internet etc. to ensure the integrity of assessments when we move to online? This includes Respondus Lockdown, and other related tools as well as to guarantee access to remote login workstations for specialized software that they might not be able to get to otherwise. And then the other part is also how this relates to policies that is how do we handle these situations, where we cannot fully accommodate those students who don’t have access?”

Jack Suess – “This work is ongoing. One of the tools that will be used here at UMBC as well as at other universities within the Maryland System is Eduroam (an international roaming service that enables internet access at hotspots throughout universities). We are also conducting a large scale survey with data from the UMBC community to determine what broadband services are available in different areas. Based on addresses, we can try to work with students around some of the programs that are available in their local jurisdictions. We are also paying close attention to the possibility that some students may live in areas with limited access and are working to develop solutions to accommodate these students.

In answer to the software question, we’re poised to begin working with departments who relied on our computer labs to help them transition to the virtual lab environment that we deployed in the spring with great success. We want to ensure that all of the students at UMBC have access to the virtual software they need.

In regards to online exams and academic integrity, it should be noted that this is a concern amongst universities across the nation. There are no perfect solutions but we are working hard to come up with creative solutions to this problem. It may come down to rethinking and retooling the assessment process to better accommodate an online platform.”

1. **General Q/A from Senators for the FPCC**

President Smith introduced everyone to the leads of the other working groups: Nancy Young, Student Life; Dr. Karl Steiner, Research; Greg Simmons, Community Engagement; and Jack Seuss, Operations.

Concern – “I have a comment and a concern regarding ending early at Thanksgiving and I wanted to state that here. I’m sure it’s a concern for many of us but, for those of us who are working with students who are seeking certification and need a minimum number of practicum hours, this will jeopardize their ability to progress in our program. In addition, there are also partnerships within many of our education classes, for example, for tutoring or virtual exchange partnerships with classes abroad that are tied to the start dates of those institutions, many of which don’t begin until mid-October. These students would not be able to fulfill the requirements needed for certification or completion.”

Question – “Will the university provide hand sanitizer, disinfectant for things like doorknobs and surfaces and alcohol wipes for equipment in music? We have things like keyboards and computer keyboards and mixers and I also wonder about if there’s also anything they are going to be doing with the air filter system in the PAHB. Also, is there anyone that’s going to be considering staff needs in various departments who really can’t conduct their work remotely? Is there a process for requesting this?”

Lenn Caron – “Facilities is stocking up on disinfectant and sanitizers that will be distributed throughout campus. Like everyone else, we are scrambling to get disinfectant wipes; at the moment we have spray bottles with paper towels. We hope to receive the wipes by the end of June or the middle of July. Regarding sanitizers: there will be stations in all of the buildings and we are continuing to assess where additional sanitizing stations should be added. We also have purchased cloth face coverings for the campus community who will be on campus.”

Mr. Caron expressed his confidence that the HVAC systems of the buildings are in good working order and that the ventilation and filtration of those systems will help reduce the airborne concentration of COVID-19. He also stated that the housekeeping staff is cleaning regularly in accordance with the CDC guidelines. They will be cleaning all high touch surfaces multiple times throughout the day.

Question – “What measures can we take to reduce the amount of cheating that is taking place during online exams? Can we have F2F proctored exams?”

Dr. Moreira – “We are discussing this option to see if it is viable.” He mentioned that many students may not be able to attend F2F classes and that the university would have to assess the risk. He reminded the Senate that the university is committed to lowering the density on campus and that scheduling in-person exams will bring more people onto campus.

Comment – “I just want to say that I’m really heartened by all of this planning and thank you to everyone for their efforts. It’s really impressive.”

Question – “Are we prioritizing students with poor Internet connectivity for access to housing? About ten percent of my students this past semester had trouble with accessing class discussions.”

Nancy Young – “One of our top priorities was to set aside a certain number of beds for students who did not have access to a viable learning environment.” She mentioned that they set these beds aside even before they began matching students’ requests for on-campus housing with their academic schedules.

Question – “Can faculty have access to our offices even if we are teaching online?”

Lynne Schaefer – “This is a question that has come up in the Fall Planning Coordinating Committee and we’re wrestling with it now. The goal here is to significantly lower the density on campus and to not have people coming and going at will.

This is a tough issue because I think we do have a lot of people who want to come back to their offices or their spaces and I think we’re going to have to think carefully about how we do any of that given the health and safety concerns of everyone including the people that want to come to campus.”

Question – “There’s been a lot of conversation about implementing shield glasses. Where will they be built and who’s going to be enforcing the mask wearing policy in classes and also when people are in shared places? Is it us (faculty)?”

Lenn Caron – “I can talk to the shield piece. We’ve provided some guidance which will be forthcoming to all departments as they put in their applications to request to come back to campus. Each department has to assess whether they think a custom shield or some sort of barrier in a work area is necessary. If a department decides that it needs one then it should put a work order into Facilities. We have identified several sources that appear to have the capacity to deliver these orders in a timely manner. These orders must be put in fairly soon.

President Smith noted the time and recognized that this is a robust conversation that we’ve initiated. She reiterated that all questions from senators will be answered.

Question – “Can you talk about how the role of testing and contract tracing for students who will be living on campus and any faculty and staff who will be on campus?”

Paul Dillon – “We have a Contact Response Team that has been meeting regularly and setting up our procedures and policies for dealing with positive cases on campus.” Mr. Dillon reminded the Senate that the CRT is not a contact tracing team because contact tracing falls under the county health department’s jurisdiction. What the CRT does is in response to the initial determination of a positive case on campus. For instance, if a student living on campus informs us that they are experiencing symptoms and that they attended a party over the weekend then we can be proactive by taking action immediately to protect the other students they came in contact with before the health department steps in. Facilities will also step in by disinfecting and cleaning areas where the infected person had been. In addition, if appropriate, Student Affairs can also move the student or students to quarantine rooms.

Mr. Dillon stated that in addition to these measures that we will take with students we also processes and procedures in the event that a faculty or staff member tests positive.

Question – “And the university will be running this testing for the students and the faculty and staff who discover that they are positive?”

Nancy Young – “We are still in discussion about this. There are two pilots running right now. One is at College Park, which is utilizing the testing resources of the University of Maryland Medical System. They have the capability of processing sixty thousand tests a day.” Dr. Young added that the current recommendation is to not test everyone because of the number of false positives that are incurred. The CDC and medical professionals recommend testing only when people are exhibiting symptoms or when there has been an outbreak or when there is a high likelihood that people have been exposed.

Dr. Young said that we are waiting for the results of the pilots to make a final decision about testing. There is also a temperature check pilot conducted via apps that may be used. In sum, we are exploring a variety of options, which could include testing water systems to see if there was an outbreak in a particular area of residence in the community.

Dr. Young added that UMB will be sharing this information with the university presidents on Wednesday, and they will be making final recommendations about the minimal standards we should be following under the CDC and also the maximum standards we can put in place without violating people’s privacy to make sure that our communities will be safer even that what the CDC recommends.

President Smith thanked the members of the FPCC for attending the meeting and reiterated that this is an ongoing discussion. She invited the senators who are interested to stay on the call after the meeting for an informal conversation with her and Dr. McDonough.

President Smith ended the meeting by thanking everyone for their time and the meeting adjourned at 4:47pm.