

**MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE MEETING, FEBRUARY 8, 2021**  
**THESE MINUTES SHOULD BE READ IN REFERENCE TO THE AGENDA OF THE DAY**

Present: Abraham, Berliner, Boston-Hill, Burnett, Caniano, Cassar, Ciani, Craig, Dimes, Dippel, DiStefano, Dougharty, Eads, Eliot, Ghorayeb, Heiss, Hernandez, Huang, Kinney, Lopez, Lotier, McElroy, McFadden, Osner, Seirup, Stark, Sunik, Tarson, Tomei, Tompkins,

Absent: Elkis-Abuhoff, Gounelas, Jazterzenski, Miller, Ortiz-Jimenez, Schlegel, Valerius

Guests: Ploran, St. Leger

I. The December 7, 2020 minutes were unanimously approved.

**II. Report of the Provost, Provost, Herman Berliner**

The Provost convened the meeting by reporting that although the spring semester started with a lot of snow, the community adjusted very well. He noted that we now have two common hours. The University Senate and Full Faculty meetings are utilizing the Monday Common Hour which will make the meetings more convenient.

The Provost reported on spring commencement. The hope is to try to be in person to the extent possible, as it is the commitment that we've made to students and it's important to honor that commitment. Chances aren't that great that we will be able to use the arena for any of our standard ceremonies because with social distancing, the occupancy of the arena becomes far smaller. If we choose to use the stadium, one alternative would be to have multiple commencements. However, using the stadium has some downsides with regard to weather:

- if it is an exceptionally hot day, it becomes extremely uncomfortable
- if it is raining or cold it can also be uncomfortable
- if there is thunder and lightning, we would have to end the ceremony immediately, as the stands are aluminum

Other possibilities may include renting the Nassau Coliseum which will allow us to have the kind of social distancing we need to have. However, if the New York Islanders are in the playoffs, and have home field advantage, it is conceivable that they may need the facility that Sunday. We should know by April whether the Coliseum is a possibility in May.

We could try to have one NYU style or Columbia style massive ceremony for the graduates where the president confers the degree on everyone, and then have individual school commencements with the smaller schools held in the arena, and larger ones in the stadium. Another possibility is having a virtual commencement for the audience, with an in-person commencement for the graduates.

At this time, the Provost would appreciate everyone's input.

For next fall, the Provost believes undergraduate classes should be in person to the extent possible. On the graduate level, and some advanced undergraduate courses, remote or hybrid can work very well, and we have accelerated the timetable for graduate being more remote and online. The student experience needs to be as full textured as it can possibly be.

### **III. Report of the Senate Executive Committee, William Caniano**

Prof. Caniano reported that he, and Michael Heiss, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, are continuing the process of designing an elite pre-collegiate summer academy and if anyone is interested in participating in the design or thinking about becoming an instructor for this to reach out to him. He also reported that he is looking for volunteers to populate an ad-hoc committee for continuing education and professional programming, which was discussed at the last Senate meeting. If anyone is interested or knows of anyone who has experience in this field, please let him know and he will reach out to them.

### **IV. New Business**

Jacqueline Cassar, the senator representing the Local 153 staff on campus, presented new business regarding the Bundy Aid, which provides unrestricted financial support to independent colleges and universities in New York State. At the February 4<sup>th</sup> New York state budget hearing, the governor proposed to eliminate the program. Private, not-for-profit colleges and universities use the funds for student aid and to enhance the educational experience on their campuses. Local 153 has been forthcoming with their support for the university, agreeing to an MOA which includes a four-day work week for most members until September 1, 2021. Eliminating this program could result in a loss of jobs and decrease in wages for Local 153 staff. She reported that the union is looking to form a coalition made up of unions that work at these private institutions and management and have reached out to Melissa Connolly, Vice President of University Relations. Prior to today's meeting, she learned that Vice President Connolly is aware of the proposed cuts and has been working on advocacy.

Elisabeth Ploran, President of the AAUP, added that she has been in touch with Vice President Connolly, who has planned advocacy calls with legislators in Albany this week. Some of those calls will include students who are receiving some of this aid, speak to the problem. In addition, Rebecca Natow, from the School of Education, does work in higher education policy and may be included on some of these calls.

The Provost reported that the university is very supportive of retaining the Bundy Aid for private education. It has been in place for decades and the state has already done a disservice as the Bundy Aid monies has stayed flat for years while the cost of education has increased. He reported that the university is making use of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU), which is the umbrella group for all private education in New York state in terms of advocating for the continuation of money for funding for Bundy. W. Houston Dougharty, Vice President for Student Affairs reported that his office has been working with Vice President Connolly to try and identify New York state students that are recipients of the aid. Jessica Eads, Vice President for Enrollment Management, reported that her office is also working with Vice President Connolly.

### **V. Committee Reports**

A. Christopher Eliot, chair of the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the committee met with Mitchell Kase, Associate Director of Instructional Design, and Joseph Bartollota, chair of the Special Committee on Educational Technology, to discuss ways EdTech is supporting faculty instruction online. The sense of the committee is that they are very impressed by the department's efforts and will continue to work with them as they begin to discuss ways of connecting faculty better with the best models of online instruction, as Hofstra faculty are implementing them, and to try and make those models more available.

- B. Michael Heiss, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, reported that the committee met over January break to review the special leave applications and recommend to the Provost's Office, as well as approve Emeritus Status for Cliff Jernigan. The committee is looking into a program to acknowledge excellence on campus regarding faculty separate from the current awards that are being offered.
- C. Kaylor Dimes, chair of the Student Affairs Committee, that last semester, the committee updated its bylaws to gain more of a connection with student governing bodies on campus that are recognized by the Office of Student Leadership and Engagement (OSLE). Over the winter break and within the past week she has met with four of the eight organizations and will meet with the remaining four within the next two weeks. From there the SAC will have more communication with student groups on campus.

Senator Rocco DiStefano reported that the Hofstra Racial Equity Council met twice over the break and has established its mission and vision which he shared in a pdf to Senate members. They are looking to act as liaison between the grassroots groups on campus, as well as to design and implement racial equity training for everyone on the campus. They have currently reached out to key people in the Diversity and Inclusion Office to establish themselves as a separate group on campus.

- D. Craig Burnett, chair of the Planning and Budget Committee, reported that the committee will meet next Monday to discuss a survey from the Environmental Priorities Committee and hopes to get it passed and brought to the University Senate in time for the next meeting.
- E. Kevin Boston-Hill, chair of the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the committee is looking to clean up any ambiguous language in the Repeat Course Policy forms so that just so that it matches up better with Faculty Policy Series #11 - Procedures for Handling Violations of Academic Honesty by Undergraduate Students at Hofstra University and other issues dealing with academic dishonesty. The committee will also discuss the Completion Ratio for academic probation to give students a better chance to progress within their studies. He reported that the committee will also review the possibility of expanding badge programs at the undergraduate level.

## **VI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.