

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

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

Absent: Cassar, Gounelas, Hirsch, Jasterzenski, Miller, Ortiz-Jimenez, Tompkins

Guests: Ploran

**I.** The February 8, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

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

The Provost convened the meeting by thanking Kaylor Dimes, chair of the Student Affairs Committee, for the excellent report that she and the committee put together on the student preferences in terms of commencement. The results were as follows:

- 20% of the students are in favor of a virtual commencement
- 20% of the students are in favor of an in-person commencement
- remaining students indicated they will try to attend an in-person commencement, even if it is just the graduating students

The Provost reported that the administration is working on an in-person commencement. If the state restrictions remain as they are now, it will be only for the graduates. The question remains what the university should do for the 20% of students who want a virtual commencement. Should there be a virtual ceremony in addition to the in-person ceremony? Melissa Connolly, Vice President of University Relations indicated it would take about eight weeks to put together a virtual ceremony. The Provost reported that after reading the report from the SAC, he feels we should do more than an in-person commencement and should also schedule a virtual ceremony. A discussion followed.

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

Prof. Caniano reported that he recently met with undergraduate senator, Mercedes Jasterzenski, and Public Safety to discuss the nighttime shuttle. They plan to set up an ad-hoc committee to discuss possible changes to how the nighttime is run, and updates to the current app that tracks it.

Prof. Caniano reported that he sits on the Committee of Diversity and Inclusion which met on March 4. They are in the process of organizing into subcommittees.

**IV. Committee Reports**

A. Christopher Eliot, chair of the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the committee found that the current bulletin accidentally prevents matriculated students doing badge programs from receiving scholarships and a number of other problems, so they proposed some fixed language in the badge study section. The committee is also working on a focus group for graduate students from a wide range of programs to figure out how graduate students might better be supported in their academic work. The committee is also working with Suzanne Pike, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, to figure out what practices might be

recommended to faculty for exam security. Finally, the committee members are working out promotional language to share with faculty for what benefits might be accrued from using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in the presentation of their courses, that which is to say benefits for all students who are who are taking courses online.

- B. Michael Heiss, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, reported that the committee is working on two recognition systems. One is regarding adjunct faculty and their specialty and their contributions to the University, which will be a separate award from the Teacher of the Year award that's associated with full-time faculty. They are creating an ad hoc committee of members to decide what kind of recognition system to come up with. The other recognition system for innovation on campus recognizing faculty on campus that are doing something innovative whether it be through technology instruction or something else. The committee is also considering other areas on campus to build on including an academic summer camp for high school students that are looking for advanced coursework in a field that they have demonstrated proficiency in, as well as working with the Continuing Education program which is being revamped.
- C. Kaylor Dimes, chair of the Student Affairs Committee, reported that as previously mentioned, she worked on the report for graduation, and the committee is working with Public Safety, through senator Jasterzenski on changes to the Hofstra nighttime shuttle. Ms. Jasterzenski will research peer schools that have these apps similar to what they would like at Hofstra.

Ms. Dimes reported that the committee has invited members of Student Government Association (SGA) to their meeting this week to continue work on an initiative to create some sort of resource guide for students to kind of know their resources online, what they can or can't use and what resources will still be available when the university moves towards more in person classes. They would like to get this information onto the portal.

Senator Rocco DiStefano reported that the Hofstra Racial Equity Council has met with Cornell Craig, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Gillian Atkinson, Director for Intercultural Engagement & Inclusion and are in the process of moving forward with racial equity training that would be proliferated through individual departments and provide a format and systems for each Department to provide racial equity training for their constituents. It would be a self-governing self-organized type of training. The process of creating the structure for this training will begin at some point next week. He reported that the council now has nine members representing administration, faculty and undergraduate students, and has reached out to graduate students as well, to include them in the process. Two events are scheduled. One is on March 23, in honor of South Africa's Human Rights Day which observes the murder of protesters against apartheid in 1960. The other is a convention style "Day of Understanding" currently planned for April 30.

Senator DiStefano reported that they are exploring the idea of making the Racial Equity Council an office committee of the University Senate, rather than a subsidy of the Student Affairs Committee, as they hope the discussions the council is currently having will continue after the members have graduated from Hofstra. Provost Berliner reported that they should send a recommendation to the chair of the Senate Executive Committee. A slight discussion followed.

- D. Craig Burnett, chair of the Planning and Budget Committee, reported that the committee reviewed a survey from the Environmental Priorities Committee and should have it approved for the Senate Executive Committee next month. The committee will facilitate the discussion previously mentioned about the nighttime shuttle and act as a liaison for the ad hoc committee and bring on a broader conversation with the entire P&B committee going forward. A discussion followed.
- E. Kevin Boston-Hill, chair of the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the committee considered the feasibility of creating a badge program for undergraduate students, but after careful consideration and in conversation, they thought that the overall purpose of badging, at least at least undergraduate level, was satisfied within the individual departments with their clustering of classes, as well as through our current minor programs and certification programs. While it may not work out at the undergraduate level at this juncture, it can be revisited sometime in the future, especially if it becomes something that students are really clamoring for. He also reported that the committee is in the process of cleaning up the language regarding the completion ratios because they noticed there were some students who are kind of adversely affected by it when it comes to probation, because they've actually done well in the classes that they've had to do well in, but because of the number of credit hours that that they had accumulated in relation to what they had to repeat, it was negatively affecting them.

## **VI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 p.m.