

Council of Faculty Representatives

APPROVED meeting minutes

Friday, March 22, 2024

Present: Praveen Sekhar (chair), Paul Bonamy, Laurie Drapela, Yijun He, Kristin Lesseig, Sam Lohmann, Kelsey Pascoe, Samantha Reisz, Aaron Whelchel.

Absent: Dene Grigar (vice chair)

Guest: Renny Christopher, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (VCAA)

Recorder: Lohmann

Discussion Items

1. Committee reports
 - a. Chancellor's Advisory Council (Lesseig). Updates on FAFSA problems causing nationwide delays on financial aid announcements; pros and cons of the One Application system. It makes it harder to predict the number of students who will come to WSU based on application numbers.
 - b. President's Committee on the Status of Women (Drapela). [Women of Distinction Luncheon](#) was held recently, with awards. The [Alumni Association Women's Leadership Summit](#) is coming up on April 5.
 - c. Institutional Climate Subcommittee (Drapela). Subcommittee is looking into work-from-home policies and working on a series of questions for Employee Engagement Survey related to working from home.
 - d. Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Salary Steps (Drapela). Drapela is finishing a draft of a report looking at faculty compensation at peer institutions.
 - e. Student Tech Fee Committee (Bonamy). They have submitted recommendations to the Chancellor for the year.
2. Discussion with VCAA Christopher
 - a. Budget.
 - i. VCAA's comments on budget process. Xe described their experience at a former position with Faculty Senate, including a practice of Zero-Based Budgeting. WSU follows a different approach using Permanent Budget Line or Base Budgets. At one time there was a process for distributing "One-Time Money" but due to enrollment decrease, there have been no new one-time funds to distribute since 2019. WSU Vancouver is now going through a cut-modeling process, with each unit projecting how it would handle 1%, 3%, and 5% cuts and submitting those to budget council.
 - ii. Timeline on budget cut proposals: Deadline for each unit's proposal is April 5th.

- iii. Question about parameters for units' cut proposals. VCAA comments that there are few options without eliminating positions. Around 90% of campus costs are for salaries. The guidance has been to avoid layoffs for permanently funded positions. This means cuts are being made to goods and services, travel funds, etc., and to adjunct positions. Xe stresses that Vancouver is not currently considering layoffs or non-renewal of contracts. Xe also acknowledges that people in adjunct positions are the group most affected by enrollment declines so far.
 - iv. WSU Vancouver's approach has been to eliminate positions by attrition rather than by layoffs. There are upcoming retirements in several units which will not be filled, or not filled in the same way (for instance, a staff position might be filled at a lower classification level).
 - v. Factors related to long-term planning, including the possible elimination of programs. VCAA notes that if there are tenured faculty in a program that exists on multiple campuses, it is unlikely that that program would be eliminated. If a program was eliminated, campus would be obligated to try to house tenured faculty in different programs.
 - vi. CFR members note that faculty can work with the academic coordinators for their programs to consider consolidation and allocation of courses. VCAA notes that some full professors will need to teach 100-level courses for the first time in a long time. There has also been some collaboration across units, for example an electrical engineering professor teaching physics.
- b. Shared Governance.
- i. VCAA's comments on shared governance structure.
 - 1. Budget Council is Chancellor, VCAA, and VCFO. VCAA sees the role of shared governance (including CFR) as setting values and guiding principles for cuts and resource distribution, rather than specific budget allocation.
 - 2. Faculty Senate is the recognized Shared Governance body for WSU, recognized by the Board of Regents. CFR does not have the same types of legislative powers. For example, due dates for midterm grades are part of Academic Regulations; Faculty Senate could vote to change these and submit that recommendation to board of regents, but CFR cannot.
 - ii. Question about which office FOEC and CFR were housed in historically. VCAA notes that since at least 2012 VCAA office has had closest interaction with CFR; the budget has been housed in the Academic Affairs office at least since then; work with CFR is written into the job description for VCAA. Xe does not have first-hand knowledge of why the FOEC bylaws mention funding from Chancellor's office and not VCAA office.

- c. Enrollment and retention.
 - i. Problems with FAFSA due to federal changes. This especially affects students whose parents and guardians are undocumented or not U.S. citizens (“mixed status families”). VCAA is especially worried about this since it will affect a large proportion of current and prospective students. Students still do not know what financial aid they can expect next year. WSU has changed deadlines to mitigate the situation.
 - ii. C-Tran has a plan to make WSU Vancouver the north terminus of a north-south rapid transit bus (The Vine).
 - iii. VCAA office is concerned about clustering of course offerings at popular times.
 - iv. New BS in Behavioral Health program is externally funded by the state and may bring a slight enrollment increase (estimated around 40 students).
- 3. Regarding Memo on CFR Funding
 - a. Chair asks each CFR member to email him regarding whether CFR Chair funding should come from Chancellor’s office or VCAA office.
 - b. Proposal to request a memo of understanding with the Chancellor’s office regarding funding and commitment to involve CFR in budget process and decision-making.
- 4. Debrief on Board of Regents listening session:
 - a. Chair of Regents began with a list of a Top 20 concerns. Regents were taking notes toward a summary of faculty concerns.
 - b. Discussion topics included: transparency of budget and decision making; relationships between Vancouver and Pullman Academic Units; effects of OneWSU rollout; library resources as a barrier to creation of a new program in Spokane; concerns about the impact on research if WSU System status were disaggregated by campus, especially if non-Pullman campuses were to lose R1 status; lack of transparency in how WSU’s legislative priorities are set by the President’s Office.

Action Items:

- 1. Bonamy: Send recommendations to Chair for draft memo of understanding.