

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Zoom Meeting ID 920 3685 0196

November 12, 2020 – 2:30pm

Approved Minutes

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee was called to order at 2:30pm on Thursday, November 12, 2020 in Zoom by President Laurie Rice.

Present: Laurie Rice, Jocelyn DeGroot-Brown, E. Duff Wrobbel, Keith Hecht, Jingyi Jia, Stephen Kerber, Marie Klopfenstein, Mike Shaw, Ezra Temko

Guests: Ann Popkess (UPBC)

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Announcements:

The next SIU Board of Trustees meeting will take place on December 3.

Consideration of Minutes:

The minutes for the October 22, 2020 meeting were approved as written.

Action Items:

There were no action items.

Unfinished Business:

The discussion of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Strategic Plan from the November Faculty Senate meeting was reviewed, including the discussion about diversity and defining that more fully. Recommendations from the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) may be a good place to start, however there is a desire to include sexism in the discussion. The Provost is working to get the ARTF recommendations online and available, which can help to build on what is already happening since not everyone is aware of what is being worked on. Jessica Harris will be invited to speak at the next Faculty Senate meeting, and a request for the ARTF information session video to be made available will be shared.

New Business:

The pre-tenure faculty are working on a letter that has also been shared with the Faculty Association. Issues noted include class sizes and the cumbersome tenure process. There is an impact on salary and tenure, and the negative impacts are not just affecting pre-tenure faculty. There is a desire to work with the Staff Senate on these issues because a large number of them are front line workers with similar impacts. There is a suggestion to push things back a year, but it would delay the ability of some people to get tenure and promotion so it would need to be optional. While easing some of the mid-point review documentation could help, it is important not to lose critical information.

Rice will be checking on the in-person requirement of the Open Meetings Act in light of University policy changes and increased regional mitigations.

Reports:

The University Planning and Budget Committee (UPBC) will be speaking with Doug McIlhagga and Rachel Stack at their next meeting. The continue to review operating papers, and a draft is in progress to bring the numbers down to 18 from 22 by eliminating the at-large memberships and one Faculty Senate representative. The non-tenure track position will not be specifically for the Faculty Association.

Curriculum Council reported that the Admissions Criteria Review Committee continues to work and may have a recommendation in time to move forward with it in January.

The Rules and Procedures Council is working on getting full membership on the reorganization committee.

The Welfare and Governance Council is finalizing the grievance policy for unrepresented faculty. The Provost and Ombuds will be present at their next meeting.

The Past President reported that the Academic Continuity Task Force (ACTF) met with the Chancellor's Council and the report was well-received.

The President posted a report which is attached.

There were no other reports.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Submitted by Anne Hunter, University Governance

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Zoom Meeting ID: 920 3685 0196, Password: chimega
<https://siue.zoom.us/j/92036850196>
Board Room, Morris University Center
November 12, 2020 – 2:30PM

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT***
- III. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- IV. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**
 - a. October 22, 2020
- V. ACTION ITEMS**
- VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - a. IBHE and Illinois Strategic Plan
- VII. NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Pre-Tenure Faculty and COVID-19 Pandemic
- VIII. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL CHAIRS**
 - a. UPBC – Ann Popkess
 - b. Faculty Development Council – Marie Klopfenstein
 - c. Curriculum Council – Keith Hecht
 - d. Rules & Procedures Council – Ezra Temko
 - e. Welfare and Governance Council – Steve Kerber & Jingyi Jia
 - f. Graduate Council – Mike Shaw
 - g. Past-President – Jocelyn DeGroot Brown
 - h. President-Elect – Duff Wrobbel
 - i. President – Laurie Rice
- IX. ADJOURNMENT**

*Due to Restore Illinois Phase 4 restrictions, the Faculty Senate is accepting public comments via email to encourage social distancing and safety. Submitted comments will be read aloud during the meeting and added to the minutes. Please submit any comments to the University Governance Office at anhunte@siue.edu prior to the start of the meeting. Meetings will be accessible via Zoom, and login information is included in the agenda.



Dear Provost:

We are writing this letter to express our deepest concerns about the way the University is handling teaching responsibilities for junior faculty members in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic. As junior faculty working within the teacher-scholar model where critical thinking is the goal for our student population, we find that the increased service demands, class sizes, mentoring demands, and responsibility of preparing different classes each week are challenging. As junior colleagues seeking to advance our careers towards tenure, we are facing unique challenges and we feel that the University could do more to promote.

Statement of the Problem:

Classes Sizes and Critical Thinking:

Considering the current global pandemic and the abrupt transition from traditional face to face courses to a fully online structure, the reality is that very often class sizes are too large to adequately teach critical thinking. The course sizes as they exist reflect pre-COVID enrollment of students in a face to face setting. Having 35-50 students in an online class is untenable if you hope to foster discussions and manage lots of writing assignments. Further, we firmly believe that critical thinking on controversial topics of the day- politics, critical race theory, the Black Lives Matter movement, protests, etc. - are impossible to teach without engaging students in discussions or short writing assignments.

In regards to testing, Multiple choice questions are useful for some, but not when it comes to engaging students in deeper thinking on current issues. When we have more than 25 students in our classes, we cannot adequately monitor and engage with discussion boards. We find ourselves drowning in grading and emails (on top of the work of moving lectures and other materials online) - meaning that we are not able to provide timely feedback.

We do not believe that online education needs to be of lower quality than face to face. Now more than ever, quality education that focuses on critical thinking, especially around social problems, should remain a central focus. This scope of education is vital if we hope to foster citizens who can make the changes we need regarding the twin concerns of economic and health crises. However, if class sizes remain too large, we will not be able to give the students the attention they need and deserve.

Mentoring:

The reality is our students have a wide range of lived experiences and are directly affected by the complex series of events that are happening. More specifically, some of our students are facing extremely difficult situations both economically and socially. Economically, students have increased challenges at work, either losing jobs which place them in economically vulnerable situations or being considered an essential worker that puts them at risk of COVID. Socially, students are being asked to caretaker family members and others affected by COVID. Furthermore, many of our students are deeply affected by the shooting and murder of unarmed Black men and women at the hands of police. Our mentorship provides safety for students. As no conversation is off limits, we have been involving ourselves in significant emotional work and

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we feel this should be acknowledged as some of the most critical duties and responsibilities of our service.

Scholarship Concerns:

We are concerned about achieving tenure and promotion. The pandemic has made certain types of research more difficult or impossible to conduct. For instance, some research involves traveling to other cities and/or states, engaging with large institutions that are now inaccessible, and/or completing ethnographic research via participant observation. With the current restrictions via the pandemic, much of our methodological approaches to conduct data have been severely limited, if not, outright deprived. With closures and restrictions across numerous states, not to mention, the health risks involved with the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers are encouraged to conduct their research agendas in some risky and potentially life-threatening situations to meet the demands of the tenured clock.

Furthermore, the Trump administration's hostility towards science, news media, and indeed truth and transparency itself, has made FOIA requests impossible to attain - either through flat out refusal or through exorbitant fees and bureaucratic red tape. Leaving social scientists, historians, epidemiologists, and other researchers who do the important work of digging through government documents struggling to complete their research projects.

Family/Work Balance:

On top of issues accessing our data and research sites, many of us are struggling to balance caretaking for sick relatives and children. This is in addition to the hours of work moving our classes online and the existing demands to complete our research and service requirements. We know that caring for children as well as people who are sick or disabled falls disproportionately at the feet of women. We also know that this crisis has disproportionately impacted Black and immigrant families - with devastating death and illness rates as well as the potentially crippling chronic conditions and medical debt.

If we hope to create and promote a more diverse faculty work force, we must attend to the ways in which white women and BIPOC faculty have been disproportionately impacted by this crisis.

Statement of Solutions:

The University has offered, as a solution, the potential to delay tenure by a year. While this may seem like an equitable solution on paper, tenure and promotions impact salaries. Earlier or later tenure and promotion come with salary bumps or losses that have a cumulative impact all the way through a person's career and retirement. Basically, the delaying tenure option puts white women and BIPOC at a disadvantage relative to their more privileged counterparts – men, people without children, and white colleagues. A disadvantage which will reverberate through the person's life course and impact the next generation.

Lowering Class Sizes:

First, we strongly believe that online class sizes need to be lowered. Classes that are too large impact our ability to teach critical thinking and limit the time that we can dedicate to our research, service, and families.



Summer Stipends/Course Releases:

Second, offering junior faculty other support like summer stipends to do research and course releases will help faculty to manage research, service and family demands.

Removing Bureaucratic Hurdles:

Third, remove some of the bureaucratic hurdles that take up our time and energy as we prepare our tenure portfolios. For instance, we could make midpoint reviews less time consuming and more humane by limiting the review to a conversation with your chair rather than a full committee. Alternatively, we could submit the first three years of annual reviews - rather than a full midpoint portfolio review.

In conclusion, the pandemic has brought to the surface many structural inequalities in our society. This is as true in the academy as anywhere else. We need institutions of higher learning now more than ever in order to foster citizens who are willing and able to think critically about these structural issues. If we are going to do this effectively, we need a diverse workforce in academia and we need to protect and promote that workforce. This requires some critical thinking on the part of the institution and solutions which do not further entrench existing inequalities.

President's Report to FSEC

November 12, 2020

Meetings

November 2: Provost

Topics discussed included what's next for the Antiracism Taskforce recommendations, election related concerns, Covid-19 testing, and the challenges faculty are facing conducting research during the pandemic.

November 4: Enrollment Management Starfish Leadership Session

Focus group on the student success landscape and SIUE's capacity and readiness to support our student success goals.

November 11 4pm: KPI Working Group 2

Discussed committee's charge and set potential timeline. Reviewed data on persistence, retention, and graduation rates for new freshman, transfers, and by gender and by race and ethnicity.

Upcoming Meetings include:

November 16: Diversity Council

November 17: Constituency Heads

December 3: Board of Trustees

December 10: University Quality Council