

Unapproved Minutes
Chairs' Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, February 18, 2021

In Attendance: Dr. Kimball, Dr. Sherman, Ms. Fitzsimmons, Dr. Coym, Dr. Ward, Dr. Tatom, Dr. Harrington, Dr. Messenger, Dr. Mulekar, Dr. ter Horst, Dr. Moore, Dr. Meeker, Dr. Powers, Dr. Sanders, Dr. Habel, Dr. Shelley-Tremblay, Dr. Hanks, Dr. Loomis, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Wierzbicki

Absent: None

Guests: Mr. Christopher Hansen, Chief Compliance Officer; Dr. Raj Chaudhury, Executive Director, Innovation in Learning; MAJ. Brigg Sturgis, Military Science; LTC. Clifford Franklin, Air Force Studies

1. The minutes of the December 3, 2020, Chairs' Meeting were approved.
2. Mr. Chris Hanson discussed Conflict of Interest. Dr. Wierzbicki introduced the subject by stating that the policy has been updated by implementing an electronic system to disclose conflict of interest and an external professional activity disclosure. Chairs play a role in completing this by certifying disclosures and approving/disapproving conflict management resolutions. The conflict disclosure submissions are due by March 11, 2021, and the complete review of the disclosures are due by April 2021. Mr. Hansen explained how the chairs can access and submit disclosures and answered questions.
3. Dr. Raj Chaudhury discussed Start South and Early College. He announced that the Strategic Course Design mini course (March Madness) will be held March 1st-26th, 2021, and that the Conference on Teaching and Learning will be held on May 12, 2021. Regarding Start South, he began by thanking everyone who offered their courses and faculty for the dual-enrollment courses. He stated that the ILC would like to gauge what courses can be offered and to try to get MCPSS to commit students to take the courses as early as possible. In the summer, the early college courses will be an option (100-200 level that offer general college credit that should transfer to most four-year colleges). The ILC plans to put together a portfolio of about six to eight courses to present to the schools. The Start South coordinator, Alice Abernathy, will be the contact person to get information to the schools. The cost to the student will be \$500 for a 3-credit course. Books will be an additional expense. The courses that will be offered will be those that are already slated for USA students, so as not to require additional resources or faculty members, and will use the blended format. Dr. Chaudhury then discussed the shift/management of remote instruction. Phase two of the "lecture-capture" rollout has started. They are up to ten rooms currently. He has started collecting information on additional rooms that were not on the initial list of rooms for lecture-capture equipment. Chairs were asked to send in requests within the next seven days to Dr. Coleman, regarding classrooms needing technology enhancements. A consultant will walk through the rooms to make sure everything has been set-up properly. Regarding course re-design templates, Dr. Chaudhury said the ILC has created templates to make it easier. It is now possible to have external professional instructional designers assist with the re-design. The process takes about one month to design one course.
4. Dr. Wierzbicki went over the spring 2021 enrollment. The University lost 417 undergraduates, about 4.82%, but gained 156 graduate students. The College gained 22 (about 10.43%) graduate students, but lost 261 undergraduate students (a 2% loss). We are still carrying over losses from the fall semester. In the fall semester, A&S lost 181 undergraduates which was about 7.38%. Enrollment services is doing a tremendous job stabilizing the enrollment, and are expecting a much larger freshman class. The A&S Communication Director is doing an outstanding job targeting students. There will be a big postcard initiative. The postcards will be sent to Chairs for review.
5. The budget update as of January 31, 2021 was reviewed. There were still discrepancies in some departments' operating budgets due to the Business Office incorrectly charging salaries. This directly affects the Math/Stat, Psychology, and Art and Art History departments. The Business Office promises to fix these issues. The Departments have around \$2.5 million in reserve accounts. There is roughly \$681,000.00 in the supplemental accounts, \$250,000.00 in overhead funds, \$530,000.00 in professorship funds, \$364,000.00 in start-up funds, and \$675,000.00

in student fees. The Dean urged Chairs to use the student fees according to their designation. The second portion of the foundation money for travel has not yet been transferred to the College. Once received, the A&S Departments will get these funds for travel. Supplemental funds have been transferred to departmental accounts for the Chairs to manage departmental needs and/or travel needs.

6. Dr. Wierzbicki discussed the COVID Student Survey. Only 14% responded (about 1,000 students), regarding the conversion to online courses due to COVID and the expectations from the student body. Students would like to return to a sense of normalcy as soon as possible with campus-life experiences and regular, in-person classes. Overall, students appreciated the response of the University and the safety protocols implemented. They were happy with how quickly the University converted in-person courses to online courses. They felt that extra help was needed with online classes because the quality of the classes was not what most students desired. Also, students wanted to have targeted counseling outreach for grief and traumatic loss. Dr. Loomis added that many students were upset with instructor-student communication. Chairs were encouraged to address this with faculty members who receive that response in their teaching evaluations.
7. The Departmental Assessment was discussed. Dr. Angela Coleman proposes that the submission of Departmental Assessment will be aligned closely with end of the academic year's submission of the FARs. This change would help eliminate more work later on. Dr. Coleman stated that this would basically replace the department assessment. He and Dr. Wierzbicki recommended to Angela Coleman that there will be a series of questions to which the Chairs will provide narrative responses, and these responses will come to the Dean's office.
8. Dr. Wierzbicki discussed the Fall 2021 Schedule and Class Formats. The Chairs were asked to remind their faculty to not deviate from the class format posted on the schedule. There have been requests for tuition and housing refunds due to deviations. Any format changes must be approved before any change can be made. The plans are to return to pre-COVID class formats for the fall semester. However, everyone must have an emergency plan in place in case social distancing is once again required. Dr. Loomis mentioned that the WH and WR formats are being removed for fall and will not be offered. However, they are still options for summer. If a faculty members requests to teach WR in the summer, the requests will have to be approved by the Dean. Dr. Wierzbicki commented that our projected freshman enrollment for the fall semester is up by 24%, freshman applications are up by 31%, acceptance rates are up by 44%, fall transfers are up by 30%, and tours and individual visits to campus are up 40%. Undergraduate applications are up by 100 each from the Mobile and Baldwin county school systems. The incoming freshman class is expected to have a growth of about 15%. Dr. Loomis pointed out that part of the increase in freshman enrollment is due to the University admitting more test-optional students who may subsequently need more support with Composition and Math 100-level classes.
9. Dr. Wierzbicki reviewed the Sponsored Activity Update. Faculty members in the College have received 15 awards this year versus 10 last year with 36 submissions this year versus 30 last year. The College has received \$913,739.00 this year versus \$1,050,287.00 last year with a difference of about \$146,548.00. The Dean expects a few large grants to come in from Psychology, Meteorology, and Marine Sciences. He asked chairs to encourage faculty to be on a constant lookout for funding.
10. Dr. Wierzbicki went over faculty contracts. For 9-month faculty with two or more years of service, notice of termination must be submitted to the Dean's Office by April 30, 2021. The same deadline is set for 12-month faculty with two or more years of service. For 12-month faculty with one year of service, notice of termination must be submitted by May 10, 2021. Annual contracts will go out by May 3, 2021.
11. Dr. Wierzbicki reminded the chairs that FARs are due on April 23, 2021. Signed narrative evaluation letters for non-tenured tenure-track faculty members are due by April 12, 2021. The annual reports are due on May 14, 2021. Mid-probationary reviews are due on March 12, 2021. If a mid-probationary review has been submitted, an annual review is not required for that faculty member.
12. Maymester contracts are due by March 19, 2021, and are to be sent to Ms. Krista McCreery. Chairs need to submit the instructors name, course, section number(s), number of credit or contact hours, and specify the part of the term (Maymester, 1st, 2nd, or full term). No faculty member can teach more than two courses during the summer terms.

13. A program review reminder was given by Dr. Coleman. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness wants significant student feedback about student learning and plans to improve student performance. Anthropology, Chemistry, History (B.A. and M.A.), Modern and Classical Languages and Literature, and Psychology (B.A. and M.S.) will be undergoing program review next fall. Dr. Cara Mia Braswell will have orientation meetings with all of the Chairs this summer concerning program review for next year. If Chairs would like to meet with her sooner, let her know. External reviews must be completed by May 2021. Reviewers are compensated by the Dean's office.
14. Dr. Coleman gave an assessment update. Dr. Braswell has gone through the assessment results from last fall and has identified the changes that need to be made. Dr. Coleman told Chairs that he has a summary of the changes recommended for each department. Changes are to be made by March 4, 2021.
15. Dr. Coleman discussed the online employee annual fund campaign. Everyone should have received an email from the Development Office. Options for contributions may be selected online as payroll deduction, credit card, or a check. He asked Chairs to assist their department's representative by reminding faculty that there will be no envelopes for donation. This is a great opportunity for faculty, staff, and retirees to support scholarships or to create new scholarships. The Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative is still matching scholarships contributions dollar for dollar. The deadline is March 24, 2021.
16. Dr. Coleman discussed the Faculty Activity Report. He reminded the Chairs that they are to create the narrative for the FARs and that the reports are to be in A.P.A. style. He then went over the guidelines and rules for submission.
17. Dr. Loomis reminded the Chairs about the Annual/Mid-Probationary Reviews. He asked that each Chair send him a list of the members of their department's mid-probationary review committee so that he can give them Digital Measures access to each candidate's material. He then went over the protocol for the reviews and reminded them that they will be sending the Dean two electronic copies of each review. One is called application.pdf, which is prepared by the candidate and includes the candidate's Digital Measures report. The other is called reviews.pdf, which includes both the department committee's and the Chair's review.
18. Dr. Loomis announced that the deadline to submit changes for the round two revision of the 2021-2022 Bulletin is February 22, 2021.
19. The Office of Adult Learner Services is interested in exploring the possibility of fully-online degrees with particular interest in adult learners. If Chairs decide to offer online degrees, they will have to support fully-online instruction for every incoming class on an ongoing basis. If interested, Dr. Loomis can get them in contact with Dr. Paige Vitulli and Mr. Bob Charlebois.
20. Dr. Loomis discussed a proposed grade forgiveness policy. The Student Success Team has asked for input from the colleges. The proposal would replace our current grade replacement policy with a real grade forgiveness policy. Under the proposal, current USA students would be eligible to request the deletion of up to 12 credit hours of course grades that are D's or F's. The courses have to be USA courses and requests must be made prior to graduation. Students requesting forgiveness must meet all major requirements for graduation. Three potential advantages to the proposal are that students can potentially save time and money and avoid further damage to their GPAs from receiving a lower grade after repeating a course. Second, students who may just have a bad semester and want to have that semester's grades wiped out will not have to sit out for a whole year and ask for academic bankruptcy. Third, students who change majors due to doing poorly in a particular course for a specific major (e.g. Math 112) can have that grade forgiven by replacing it with the grade of a particular course required by their new major (e.g. Math 110). There could still be potential problems with this proposal, and Chairs were asked for their input.
21. Dr. Loomis went over the New Student Orientation and Advising Feedback. The model for advising and orientation used for the fall semester will likely be used for spring and summer.
22. Dr. Loomis went over the A&S Support and Development Awards Criteria and Ongoing Requests. The A&S Support and Development Awards Committees, over the past few years, have been unsure of the intent of the award. The consistent problem reported is that, on the one hand, the intended purpose seems to be for the support of faculty development, including faculty research travel. On the other hand, the funds can be intended to cover the cost of

bringing in guest speakers, which may, or may not, support individual faculty development. He asked if the chairs thought that SDA should be re-written to be focused on individual faculty projects, or if they are comfortable having department colloquia, for example, being the kind of event that can also be supported by the SDA. The Chairs supported the inclusion of the latter into the SDA criteria, provided that the proposed visitors would contribute to the research activities of one or more faculty members in the department through their presentations or collaborations with faculty while on campus.

23. Dr. Wierzbicki announced that the A&S Spring 2021 Commencement will be held 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 8, 2021 at the Mitchell Center. The social distancing format will be observed, and students will be allowed to invite a limited number of guests. Dr. Wierzbicki asked Chairs to submit recommendations for faculty and student speakers to him by the end of March 2021.
24. There was no other business.