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FSEC Minutes August 22, 2022

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Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

August 22, 2022

1:00 - 3:00 PM

MINUTES

In person - Pastore Conference Room RM224

Remote Option: via ZOOM -

1. Call to order - President Rice called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Senators Maier Speredelozzi, Gindy, Echevarria and Nassersharif were present.
2. Guest: Karlis Kaugars - IT Resources/other IT policies discussion. The FS President and Vice President noted that CIO Kaugars had been invited to address concerns related to the rapid promulgation of new IT policies. Concerns include the fact that faculty members are heavy users of IT resources but new policies are being pushed without input from faculty about the potential implications. All members of the community desire to comply with the policies but struggle to do so when there is quick implementation with little notice or training. Further, the University's new security systems require a robust consent agreement which implies that all information, including personal and confidential information, may be screened without further notice or permission. This is problematic in a couple of ways. First, not all faculty members have access to a University provided device and are using personal devices to do University business. Even faculty members with university computers find themselves using personal devices in certain situations. Screening of devices in these cases seems like an overreach. Secondly, for faculty involved in projects or research requiring a security clearance or other vetting for confidentiality purposes, some assurance should be provided that the IT personnel involved in screening have equivalent clearances.

CIO Kaugars explained the rationale behind the rapid roll-out of several policies and it is related to the University's cyber-security insurance requirements. Hard and fast deadlines are in place if the organization is to remain insurable. Regarding screening, the

University does not have the resources to and would not want to continuously monitor network use but needs to have an activity audit trail. Anything accessed via an @uri.edu account is in the University's cache. All IT employees have standard BCI checks but secure information is not viewable to "rank and file" employees and such access is confined to personnel with appropriate clearances. The University has a goal of providing all personnel with a University computing device (possibly as "virtual" devices) but has not hit that target quite yet. Cell phones are also of concern because faculty often use their phones as a work tool. Faculty should be aware that any time they use the University's secure wifi or VPN, their activity is observable. And even when not using the University's network, if a personal device, including a phone, is used to access any University system (Brightspace, an @uri email account, etc.), that activity is visible to the IT Department. While it is true that everyone participating in modern life is likely being monitored (by Google, Apple, Verizon, etc.), much of that activity is Federally regulated in terms of what can be collected, retained and shared. At the hyper-local level within the University, that regulatory framework is more nebulous and people are unsure and therefore sometimes suspicious about what information is being viewed and stored. It is also starting to feel to some faculty like the University is becoming a place that is surrounded, from a technology standpoint, by a "barbed wire fence" which seems to run counter to encouraging an open and creative, collaborative academic environment. CIO Kaugars affirmed that dealing with insurance requirements and reacting to cyber-security threats are tedious and bureaucratic tasks and he and his department would rather spend time on more strategic initiatives. But the real threat against the community is so great in the current moment that the subject policies and similar measures must be a priority.

FSEC members suggested that messaging and communication around the IT policies should be bolstered to augment everyone's understanding of the intent behind the recent policies and the logistics of how they are being implemented and to help increase compliance. CIO Kaugars offered to attend - or assign a member of his team to attend -

future Senate meetings and/or all-College or similar meetings to get the word out about the importance of securing the University's IT resources and to answer specific questions about device and system use.

3. Announcements

- a. Presidential Inauguration plans for September 22 are well underway to include main events in Edwards Auditorium.
- b. The provost search is well underway with three finalists being considered by the search committee. Finalists will be brought to campus for interviews. There is some frustration among faculty members related to a lack of transparency in the search, although FSEC members conceded it is difficult to protect the privacy rights of candidates in a more open process.
- c. There was a meeting with Interim Provost Beauvais and Vice Provost Veeger on August 18. Topics discussed were: the Faculty Senate Budget, the recently Covid-19 protocols for the fall semester, the initiative to revise the Student Handbook (including clarity on student grievance process), the university's strategic plan and associated budget restructuring. There was a discussion about the need to consider streamlining of curricular processing w/o the loss of appropriate stakeholder input. The importance of ongoing efforts to revise the University Manual. The section that mentions faculty status (e.g. lecturers & teaching professors was given as an example). Perhaps a more contemporary technology may allow for online search functions. The use of Quali as a potential platform should be explored.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. FSEC minutes for August 9, 2022 - the minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

5. Old Business

- a. Update on General Education Committee Revisions - potential legislation for adding expertise to the GEC. Continued to the next meeting for further discussion. Members agreed that a more structured and formal relationship with

the GenEd Assessment team and the Office for Advancement of Teaching and Learning should be fostered but it does not seem to require actual additional committee membership. Specific language for the Manual will be forthcoming.

b. University Manual Maintenance -

i. A Manual section has been proposed for Chapter 11, Section 10 of the Manual, "Procedures for Changing the Manual." Specifically, a new Section 11.10.17 was proposed by the VP of Administration's policy team. FS VP Nassersharif suggested revisions to the language which were further refined by Senator Echevarria. The revised language more closely follows the prescribed legislative process whereby amendments are reviewed by the relevant committee(s) and then put to a vote. The language will be referred to CBUM for further review and refinement.

ii. Section 11.10.16 of the Manual refers to a maintenance schedule that has been developed. The schedule was reviewed as proposed for web page publication and approved unanimously.

6. Discussion Items

a. Graduate Teaching Assistant Policies - The Dean of the Graduate School wanted to make the Faculty Senate aware that the current policy about TA assignments is dated "2018 - 2022" and it will be revised this Fall. The various Colleges should consider how they are affected and be ready to weigh in on draft policy revisions in the near future.

b. Incomplete Grades - Enrollment Services Advisory Council moves amendment/addition to Chapter 8, Sections 53.20 through 53.24 of the University Manual. FSEC members noted other institutions already have language about clearing incomplete grades and this should proceed as quickly as possible. A motion was made and seconded to pass the draft to CBUM for review in hopes they will advance it to the full Senate for action in the very near future. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Dean of Students Dan Graney has requested that FSEC provide nominees to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee (per UM 5.73.10 - 4.73.13). It was agreed that last year's members would be asked first if they are willing to continue on. Several other names were suggested in case additional members are needed. Staff will reach out directly to determine who is willing and able to serve.
7. Action Items
 - a. FSEC Meeting Schedule For Fall, 2022: Set for Wednesday Mornings 8:30 - 10:30 AM. Staff to send calendar appointments and reminders.
 - b. Program Review Committee backlog of reviews. The review process and timeline were discussed and it was noted that while the program reviews are behind schedule, trying to play catch up at this point could overwhelm a soon-to-be new Provost. It was suggested that the APRC work with the Provost's office to come up with a completely new schedule based on reasonable expectations and a steady and staggered flow. It was further suggested that a two-year cycle for program review is simply too much and the structure itself should be reconsidered. With adequate planning, the Provost's office could probably budget for some additional summer contracting money and then faculty could be recruited to help with this task next summer to help clear the current backlog and reset the cycle.
8. Call for New Business - None
9. Adjournment - the meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.