



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Board of Trustees
Educational Programs Committee
August 12, 2020
Virtual Meeting
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Kenneth Bradley, chair of the Educational Programs Committee, called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m. Committee members Vice-Chair Caryl McAlpin, Trustee Joseph Harrington, and Trustee Sabrina La Rosa were present. Board of Trustees Chair Beverly Seay and Trustee David Walsh were also in attendance.

MEETING MINUTES

The June 17, 2020, meeting minutes were submitted for approval. The motion to approve was made by Vice-Chair McAlpin, and Trustee Harrington seconded. The committee unanimously approved the minutes as written.

REPORTS

Inspirational Spotlight

Vice-Chair McAlpin reflected on the person who has been most inspirational to her. She spoke about her father and all the great life gifts that he bestowed on the entire family.

Provost Update

Interim Provost Michael Johnson provided the provost update, beginning with the fall return-to-school plans and efforts to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic as safely and carefully as possible. Provost Johnson presented the plan for a return to a degree of on-campus teaching based on two priorities: providing a high-quality educational experience for students, including a campus academic community, and protecting the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. The university has concentrated on providing those courses on campus that are most needed to be taught face-to-face for graduation.

He also underscored that offering an on-campus experience is important to the academic success of first-year students. He noted that the library, student spaces, food services, and other services that students may need will be open, and in some cases, with limited hours. With this opening will be the requirement to wear facial coverings and maintain physical distancing throughout campus.

Because of the requirements of physical distancing, Johnson explained that there would be a relatively small number of on-campus courses. Around a quarter of sections will have an on-campus component, these are necessarily smaller classes with fewer students spread out in larger rooms. It also means a smaller fraction of student credit hours will be generated from face-to-face courses. This fall, about 11 percent of student credit hours will be delivered face-to-face compared to 70 percent in an ordinary semester. About a fourth of the students will have at least one on-campus class, compared to 81 percent in a typical semester. To look at this another way, typically the busiest class hours have around 18,500 students in classrooms, this fall that number will be approximately 3,300.

Johnson explained that UCF invested more than \$5 million in infrastructure and safety measures in preparation for the fall return of students, faculty, and staff to campus. These include installing 1,200 touchless hand-sanitizing stations; providing free facial coverings for all students, faculty, and staff; upgrading filters in HVAC systems; additional classroom cleaning; and providing more than 500 Plexiglas panels in classrooms and other key areas.

He also provided information on the campaign underway to help students understand the importance of wearing face coverings and practicing physical distancing and hand washing. We will make certain faculty understand that noncompliant students should be told to leave classrooms. We are prepared to use the disciplinary process if need be to help people understand how critical their behavior is in this process and to limit the spread of the COVID-19.

Interim Provost Johnson went on to outline other topics related fall return to campus, including:

- Student registration is trending just above the same date last year (2.3 percent, with a record number of FTIC students for now). There is a chance that more students than typical will change their plans. This will be known at the September 4, 2020, due date for tuition payment.
- Task forces have prepared recommendations for faculty, including new syllabus language, to help manage classes this fall.
- Faculty are asked to be prepared to accommodate students who fall ill or who will need to be isolated. Faculty members have also been asked to be familiar with and understand some of the technological solutions provided by the Center for Distributed Learning.
- The Faculty Senate recently surveyed faculty to gauge their thoughts about the fall semester. There is considerable discomfort; for example, when asked whether they felt comfortable returning to campus this fall, more than 60 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat disagreed. Their chief concerns were exposure to COVID and potentially infecting others.

The Provost recognizes faculty with high-risk conditions may request for accommodations to assure their safety. He said UCF must also fulfill its responsibility to student success: We know that an on-campus experience is critical to student success. Johnson said he did not believe it is possible for UCF to base on-campus teaching entirely on faculty preference, and still fulfill its responsibility to advance student success.

He summarized his remarks on fall planning by emphasizing that the university's plans are contingent upon what happens with health conditions, of course. If case numbers grow beyond what we can handle – if the testing or tracing systems, or the hospitals – become unable to meet demand, then we are prepared to pivot teaching more courses online or going fully remote. Flexibility is key.

Provost Johnson concluded his update sharing other university news:

- UCF broke the \$200 million mark in research funding for the first time in school history, collecting \$204 million. This excludes CARES Act funding.
- This marks the fourth year in a row that we have set a new school record for research funding. Congratulations to our faculty, Vice President for Research Liz Klonoff, and the staff supporting our researchers for this outstanding achievement.

Trustee Joseph Harrington was recognized. In the past week, the Faculty Senate met to discuss the campus re-opening plan. Trustee Harrington presented the findings of a recent faculty survey, Faculty Senate committee research on the pandemic, and concerns the faculty had regarding returning to campus.

Trustee Harrington relayed the faculty's desire for the following:

- That faculty be able to choose their teaching modality (in-person, virtual etc.),
- That faster identification of positive COVID-19 cases be available, and
- That testing results should take no longer than two days as stated in the contract with the testing company.

Trustee Harrington then moved that the Committee and the Board instruct the administration to work with the faculty to develop a credible, science-based set of criteria that would compel us to go to online instruction to protect the Central Florida as well as our own community without limiting the option to go online by our own judgment.

Trustee McAlpin seconded the motion for discussion.

Chair Bradley iterated all parties – students, faculty, staff and administration – have the same goal: to provide the best education in the safest way possible for everyone. Chair Bradley asked Trustee Harrington about the faculty participation in the re-opening plan approved by the Board of Trustees in June. What has changed for the faculty since then? Trustee Harrington responded faculty had been involved in those plans and had requested that closing criteria be developed and that more aggressive testing be done. Since that time, the pandemic had reached new levels in Florida, causing more concern. Chair Bradley asked several other questions, which both Trustee Harrington and Provost Johnson responded.

Provost Johnson discussed the ongoing dialogue the faculty and administration have had to address faculty concerns about in-person education.

Trustee David Walsh was recognized by the chair and asked: "Based on the criteria suggested; what time and place will return be appropriate?"

A specific question was discussed: If a faculty member has received a fall class assignment to teach in-person but now has personal health or family concerns, what accommodation can be made? Provost Johnson discussed the dual need to help keep faculty safe and for students to receive the courses in the way they have registered for them. A process has been created for faculty to ask the provost directly for adjustments due to health and safety concerns. This process has been reviewed by Human Resources and the General Counsel's Office, along with being reviewed for its agreement with the faculty contract. This process so far has been utilized by fewer than 15 faculty members. The provost is personally working with concerned faculty.

President Alexander Cartwright and Provost Johnson added that the current path for the fall could be revised dependent on circumstances. Keeping students and faculty safe are the utmost concern.

General Counsel Scott Cole said since the UCF reopening plan has already been approved by the Board of Governors, additional information could be required before approving the motion.

Chair Beverly Seay encouraged all parties to get together to resolve the issue at the administrative level.

After further discussion, Vice-Chair McAlpin withdrew her second. The motion subsequently failed for lack of a second.

NEW BUSINESS

2020 SUS Textbook and Instructional Material Affordability Annual Report (EPC-1)

Dr. Theodora Berry, along with Dr. Melody Bowdon, submitted this annual approval item to the committee. House Bill 7019 passed during the 2016 Legislative Session and was signed into law by Governor Scott on April 14, 2016 (Chapter 2016-236, Laws of Florida). An amendment to Section 1004.085 regarding textbook and instructional materials affordability requires each university to submit an annual report by September 30 of each year to the chancellor of the State University System.

The report addresses the following:

- (1) required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials for general education courses;
 - (2) specific initiatives of the university designed to reduce the costs of textbooks and instructional materials,
 - (3) university policies for the posting of textbooks and instructional materials.
- Proposed University Regulation UCF-2.032 Textbook Affordability is pending approval by the Board of Trustees.

Approval of this regulation will initiate a change to the number of days for textbook adoption from 45 to 60 days.

Trustee Harrington motioned to approve, and Trustee LaRosa seconded. The committee unanimously approved 2020 SUS Textbook and Instructional Material Affordability Annual Report.

Potential establishment of UCF Geospace Research Program (EPC-2)

This item was presented to the committee by Dr. Elizabeth Klonoff and; it was also an information item for Finance and Facilities committee meeting. Dr. Klonoff explained to the committee that this is an opportunity for UCF to bring in a worldwide leading research group in Geospace Studies and enhance our planetary sciences and space research efforts at the University of Central Florida. According to Klonoff, approval of this item would allow UCF to work in California and collaborate, collaborating with SRI International (formally Stanford Research Institute), a nonprofit California corporation founded by Stanford University in 1946.

Trustee McAlpin motioned to approve, and Trustee Harrington seconded. The committee unanimously approved the potential establishment of UCF Geospace Research Program.

Discussion Item: Emerging Issue: Develop a Work Plan for Faculty Mix and Student-Faculty Ratio Exploration.

Chair Seay charged the Educational Programs Committee with studying the faculty mix, student-faculty ratio, awarding of tenure, and tenure with hire issue. These are critical issues given our status as an R1 research institution. The discussion was designed to frame the issue for both the committee and staff and determine the direction and cadence of our review.

Chair Bradley presented this discussion item. Provost Johnson shared the complexity along with importance of the topic. The Provost's team stands ready to support this worthy discussion.

Chair Bradley and Provost Johnson suggested studying this topic along with bringing recommendations will require significant EPC committee time. Initially, data along with benchmarks will be presented. Chair Bradley stated there could be the need for a "retreat" meeting of the committee members to devote time to review the topic and explore key issues as the committee seeks ways to best focus on this issue to advance the university. Members of the; Faculty Senate, college deans, and others from the campus community will be included in the discussion.

FY21 Educational Programs Committee Annual Plan (INFO-1)

Due to time constraints, Chair Bradley submitted this item for discussion and review. He asked the committee to present any ideas to the provost and committee staff, to aide in this annual plan being robust.

Academic Program Development Process (INFO-2)

Due to time constraints, it was suggested that this information item can be read and reviewed independently.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bradley adjourned the Educational Programs Committee meeting on August 12, 2020, at 3:36 p.m.

Kenneth W. Bradley

Reviewed by:

Kenneth Bradley
Chair, Educational Programs Committee

Janet D. Owen

Submitted by:

Janet Owen
Associate Corporate Secretary