

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 October 2023
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julia Albarracín, Chair; Everett Hamner, Vice Chair; Denise Graves, Secretary
ALSO PRESENT: Manoochehr Zoghi, Provost; Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
GUESTS: Michael Lorenzen; Lorette Oden; Cassandra Standberry; Lisa Wipperling

1. Ad Hoc Committee on Anti-Bullying Policies Preliminary Report Cassandra Standberry, Chair

Ad hoc committee Chair Cassandra Standberry stated that the committee thought the first thing they should do is determine definitions related to bullying, which generated a lot of good discussion. The definitions include cyberbullying which the ad hoc committee thought it was important to include.

Standberry stated that the policy, once approved, would apply to contract workers, customers, clients, part-time workers, volunteers, and other tertiary partners in the workplace. The ad hoc committee will look for procedures to accompany the policy include how employees will grieve if there is a violation of the grievance forms, and level of response which will ultimately

to fail a student because it flags too much writing incorrectly, but it could be the reason to have a conversation with a student. He thinks a better way to look at AI is how to better design assignments in the knowledge that AI is out there and some students will use it to deliberately cheat, which they can learn from YouTube videos.

Senator Gravitt asked if the detection software could still be effective in catching plagiarism issues separate from writing using AI. Dr. Lorenzen replied that it cannot, noting that AI detection software looks for original work created using artificial intelligence while plagiarism software looks for text matches.

Parliamentarian Robinett noted that while he knows some of his students have been using ChatGPT to write their papers because they do not speak or write emails at the level of the language used in their papers, the problem is that there is no way to prove it; because it is "new work," there is no way to catch them out. He thinks it will be challenging to design new forms of assessment based on the ones commonly used in academic disciplines. He noted that the students he is sure used ChatGPT for their papers showed 0% on Turnitin, so he thinks the conversation about academic integrity is a long way from being resolved.

Senator Hamner, who serves on the ad hoc committee, thinks everyone needs to learn as much as they can about the capabilities involved with AI so that the university community is not surprised by them. He noted that not only can individuals give the existing AI platforms a prompt, but also enormous documents can be uploaded into the AI program with a request that they be analyzed; once the output is received, the individual can ask for a modification of it in order to, for example, shift the tone, which will result in an entirely new document. He encourages faculty to dig into AI and try things themselves so that they can learn what is possible. He stated that over 60% of students use AI.

attendance and indicated that classes in the majors are the most important to them. Parliamentarian Robinett noted this somewhat matches the results of a survey administered last year to students taking online classes. He recalled those students indicated they wanted to take Gen Ed courses online, and they spoke about the significance of a class being the determiner of whether it should be offered in an online format. He noted that some students really seem to like attendance and think it should be a responsibility others indicated that since they are paying for their education they should be able to say if they wish to attend a class in person. Some students responding to the survey thought attendance should be required only for freshmen and sophomores. Parliamentarian Robinett related the greatest variability in responses was to the question asking whether attendance policies should be the same across all courses.

Parliamentarian Robinett told ExCo he would refer to this survey as a pilot study. He is glad 230 students filled it out but does not think the results are a clear guide regarding whether attendance policies are needed. Provost Zoghi asked if there is a similar survey planned for faculty. Chair Albarracin responded she is working on one. She wants to understand where faculty members stand on the topic of attendance because faculty members have different ways of communicating their expectations to their students. She would like to have an idea of what different faculty members do in their various courses – how attendance is addressed and how students are encouraged to attend classes. Chair Albarracin will share the faculty survey with ExCo before sending it out.

Parliamentarian Robinett noted that the survey did show that “instructor stated expectations about attendance” mattered highly to the students who responded to the survey. He noted that perhaps it is just the way professors talk about attendance that makes a big difference in what students do. He noted that the students indicated “all” or “most” to the question asking “how many of your instructors explained their attendance requirements during the first week of classes,” which suggests that faculty are communicating their expectations to their students.

Chair Albarracin noted that some research shows that students exhibit an oppositional attitude when told they have to come to class whereas if attendance is less strict they will feel a responsibility to come on their own. She has also seen evidence that recording attendance, but not penalizing absentees, sends a strong message that student attendance is important to that faculty member if attendance is merely taken by passing around a sign-sheet, this is more effective than an overall mandatory attendance policy.

Senator Hamner expressed his agreement that there are few faculty, if any, who do not care if students are present for their classes. He noted that many faculty deliver pretty impassioned statements about attendance, but the real question is whether attendance should be built into students’ grades and whether students should be downgraded if they are not present for classes. He noted there are many factors that go into whether a student is able to attend every single class during a semester, and the situation may be different for a single mom who lives 45 minutes away from campus and works full-time versus a residential student whose dorm is five minutes from class. Senator Hamner thinks the underlying question is whether there are results about whether mandatory attendance policies do harm or good or something in-between.

Provost Zoghi stated that attendance is a way of communicating to students that the faculty member cares about them and wants them to be successful. He noted that students who participate in class do much better than those who do not, but this does not mean that students who do not come to class should necessarily be given a lower grade.

4. Biennial Reapportionment

The Faculty Senate Constitution (Article 3.2) requires that a count be taken every two years of faculty who are eligible to vote in Senate elections and that this count determine the membership of the Senate. According to the Article, the Senate membership cannot fall below 1.6 (m)1 A6.3 (r)-4 (9 ((y)12.4.141 T10.9 (t))TJ

The biennial reapportionment breakdown will be presented to senators as an informational item during the Faculty Senate meeting on October 24.

5. Procedures to address requests from trustees

Chair Albarracin noted that in May the Executive Committee held a special meeting to address concerns from a member of the Board of Trustees, and at the most recent Board meeting a Trustee asked her to request a special report from CAGAS. The Trustee would like for CAGAS to craft a policy to prohibit resident students on the Macomb campus from taking online classes. Chair Albarracin asked if it is the Executive Committee's role to be responsive to requests from Trustees or if, as seems more logical, requests should first go through the upper administration. Provost Zoghi stated that the administration received a three-page memo from the Board of Trustees about this and other topics and will follow up with them in trying to address their concerns.

Chair Albarracin related she has heard people theorize that Macomb residential students choose to take online classes because they think they are easier, but she does not think residential students are necessarily less serious about their educations than other students. She thinks such a policy would go against the university's best interests and the flexibility that it is trying to offer to students. Provost Zoghi noted that the concern is that students in residence halls are not showing up for class, and that class enhances participation and retention.

Parliamentarian Robinett observed that some programs were set up for only students, but when the pandemic arrived these courses and programs were opened up to allow any students to take them. He noted that departments have moved away from online sections to open them up so that the courses have enough students to make their required enrollments. He noted that, pedagogically, those programs that were only supposed to be delivered to online and distance students are now mingled into traditional campus offerings. Chair Albarracin said she also has heard complaints about this, but it could be a very complex issue.

Senator Hamner noted that the university only determines that a student is enrolled in a particular location or modality retroactively; the Registrar looks at the schedule of classes a student signs up for during a particular semester to determine how to identify a student for the purposes of that semester. He stated that there is nowhere on the university's website where a student can say if they are permanently an online, Quad Cities, or Macomb student. Parliamentarian Robinett remarked this determination can have real effects for student billing and benefits. His department offers a livestreamed class which, when livestreamed from Macomb(h)12.8 (e2