**UFS Minutes**

**Meeting: August 18, 2021**

**Attendees:** Mike Kiel (President), Aaron Wachhaus (Vice President), Aaron Wachhaus, Alan Weisman, Alicia Campbell, Andrea Cantora, Anthony Butler, Antieris, Barbara Aughenbaugh, Beth Amyot, Betsy Yarrison, Bill Carter, Bill Schnirel, Bridget Blodgett, Candace Caraco, Carol Molinari, Catherine Andersen, Christal McBride, Christine Spencer, Danielle Fowler, Danielle Giles, Darlene Smith, Dave Riggin, David Bobart, David Lingelbach, Gabriela Wasileski, Ivan Sascha Sheehan, J.C. Weiss, Jan Williams, Jeffrey Hutson, Jeffrey Ian Ross, Jennifer Artis, John Chapin, Jose Anderson, Julie Simon, Karen Karmiol, Karyn Schulz, Kurt Schmoke, Lakeisha Mathews, L W Gentry, Magui Cardona, Margaret Gillingham, Marilyn Oblak, Mary Beth Waak, Megan Rhee, Michael Frederick, Michael J. Hayes, Michele Cotton, Mortimer Sellers, Nafeesa Yunus, Neb Sertsu, Nicole Marano, Pavan Purswani, Roger Hartley, Ronald Weich, Ron Castanzo, Roxie M. Shabazz, Sally Farley, Sally Reed, Seyed Mohammadi, Sharon Glazer, Suzanne Tabor, Teresa Callison, Terese Thonus, Vineda Myers, Wolf Pecher, Zach Luhman

*Logistical Items*

* Agenda
* Minutes

The agenda and Minutes (Meeting on May 5) were approved

*Annoucements*

President Schmoke welcomed back Faculty and Staff and thanked all for their hard work and thanked the Senate for its flexibility regarding meeting times.

UBalt is continuing to montitor and respond to COVID-19, and continues to update a FAQ site on the web for general concerns.

Students can direct unique concerns to the Nicole Marano, Faculty to their Deans.

Provost Andersen reiterated President Schmoke comments and also thanked all the people working behind the scenes.

UFS president Mike Kiel offered 2 priorities the senate should address this year:

(1) budgetary situation, driven by enrollment, would be good to have an ongoing dialog with enrollment management to gain a better understanding of enrollment

(2) information dissemination/flow needs to be better, hope to establish an agreement on how to better share information

*Information Items and Announcements*

* Current Enrollment Information
* UFS and GSC Committee Documents
  + UFS Committee Membership
  + GSC Organizational Documents
* Assessment and Sharepoint
* Position Changes at Ubalt

**Action items**

**None… yet**

**Discussion Items**

***Resolution:***

Michael Hayes a Law faculty representative introduced a resolution from Law faculty to allow faculty to opt out of in person teaching who are “immuno-compromised or otherwise entitled to an accommodation under federal or state or Baltimore City law” and are primary caregivers of children to young to be vaccinated.

The resolution would allow faculty who are concerned that despite the measures in place, contracting COVID in the classroom is a possibility. Vaccinated people are able to transmit the virus. Therefore, faculty with young children may be transmitting the virus to their children. Faculty should be able to ask to not be required teaching in person.

***Discussion and Comments***

* No one should need to choose between job and health.
* There may be already a policy for students. Faculty should also have the flexibility.
* (Ron Weich, Dean of School of Law): Concern was brought up and discussed during last School of Law senate meeting. Resolution not supported by all Law faculty. Issue with accreditation. UBalt Law is required to have in person classes. Students expect and want in person classes. UBalt does not have the technology to support remote learning. There is a fundamental difference of quality between online education and in person education.
* The senate needs to vote. Reminder it will be a very strong recommendation but not binding.
* What would be the immediate consequences for the class. Should the resolution also cover students? And Staff? (many have little children)?
  + Agreed that this is a concern for students and staff, but not including students and staff in the resolution is not an argument against the resolution.
* Colleges try every way to keep safe environment and accommodate students as much as possible.
  + We have to work with each college on an individual basis.
  + A blanket accommodation cannot be done if it does not fall under ADA.
  + We follow all Maryland policies and beyond.
* We are the university faculty senate, staff and student concerns should be addressed by the respective governance bodies.
* President Schmoke and Sally Reed were asked to comment.
  + President Schmoke: Difficult to comment, a lot of static, could not follow the entire discussion. We have an established record of keeping people safe. Law School has different needs. Decisions related to the Law school heavily depend on the recommendations of the Dean of the Law school.
  + Sally Reed: Also could not follow the entire discussion. Resolution presents many challenges. Not all accommodation requests are reasonable. If a student does not want to be in a face to face class, setting up remote learning is not possible. Vaccine rates are high, risk is low, but it is impossible to guarantee no risk of infection. Another concern is that the resolution is proposed at the very last minute. The schedule for Fall is already set, changing in person classes to virtual classes cause high disruption.

***Vote:***

10 votes in favor, 1 vote against, 1 abstention

**Discussion items**

***Senate Priorities and Operations for the Year***

Senate president Mike Kiel addressed these in his welcome message (see above)

***Changes and Updates on Pandemic Operations following Townhall***

* Decisions for the Fall term were made in June. At that point the Delta variant was not very prevalent. Some decisions will need to be reconsidered, situation is constantly monitored. Adjustments are made when necessary. We get weekly updates and are not blind and ignorant
* Response to COVID-19 could provide an opportunity for better communication.
  + A lot changes week by week. The FAQ site is updated regularly. Recognize that even more can be done.
* In terms of planning, scheduling for spring is due in October? However, a September 8 deadline was communicated to chairs.
  + President Smoke: not aware of the early deadline.
* Faculty is told to hold classes at a certain time slot, time slots cannot be changed due to software restrictions. If classes could be staggered, one way to reduce traffic volume in buildings.
  + There is no software limitation, maybe restrictions due to the physical classroom schedule.
  + Deans need to be informed that flexible classroom schedule is possible.
* We are reinventing the University, maybe time to convene committees and take a year to evaluate what UBalt could be, take a year to look at the bigger picture.
* Who decides to implement a lock down? Does System have metrics?
  + President Schmoke: Decisions are made by the State, or County about lock downs. If deemed necessary, UBalt develops a plan that the chancellor has to approve.
* How would contact tracing work at UBalt? Who needs to know?
  + Not everybody needs to know. Strategy depends on vaccination status, and who is deemed to have been in close contact (less than 6 feet for more than 15 min). For example, if an employee has COVID in an office a student visiting that office for a short time would not be informed. It is also absolutely crucial that Associate Deans in the College closely work with students and faculty.
* Booster shots may become available soon, could UBalt be a vaccination site?
  + UBalt had offered to the state to become a vaccination site. The convention center was chosen instead.
  + Faculty of CPA already organized vaccination campaigns.
  + Good idea, UBalt should consider
* Other institutions regularly post COVID related information (number of people infected, etc) on their web sites. UBalt has not done so far. This information would be very helpful.
  + UBalt was in lock down, only few people worked. Numbers of cases was not informative. However, now that UBalt is opening it this would be possible to do.
* Concern about individuals that do not comply with the mask directive. What can be done?
  + According to the AG’s office there needs to some level of a due process. Thus, we cannot remove people from campus immediately.
  + In regards to students, failure to comply with the mask directive would be considered a violation of the students code of conduct.
  + Faculty can ask students to leave but not necessarily remove the student from class.
  + One suggested strategy would be to repeatedly remind students and participants of the mask directive.
  + If things get out of hand, Security (UBalt police) can be involved.
  + If faculty cannot enforce mask directive, faculty can cancel class, or take a break.
  + Candace Caraco compiled a useful document as an additional resource for faculty. It is on share point (Faculty guidance COVID 19 Fall 2021…)
* Are there panic buttons in classrooms?
  + No.

***Crafting a new Workload Policy***

* Not addressed in this meeting.

***Data and Communication***

* Faculty should assume temporarily leadership positions and service early on.
* Advocate for more transparency and accessibility of information. For example, Ubalt’s financial situation. Faculty does not have access to this information. It should be accessible and not restricted to a few selected people.
* Information is difficult to find at UBalt. Data storage not systematic, too many different options. UBalt’s website search function is useless. Data often exists, but where?
  + Information flow and storage was one of the reasons why the UFS moved to share point.
  + Never say the information is on the web. People do not find it. Fore example a staff member wanted to join today’s UFS meeting but was not able to find the information to the zoom link. A suggestion would be a list of all public meetings in one place with all the information needed.
  + Staff members should be added to the sharepoint folder as observers.
* Regular (at least quarterly, if not monthly) interim reports and updates on enrollment figures (including financial information)
  + Enrollment discussions should be a regular item at UFS meetings.
  + This information would also be helpful for faculty not familiar with accounting.
  + Information on enrollment management would also be helpful. Faculty could have constructive comments.
* At the college level have further discussion between faculty and Deans.
  + Deans may not realize what faculty knows. CAS Dean is open and responsive to faculty requests, but faculty needs to know what to ask for.
  + Make minutes and highlights of upper administration meetings available to faculty.
  + At this point premature to open minutes up, need to discuss how to share, what procedures to put in place.
* Have (monthly) series of talks about different programs and services offered at UBalt open to faculty and staff.
* Provide more externally facing information. How does UBalt compare to other (comparable) institutions?
  + Good idea, we can start with what is already available and start from there.
  + Data should be quantitative.
* For new faculty, provide information not only at the beginning but again half a year or a year later.

**Upcoming**

* UFS 20-21 Fall meeting dates (format to be determined)
  + September 8
    - Enrollment Overview
    - Vote on GEC STEM Member
  + October 13
  + November 10
  + December 8

Respectfully submitted

Wolf Pecher