

MINUTES

UFO Executive Board Meeting (Emergency Meeting)

1 March 2021

Held via Zoom

4:30 p.m.

Executive Board Members present:

Jeff O'Connell

Jeffrey S. Dean

Janice Jones

Emmanuel Garcia

Rob Smedfjeld

Andrea Brown

Heather McCarty

Executive Board Member not present:

Teresa Massimo

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. This emergency meeting of the UFO Executive Board was called to discuss and vote on the evaluation form for faculty during the current closure of campus due to the pandemic. Also discussed was a potential questionnaire for faculty regarding their feelings related to a return to campus following the closure in March 2020.

Discussion initially centered around a draft of an evaluation form that had been through the negotiations process. The form had been previously emailed to the members of the Executive Board and is intended to be used for observations of synchronous classes offered during the campus closure with an expiration time being the end of Summer 2021.

Smedfjeld asked about the time limitation and whether or not this would need to be extended, given that a full return of classes that were previously offered in person is not likely to happen. The MOU was amended as suggested.

Some revision to the language in the agreement (not the form) was made by Garcia, while he was sharing that document. O'Connell noted that the language in the form has already been negotiated, given that the language comes from either the form for evaluating a faculty member in an in-person class or the form for a fully-online class. This form draws from both existing documents to make a form that makes sense for classes taught asynchronously through Zoom.

Smedfjeld asked a question about whether or not the evaluator using the form would be evaluating the use of Canvas, in addition to the instruction viewed on Zoom. McCarty noted that there is language in the form that there should be "a brief conversation about the faculty member's use of Canvas" and that the focus is not on evaluating Canvas use for these asynchronous classes.

Jones noted that she was told to use the evaluation form for an online course in evaluating an asynchronous class. It was noted that different Division deans might be giving differing guidance to full-time faculty who are evaluating part-time faculty.

Smedfjeld made the motion to approve the form and agreement as amended. Brown seconded the motion. The vote to approve the form was called and there was unanimous agreement to approve it.

The second item discussed at this emergency meeting related to ideas about surveying faculty about their feelings regarding returning to campus and in-person teaching. This was presented as an initial discussion item, given that there is a group on campus, RTCW (the return-to-campus workgroup) and a smaller group within the RTCW, known as the RTCW Chairs, which meets to discuss what a return-to-campus will look like and what are the practical considerations and more nuanced feelings that need to be assessed. This group approves requests to enter campus.

O'Connell asked whether or not the Executive Board has feelings about the questions in the draft questionnaire, which was sent out in advance of the meeting, and whether or not it should be sent to faculty from the UFO.

Brown asked what the purpose of the survey and what actionable data could be drawn from it. O'Connell said that what was distributed was a rough draft with some initial types of questions and noted that he understood that the survey might result in quite a lot of individual responses that would be hard to categorize, given the differences in people's comfort levels about returning to campus. As an example of this, McCarty noted that she would return to campus, but that there were a lot of unknowns that

would affect her decision. For example, McCarty noted that returning to a class of 120 would be quite different than returning to a smaller class in a larger space than before.

Brown voiced concerns about the data from the form being shared with the District and whether or not those responses, particularly from adjunct faculty, would place their work in jeopardy. O'Connell responded to that, noting that he could make the survey anonymous and that the information could be kept by the UFO. McCarty agreed with Brown regarding the point on adjuncts being asked to respond. It was noted that this is an extremely fluid situation and that people's responses to the questions would be dependent on many factors and that much of the information that faculty would need to make a decision about returning to in-person instruction is unknown or changes. O'Connell indicated that we would continue the conversation about surveying the faculty and what form that might take at the next Executive Board meeting, in one week's time.

Smedfjeld noted that the type of information needed might involve knowing the overall mood of the faculty and that comfort levels need to be known. An idea that O'Connell mentioned was asking those faculty who have a strong desire to return to reply and then ask those faculty what needs to be in place in order to return. Smedfjeld indicated his preference that adjunct faculty be surveyed.

McCarty brought up the point that all Divisions should be having a discussion about returning, but that this does not seem to be the case. In a related part of the conversation about programs being endangered, Jones noted that she was told that no programs would be cut at this time. O'Connell noted that some students on athletic teams will soon be returning but with significant conditions, including Covid testing the week of competitions.

The meeting concluded at 5:12 p.m.