

MINUTES

UFO Executive Board Meeting
8 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
Teresa Massimo

The meeting began at 4:32 p.m.

The minutes from the previous three meetings of the Executive Board (January, February, as well as the emergency meeting held on 1 March) were sent to members of the board in advance of the meeting. O'Connell asked for corrections. There was one change to the minutes from 1 March regarding the language which clarified the end point of the evaluation form to be used for classes meeting through Zoom. The change had been made. O'Connell moved that the minutes be adopted as corrected and they were adopted unanimously.

Smedfjeld gave an update on the work of CEER this term, which will focus on ways to improve communication. Creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable expressing their views is the ultimate goal. There has been one meeting so far with three or four more this term. Brown asked what the next step will be in the process. Smedfjeld indicated that the goal will not be to create a particular "thing," like a document, but something more like a training. References were made to the BIT (Behavioral Intervention Team) and the ombudsperson in terms of what will ultimately arise out of this beginning. Smedfjeld felt very positive about the first meeting.

O'Connell then provided an update on the RTC (Return to Campus) team and its work. O'Connell has been mulling over the idea of a large meeting initiated by the UFO to gather information, however preliminary, on what things need to be in place before faculty and students return to regular classroom instruction.

O'Connell noted that many questions about a safe return to campus remain. One option O'Connell asked for feedback on was having members of the administration present for the start of the meeting and then having the remainder of the meeting be for faculty only.

The ability for faculty to pose questions anonymously was suggested by McCarty. McCarty also noted that one meeting might not be enough. It was also suggested by McCarty that the portion with the administrators be recorded and made available for those not able to attend.

Garcia asked O'Connell what the general purpose of the meeting would be. O'Connell noted that there is a large interest in the faculty having a driving role in the RTC discussions.

An adjunct instructor reached out to Brown asking about being a part of the discussions.

O'Connell has met with the VPAA (DiSalvo) as well as the VPHRT (Zingsheim) and there is no inclination towards forcing faculty back to campus.

Smedfjeld indicated that it's important for the proposed meeting to air ideas rather than make or declare concrete decisions. Getting everyone on the same page is a critical first step, Smedfjeld noted. Smedfjeld also indicated that the meeting could be co-hosted by the UFO and the Faculty Senate, since the issues that arise in the return to campus touch on both working conditions as well as academic matters.

McCarty indicated that the date is a critical consideration in scheduling this meeting, since the schedule for Fall 2021 will be published very soon.

Massimo asked whether or not there would be value in a survey of faculty, asking who wants to return to campus.

Smedfjeld indicated that contradictory messaging about a return to a full or partial schedule is a problem for both students and faculty.

The discussion about the meeting closed with the date of March 19 set. The meeting will start at 3:00 p.m. More information will be sent out by O'Connell shortly.

The Executive Board went into closed session at 5:22 p.m. to discuss multiple personnel matters as well as getting an update on status of negotiations.

The meeting concluded at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jeffrey S. Dean, Earl of Scarsdale,
and Secretary, United Faculty of Ohlone,
9 March 2021.