Members Present:

Members Absent:
Ari Anand, Lisa Coen, Jeff DeGrave, Olga Diaz, Billy Felz, Kent Gerberich, Pat Kleine, Charlie Krula, Samantha Pearson, Lisa Schiller, Charlotte Sortedahl

Guests:
MJ Brukardt, Mike Carney, Margaret Cassidy, Debra Jansen, Nichole Owen, Jean Pratt, Jill Prushiek, Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn

The regular meeting of University Senate was called to order by Chair Weiher at 3:01 p.m. on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 via online Teams meeting.

1) Approval of the University Senate September 28, 2021 minutes
   • Approved as distributed
   • Comment made that counted votes should appear in the minutes

2) Administrator Remarks
   • As of today, 80.2% of our student population have been vaccinated
   • Many others are fully vaccinated but have uploaded their documentation improperly
   • End of October to get in on the 70 for 70 program offered by UW System
   • Encourage students to get vaccinated
   • Indigenous People’s Day and many activities are happening
     • Will have a flag ceremony recognize all 12 of the tribal nations in Wisconsin
     • Proposed statement and acknowledgment from Barron County
   • Free speech week is next week at the Menard’s Center for constitutional studies
     • Will have panel discussions on what free speech means on a college campus and understand the importance of free speech as well as the responsibilities
   • Monday is National Coming Out Day
     • UWEC was named first in Wisconsin for LGBTQ+ students
     • We received a perfect 5-star rating for 4 consecutive years
     • Thanks to all who make UWEC welcoming
   • UWEC is one of the top universities in the county and first among all comprehensive universities in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa
     • They use multiple data sets, so we are proud to be associated with this rating
   • The focus for this year is on student retention
   • We all have a vital role in helping our students succeed
   • We like to encourage students meeting with faculty/staff as well as encourage students to stay on campus over the weekend
   • Becky Blank accepted the presidency at Northwestern University
     • She will be the first female president at that institution

www.uwec.edu/usenate/
• She has achieved great things at Madison
• Comments/Questions
  • UWEC has a balance of $25 million and furlough savings are in that $25 million
    • We got $10 million in Higher Education Relief Fund (HERF) funds to reinstate lost tuition revenue
      • We also had reduction in expenses, but the increase is almost all from the HERF money
    • At the beginning of the year, we did not know we would get the additional funds and losses at that time were $2 million and the state lapse was an additional $2 million with the added $2 million from the year before then we also had covid losses of $4 million
      • It was a $10 million total loss
    • There was a $2.4 million savings from furlough(s) and $2 million with budget reductions
    • We did not know the State of Wisconsin was going to give back money but UWEC’s top priority is investing in people
    • The campus would like more details on the picture of the financial and FTE situation at the university
      • The budget book lays it all out
        • Is on the budget website
          • Another one will be published at the end of the year
    • Comment that Madison cancelled one of their furlough days
      • A request was made that UWEC return that money to the employees but that cannot be done
    • Some money was spent on masks, vaccination(s) and etc. as those are expenditures and can reinstate loss revenue but we cannot pay faculty/staff back for time they did not work
      • We cannot return pay for hours that were not worked
      • There is not a mechanism to pay people back and it has to do with state and federal law
      • Is one time funding so it is frustrating that nothing was related to instruction on how the money was spent
    • Many staff had a difficult year, so we hope the institution is looking at how to retain employees
    • Question if the Compensation & Budget Committee can adjust the pay plan to compensate
      • The Compensation Plan/Pay Plan is through the state so we cannot control that
    • That savings was to offset expenses
    • We are putting in a FEMA claim to help buffer the losses
    • Will help stabilize our campus and prevented more furloughs and layoffs
    • As a campus we made the right decision at the time but in hindsight we did not need to do it
      • We did not know about the funds until into June and July
    • Our 3 major budgets consist of: operations budget, auxiliaries, and capital projects and facilities
    • Furloughs are helping to fund future enrollment losses
    • Bark break reactions
      • It was stupendous and the turnout was great and the energy too
      • We have to buy a special insurance policy but between we managed the risk and so we will do it again
      • Concern that high school seniors do not know the costs of going to UWEC as our marketing materials do not stress the value of what you get
        • Madison is our main competition along with UW-La Crosse
        • We need a legislative initiative to give us full access to the number of dollars we bring in
    • Repository update
      • Kent Gerberich is looking into this

3) Reports

Without objection, Grace Becker will assume Linda Pratt’s term on the Physical Plant Planning Committee

a) Report from University Senate Chair Weiher
  • At the University Senate Executive Committee meeting we had a closed session for appointments to committees
  • It was recommended to us that we do not use chat feature
    • Please raise your hand and ask a question if you have one as we will not be checking the chat any longer
  • Concerns that journal subscriptions have been reduced and that grants should ensure access
Chair Weiher was on a Covid call on Wednesday
- 90% percent of employees are vaccinated
- Testing service is now going through Weber
  - It was a bumpy turnover, but things are getting better
- Students who are not complying with COVID protocols
  - There are 13 students in housing that were about to be sent to quarantine as they were not testing or vaccinated
    - Report any students who are not following our protocols to the Dean of Students and do this repeatedly

b) Faculty Representatives Report – Senator Peterson
- Departure of Chancellor Blank
- Reps meet again next week
- It was a quiet meeting beside the Becky Blank announcement
- TTC was not discussed but they may have made it more complicated

c) For the record
  Credit-bearing certificate in Sustainability and Climate Action
  
Without objection, this item will be entered For the Record

4) Unfinished Business
- None

5) New Business
  a) First Reading: Motion from the Academic Policies Committee
     Adding a 7th approved absence category

Debate

AMENDMENT was made to add an 8th absence: (8) caregiving, parenting, or pregnancy-related situations, including those covered by Title IX, seconded

Debate on amendment
- APC would like to entertain this and consult with the Caregiving Taskforce so please bring a proposal to APC for an 8th category so APC can have a more detailed discussion
- Would like definitions of the caregiving piece and it can be further explored
- Many colleagues will want to weigh in on this
- When the 7th category was suggested to APC they decided to expand the definition so sending it to APC and including any additional background might help with language that provides clarification for everyone on campus
- Too many ramifications
- We need to think more broadly about what this language would mean and would be subject to misuse
- Is well intentioned but a wide discussion would need to be had about this as it could be problematic and causes additional burden on faculty
- Some of the same things might be covered under FMLA and we could look at how we could use some of their language
- We have a committee structure for this to go through

MOTION was made to withdraw the amendment, seconded

MOTION to the AMENDMENT was WITHDRAWN

Continued debate on the original motion
- Many things can be covered under the general emergency category
- Comment that a student that gets a DUI could use this as an excused absence

Objection to vote on this today
VOTE on MOTION: POSTPONED

b) First Reading: Motion from the Faculty Complaint Grievance and Termination Review Committee

Debate
  • None

WITHOUT objection we will suspend the rules and vote on this today

VOTE on MOTION: APPROVED

c) First Reading: Motion from the Faculty Personnel Committee
  • Would still be separate reviews but they would happen in the same year
  • One would not get full professorship until the BOR meeting in June
  • What you are required to submit depends on what your department evaluation says
  • Both would happen in the fall
  • Your submission papers used to justify your excellence for pay increases but that has since halted
  • Just because you would be allowed to do this at the same time does not mean that it is a requirement
    • It would be the earliest year of eligibility
  • The make-up of these committees are two different bodies that are reviewing, so in essence, there
could be two bodies doing the same amount of work at the same time

Debate
  • It is great that this can be done with one combined action
  • This is allowed by System
  • The five-year cycle is mandated by System

Objection to vote on this today

VOTE on MOTION: POSTPONED

6) Announcements
  • The next meeting of the University Senate will be held via Teams on October 26, 2021

Without objection, meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Submitted by,

Tanya Kenney
Secretary to the University Senate