

MSU Faculty Senate

September 2020 Minutes (Draft for Approval)

The 2020-2021 MSU Faculty Senate met at 3:00 PM on September 10, 2020 via Zoom.

Senators present:

Chuck Bultena	Tina Johnson	Michael Olson
Dave Carlston	Erica Judie	Morgan Page
Sarah Cobb	Attapol Kuanliang	John Schulze
Robert Comello (proxy for Lynette Watts)	Tammy Kurzewski	Beverly Stiles
Mary Draper	Adam Lei	Christopher Vivio
Catherine Gaharan	Marcos Lopez	Tyler Williams
Timothy Hinchman	Kelly Medellin	Tiffany Ziegler
	Karen Moriarty	

Guests:

Ms. Ruby Garrett (Assistant Director of MOSAIC Cross-Cultural Center, Staff Senate Representative)

Ms. Laura Hetrick (Director and Coordinator of Title IX)

Dr. Keith Lamb (Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management)

Ms. Shelbi Stogdill (President, Student Government Association)

Mr. Tony Vidmar (Vice President, University Advancement and Public Affairs)

Call to order: 3:00 PM

Housekeeping:

The minutes and agenda were approved.

Current Business:

1. MSU Policy 2.337 (Mr. Tony Vidmar)

Mr. Vidmar stated the university's capital campaign has raised \$67.6 million, exceeding its \$50 million goal. He expressed thanks to faculty for participation in the faculty/staff portion of the campaign.

Mr. Vidmar also presented proposed changes to MSU policy 2.337 on University Advancement and Public Affairs. The main change in the new policy creates an Associate Vice President position, initially funded with donor funds. Chris Vivio moved to approve the proposed changes and the motion passed.

2. UPP 4-161.A and UPP 4-161.B (Dr. Keith Lamb)

Dr. Lamb introduced Laura Hetrick, MSU's new Title IX director.

He also presented a new Title IX policy, intended to comply with new regulations from the State of Texas. The deadline for implementation of these changes was August 14, 2020, so the new policy has already been approved by the Board of Regents. A review of the policy will take place in August, and Dr. Carlston asked that a faculty representative take part in that review.

Dr. Lamb also stated that MSU worked closely with the Texas Tech system in developing this policy, and that their work was a valuable resource.

Dr. Lamb explained the major changes to the Title IX policy:

- Advisors to parties are now required to cross-examine, so Title IX hearings may now involve cross-examination by lawyers. MSU has contracted with a firm in Austin to provide us with a hearing officer. The policy provides a number of less-formal ways to address issues, so not all investigations will involve hearings.
- The definition of incidents covered by Title IX has narrowed. It now only covers incidents in the United States on property owned by the university. This change necessitated a separate policy (4-161.B) to address sexual misconduct not covered under Title IX.

Dr. Lamb stated that more trained Title IX investigators would be valuable resource for the university.

Ms. Hetrick suggested that faculty who are not sure which policy a particular incident falls under should report it and the Title IX office will help make sure it is handled appropriately. She also stated that the Title IX office can offer help in cases of sexual misconduct even without starting a full investigation. A senator asked whether a list of those services could be provided, and Ms. Hetrick suggested that it would be better to help students contact the Title IX office to determine what can be done in a particular case.

Some senators asked whether any of the rules governing mandatory reporting had changed. Dr. Lamb clarified that those rules had not changed and that all incidents of sexual misconduct must be reported to the Title IX office.

3. SGA Report (Shelbi Stogdill)

Dr. Carlston stated that the faculty senate had asked student and staff representatives to share their perspectives about the university's adjustment to pandemic-related conditions.

Ms. Shelbi Stogdill, SGA President, stated that students are glad to be back on campus and are adjusting well to the mask policy. She expressed appreciation of the university for making policies clear and of the faculty for being helpful and understanding.

Ms. Stogdill also asked that faculty be aware the students are struggling with the transition to online and hybrid instruction, particularly as the expectations and policies vary from class to class. She also stated that many students are not sure what to expect after Thanksgiving when instruction transitions to a fully remote modality. She also expressed concern that some students are not following social distancing and sanitizing protocols and that sanitizing equipment is not always available. She asked that faculty do what they can to support these policies during classroom instruction.

A senator asked what faculty can do to help make students' efforts to manage different modalities easier, and Ms. Stogdill suggested that early communication would be very helpful. In particular, if information about course modality can be available during registration, it will be helpful to students trying to choose appropriate courses.

4. Staff Senate Report (Ms. Ruby Garrett)

Ms. Ruby Garrett presented the Staff Senate report. She stated that the campus community is generally complying with masking and social distancing requirements, and that the university is making efforts to provide opportunities for social interaction.

Ms. Garrett stated that staff are concerned about communication regarding Covid-19 cases on campus. She suggested that regular notification about the number of active cases would be helpful and expressed concern that notification about particular students' quarantine or isolation status was not necessarily reaching all staff that needed the information, and that academic advisors specifically were not being notified.

A senator asked whether academic advisors could be added to the list of people notified when a student is asked to isolate or quarantine. Dr. Lamb stated that this could be done.

Ms. Garrett also stated that the Staff Senate is working on ways to show appreciation of the people who worked so hard all summer to prepare for the return to campus and invited the Faculty Senate to collaborate in this effort.

5. Spring Semester Discussion

Faculty expressed several concerns about the fall semester and suggestions for changes that could help the spring semester run more smoothly.

- Earlier communication with students is important. Senators suggested that this could be accomplished by including modality in the course schedule as early as possible. Faculty could also send early emails to students registered for their classes or communicate through D2L if it could be made accessible to students earlier.
- Having as clear an idea of the plan for the spring semester as possible is important. In particular, the university should commit to not returning to fully in-person instruction in the middle of the semester.

- Some faculty are losing a lot of teaching time to problems with technology. We need quicker access to IT support. In particular, having someone stationed in each college with IT training would be helpful.
- Better communication between colleges could be helpful in making certain that high-capacity classrooms are used as effectively as possible.
- The expectation that students will attend class when the professor is remote has created some confusion and frustration.
- It is unfair to charge additional fees for distance education during this time.

Committee and Other Reports:

1. Administrative Council (Dr. Carlston):

No meeting.

2. Academic Council (Dr. Lopez):

No meeting.

3. Budget Oversight:

No meeting.

4. Financial Report (Dr. Stiles):

No report.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Dr. Carlston stated that the incident management team is now meeting weekly to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic and that they are considering an addition to the student code of conduct to address pandemic-related rules.

Senators expressed appreciation for the postmaster giving information about the notification process regarding Covid-19 cases.

Senators expressed concern about administration of course evaluations this semester. Dr. Carlston suggested that senators gather feedback from the faculty as a whole.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Submitted,
Sarah Cobb,
Faculty Senate Secretary

Dave Carlston,
Faculty Senate Chair

Next Meetings:

The next **Executive Committee meeting** will be TBD, via Zoom.

The next **Faculty Senate meeting** will be at 3:00 PM on Thursday, October 8, 2020 via Zoom.