Faculty Senate Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 – Webex – 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.


**Absent:** Bratlie, K.; Cochran, E.; Day, T.; Williams, C.

**Substitutes:** C. Menefee for Cook, K.

**Guests:** Wintersteen, W. (ISU Pres); Wickert, J. (SVPP); VanDerZanden, A.M. (Assoc. Prov.); Bratsch-Prince, D. (Assoc. Prov.); Jordan, T. (Asst. Prov.); Budlong, J. (University Relations); Rippke, S. (Parliamentarian); Lennarella-Servant, C. (GPSS); Parris, S. (P&S); Mahama, A. (Agron); Fritz, M. (SG); Braun, S.; Eisenberg, D. (Ombuds); Doran, C. (Ombuds)

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1. **Call to Order**

   President Faber called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and seated the substitute senators, who identified themselves through the Chat function. President Faber invited Senator Braun to explain and read ISU’s Land Acknowledgment.
2. **Consent Agenda**
FS Agenda September 15, 2020 – [20/A/1]
FS Minutes May 5, 2020 – [19/M/10]
FS Docket Calendar – [20/C/1]
Senator Freeman moved to adopt the consent agenda. Senator Wallace seconded. The motion was adopted.

3. **Special Order: Wendy Wintersteen, ISU President**
**Remembering Dr. Pat Thiel**
ISU President Wintersteen began her remarks by observing the passing of Pat Thiel, who was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019.

**Measures of Success: Enrollment, Rankings, etc.**
ISU President Wintersteen noted that ISU was the only Regents university to rise in *U.S. News and World Report*’s rankings. Enrollment was good and retention was good.

**Continuing Challenges**
ISU President Wintersteen said that she has been working closely with her administrative team (including senior vice presidents, vice presidents, and others) to meet the financial, management, and other challenges. She noted that not everyone will get everything they want, but we need to find compromises.

**COVID Transmission and Testing**
ISU President Wintersteen called senators’ attention to the university dashboard and updates, which break the data into groups. She said that she is “cautiously optimistic” as the number of cases and positivity rate has declined for the second week in a row. The data give administrators confidence that transmission is not happening in classrooms.

**Athletics Department**
Senator Hornbuckle asked about the perceived animosity between the athletic department and faculty, especially ISU Athletic Director Pollard’s public comments. He asked ISU President Wintersteen for advice on how to better coordinate messaging in the future. ISU President Wintersteen replied that she thought everyone was committed to being on the same team. She acknowledged that the circumstances created by COVID-19 have caused high anxiety and emotion and fear. Some of Director Pollard’s comments reflected heightened concern for his staff who report to him and what might happen if athletics cannot generate revenue. (Athletics is currently projecting a $30 million loss, while the university incurred a loss of $73 million through the end of August.) She said she thought he was frustrated, but she did not offer that as an excuse.

**Stephens Auditorium Recovery Campaign**
ISU President Wintersteen noted that a campaign of support for Stephens Auditorium recovery has begun. Management of Stephens Auditorium shifted to Athletics this summer. COVID-19 created problems for that.
Workload Management
Senator Watanabe said that this semester teaching is very time-consuming, especially interacting with students in an online format. She observed that the Provost’s Office enacted a tenure-clock extension program. But PRSs have not changed, which means that research expectations have not changed. Faculty still are reviewed post-tenure every seven years. Provost Wickert replied that the tenure-clock extension policy gives pre-tenure faculty the option to stop the clock. He has talked to department chairs and deans about performance evaluation. All of these parties understand the issues clearly. Associate Provost Bratsch-Prince is working with a team to create a “COVID Impact Statement” for review documents. This will provide a special place for faculty to point out how COVID has affected their productivity. He added that many faculty have done amazing things, including teaching innovations and new COVID-related research projects.

Spectators at Sports Events
Senator Smiley asked whether spectators would be allowed at future sporting events. ISU President Wintersteen said that the decision not to have fans at the opening football game was about that game only. Future decisions will depend on the situation, including the positivity rate for Story County.

Symptom Checker
Senator Peterson noted that the Cyclone Symptom Checker is not being used by ISU for research purposes. But he said that participants are not told what metadata are being collected and how they are used. The FAQ says that health professionals will have access to the data. IRB would not approve such a proposal unless it were more specific about how those data were being used in order to ensure informed consent. Senator Peterson clarified: his concern is that certain data are being collected needlessly. The data do not need to be linked to ISU e-mail addresses. But Qualtrics responses are coded with e-mail addresses, IP addresses, GPS information, etc. His point was that we are not following the best practices of informed consent. ISU President Wintersteen said that she would put Senator Peterson into contact with her team.

Senator Watanabe asked whether the participation rate in the symptom checker has declined. ISU President Wintersteen confirmed that it has declined since the program began.

Teaching Modalities
Senator Oberhauser noted the recent Sick-In protest. How is the university deciding whether to continue in-person classes or move classes online? What are the primary considerations: financial, quality of instruction, etc.? ISU President Wintersteen replied that quality of instruction (especially for studios and labs) is the primary consideration. Testing data show that there is not significant transmission in classrooms.

Senator Oberhauser asked whether the financial impact of moving classes online is a consideration. ISU President Wintersteen said that that is not a relevant part of the conversation.

Provost Wickert added that financial impact is not a main factor. Students and parents have said that they really want an in-person class experience, or as much as is practical. In planning for the fall, students understood that we need to have a mix of teaching modalities. But we know that the best way to learn is in the classroom, lab, or studio interacting with other students and faculty.
When Provost Wickert visited classrooms during the first week of classes, he talked with students about the importance of following the Cyclone Cares program to ensure that in-person classes continue. Students nodded in agreement and said that there is no learning like in-person learning. So providing an in-person classroom experience because of student demand is a driving factor of this decision.

4. **Unfinished Business**
   The motion was adopted, 66 in favor, 0 against.

5. **New Business**
   5.1. **FS Bylaw Change [20-1] - Freeman**
   Senator Freeman said that this proposal comes from Governance Council. The motion realigns FS ByLaws with FS Constitution. He summarized its main points.

   Senator Oberhauser asked whether the timeframe of a term is defined. Senator Freeman replied that it is defined as three years.

   Senator Cowan pointed out that “ex officio” does not automatically imply “non-voting.” Parliamentarian Rippke agreed that the motion should say “ex officio non-voting.”

6. **Announcements**
   6.1. **Faculty Senate President**
   **Summer FS Activity**
   President Faber said that FS EB met over the summer to discuss with Provost Wickert the content of SVPP’s memoranda. RPA Council also met. FS hosted two FS town hall forums. Recordings are available on FS website.

   **Coming FS Business and FS Procedure**
   In response to federal changes to Title IX made on August 14, FH may need to be updated. This is being worked on by J&A Council.

   President Faber asked that resolutions for FS consideration be sent to her for EB to review one week prior to FS meetings. It is difficult to shuffle things around in this virtual meeting format. If a resolution is of particular urgency, President Faber said that she would be willing to work with the proponent.

   Other issues include teaching modalities, health and safety. Everybody has their own degree of tolerance of risk and comfort zone. She thought that we need to be flexible with our students and kind to each other. She repeated calls from senators for faculty, staff, and administrators to work together to get through this difficult time.

   She thanked senators for their hard work and dedication, both over the summer and continuing into this year. She added that faculty are an incredible driver of the university. While students come for the fun and activities of university life and to see their friends, they also come to learn from faculty. She wished everyone a very successful semester.
6.2. Faculty Senate President-Elect
Academic Continuity Group
This workgroup (which reported to the Fall Planning Executive Committee) was directed by Associate Provost VanDerZanden. It was tasked with planning returning to campus amidst the global pandemic. President-Elect Wheeler acknowledges that some faculty feel anxious and vulnerable; others are comfortable with delivering their courses in the usual way, in person. She said there are a range of feelings and these affect other issues about work, family impact, feelings, fears, and frustrations.

Representative Committee
This committee is a subgroup of EB, composed of caucus chairs and headed by President-Elect Wheeler. They have collected feedback from the colleges about the spring academic calendar. They are also collecting information about the work conditions for faculty and faculty well-being: teaching, research, and life issues. Are there things we haven’t been attentive to or haven’t thought of?

President Faber asked whether the caucus chairs would send out a survey this week. President-Elect Wheeler confirmed that it would be coming.

Racial Inequity and General Education
President-Wheeler added that the stresses don’t come from COVID-19 alone. There is a crisis in racial discrimination and race-based inequality. It is essential that we move forward on this too. Last year, FS created a working group to study the U.S. Diversity general education requirement. The group re-evaluated the learning objectives of this requirement (which hadn’t been reviewed since 1994). The group issued a report recommending specific changes to make to the requirement.

6.3. Senior Vice President and Provost
VPR Search
Three finalists visited with the campus community and feedback is solicited. Provost Wickert expects the search to close in the coming weeks.

Spring Academic Calendar
The spring academic calendar was approved by BOR. On this calendar, the spring semester will begin two weeks later than usual and will not have a spring break. The instruction time will be shortened by one week, just like Fall 2020. This will have the advantage of giving more time between the new year celebrations and the start of classes. And it will de-densify campus during peak flu season. UNI adopted a similar calendar; University of Iowa eliminated their spring break. The four instructional modes will continue in the spring semester.

Winter Semester
The gap between the end of the fall semester and the start of the spring semester creates an opportunity to offer courses during a five-week winter term, beginning on December 14 and ending January 21, observing normal university holidays. These courses will be
targeted towards undergraduate students in core areas, including gateway courses and general education courses. Other colleges and universities have a “winterim” or “J-term,” but this is new for ISU. A planning committee is working on logistical issues, including the mechanism for registration, transcripting, and assessing tuition. There are other concerns about logistics with residences and visas.

**BOR Meeting**
The key item on BOR agenda is approval of the BOR legislative appropriations request. BOR is requesting reinstatement of the funds cut in the past cycle and $18 million in new funds, to be split by the universities ($7 million each for ISU and Iowa, and $4 for UNI).

**Recognizing Teaching Innovation**
In *Inside Iowa State*, there will be an article about awards for teaching innovation during the spring semester. These one-time awards were made possible by an anonymous donor (alumni) to recognize faculty excellent.

**Shared Governance**
Provost Wickert acknowledged that it’s been a lot of work over the summer and at the start of the semester to get campus running. He acknowledged that there will be ups and downs. He noted that last week was a challenging week. He made special recognition of the work done by his team, including Associate Provost Bratsch-Prince and Associate Provost VanDerZanden.

Senator Swalwell asked how faculty can volunteer to teach in the winter session. Provost Wickert said that the decision would be made by associate deans for academic programs in the academic colleges. They will curate a set of courses to offer, preferably a bundle of thematically related classes or gateway classes that open up future opportunities. The decisions are being made now, so he recommended contacting the associate dean.

Senator Winer pushed back against the assessment that we want to be in the classroom and it’s all good. University plans started out well, but fell on their face over the summer. When ISU President Wintersteen was asked directly what the criteria are for moving classes online (see above), she didn’t answer the question, and then Provost Wickert talked about the student experience. What Senator Winer didn’t hear was any discussion of health. A lot of universities moved classes online after 150 cases. In two weeks, ISU had 500 or 600 cases. This was 17 days after a town hall and there was no communication. In the town hall, we were told that we would get daily reports of case numbers. Senator Winer said that some of his colleagues have been forced into the classroom by their chairs, regardless of the Provost’s words that no one will be forced to teach in person. Senator Winer asked whether there could be better communication and more transparency. As a faculty member, he feels he’s in the dark.

Provost Wickert agreed that these matters are on everyone’s minds. He countered that ISU President Wintertseen was asked whether finances is the reason we’re holding in-person classes. She responded appropriately to that question. Provost Wickert also responded to that question, framed that way. Health and safety are the top priority. Testing and contact
tracing has been imperfect and we have made mistakes, like every university. This is the third week of the dashboard, so it is relatively new. The dashboard is being updated to include more detailed and granular information, breaking out cases by employee, faculty, staff, undergraduate student, and graduate student. The cases reported include both on-campus tests and self-reports. We tested 9000 students when they moved into the residence halls. A lot of other universities are not doing these things. University of Iowa is using self-reporting. The positivity rates did go up with Campustown parties, but they are now going down. We have been tracking student behavior. Some mitigation efforts have worked. City of Ames adopted a mask ordinance and Governor Reynolds closed bars. Those measures will continue to help us. There have been discussions by the health team. The primary obstacle to reporting data is the lag time in test results coming back from VDL. It might be feasible to have reports every other day.

Senator Winer pointed out that there are positive things being done, but they're reactions to bad situations. Only after the number of cases spiked did the bars close. How many people got sick and how many families suffered? The numbers never should have gotten that high. This is why it’s important for transparency in the decision-making process. We didn’t hear anything. When we walk into a population of students who are driving the spike, it’s hard to feel safe. What are we doing that is more proactive so that we don’t see these spikes again?

Provost Wickert replied that if things were up to him, there would have been a mask mandate in place and the bars would have closed sooner. But we don’t have the authority to make these decisions for ourselves; others make these decisions. The mask ordinance in Ames was a political process. They needed to see cases to create political pressure for the ordinance. There was a difference of views, and the ordinance was controversial. Provost Wickert said that he is encouraged by Governor Reynold’s decision to keep Story County bars closed. We know that off-campus behavior has been affecting our rates rather than on-campus behavior. With respect to faculty feeling pressure to teach in person, Provost Wickert repeated his statement in June that we will not force faculty to teach in person. He re-emphasized that position in a recent campus-wide communication. If faculty in your department want to change teaching modalities, they need to have that conversation with the department chair and try to resolve the situation. If they can’t reach a resolution, it can escalate, first to the associate dean, then the dean, and then the Provost’s Office. At this point in time, the Provost’s Office has received no such complaints. This doesn’t mean that there are no cases, but nothing has come to his office.

In the interest of time, President Faber cut off questions.

6.4. P&S Council
P&S Council President Parris said that, in the interest of time, she would send her comments to President Faber to share with FS.

6.5. Student Government
SG President Fritz said that students appreciate the work that faculty have done. It’s been a tough semester on the teaching and learning side. SG’s long term goal is to raise awareness
about open educational resources (OER), which are educational materials that are free of cost and access barriers. Last year SG honored 19 faculty members who used OER. This year they will honor 29 faculty. Using OER helps keep costs low, which helps with students’ learning.

Tomorrow, SG will debate a resolution to shift online all classes that can be taught online (non-experiential classes). SG President Fritz said that she was unsure how the vote will turn out. She said that she did not agree with it; the one in-person class she has is the best part of her day, because she gets to interact with real live people. If the resolution passes, it would be forwarded to deans and departments on campus as a recommendation.

6.6. Graduate and Professional Student Senate
None

7. Special Order: Dina Eisenberg and Chuck Doran, Ombuds Office
Ombudsperson Eisenberg introduced herself and said that this is a service that the university provides to employees as a neutral, impartial, confidential, independent resource. It is appropriate to use the Ombuds Office to talk about issues that come up in the workday, to brainstorm solutions, and find resources in the university setting. Ombudsperson Doran also introduced himself.

Senator Menefee asked how many people they serve. Ombudsperson Doran said that ISU is their biggest client. Together Ombudspersons Eisenberg and Doran have sixty years of combined ombuds experience.

Senator Tener asked whether the Ombuds Office reports statistics to the university on cases or individuals who visit. Ombudsperson Doran said that they provide reports on anonymized trends. The reports focus on issues, not individuals. These reports let the university know what the issues are, but don’t inform the administrators about who came to the office. The Ombuds Office is committed to confidentiality and privacy.

Senator Oberhauser asked whether this was a short-term contract with ISU or a permanent arrangement. Ombudsperson Doran said that that decision lies with ISU administration. The current contract is through the end of the year. If ISU wants to renew the contract, they would welcome that.

8. Good of the Order
None

9. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 – 3:30 p.m. - Webex