

University Planning and Budget Committee
Minutes of the Meeting July 28th, 2020 via Webex

Members Present: J. Melnyk, S. Cohen, P. LeMaire, M. Fallon, E. Pana, S. Hazan, J. Gamache, Y. Kirby, L. Washko, J. Snyder, M. McCarthy, S. Petras, D. Dauwalder, M. Fallon, N. Al-Masoud

Chair J. Melnyk called the meeting to order at 1:48 pm.

Minutes: A motion by N. Al-Masoud and seconded by S. Hazan to approve the minutes from July 14th was approved.

No announcements.

IPC Report: IPC met on July 27th and voted to approve approximately 1.6 million dollars of funding for predominantly COVID-19 related expenses.

From the CFO:

C. Casamento identified that 2.4 million dollars in expenses received reimbursement related to COVID-19. Information is also being provided to the System Office related to FEMA reimbursement.

From the Provost:

D. Dauwalder updated the committee on the process for add/drop related to students registering for specific sections of courses, whether they were Hyflex, Synchronous online, or Asynchronous online.

From OIRA:

Y. Kirby updated the committee on enrollment numbers. CCSU is down 6.7% compared to last year.

New Business:

The following questions were submitted for discussion by S. Cohen.

1. *What role has faculty governance (Faculty Senate and its committees) played in the decision-making concerning fall classes?*

Members of the faculty senate leadership participated on the various workgroups that generated reports related to the fall.

2. *How and by whom were decisions made about hyflex/online teaching assignments?*

The academic workgroup discussed criteria for features of classes that might lend themselves to HyFlex instruction and then solicited feedback about these classes from Chairs. Deans, at different times and using different methods, communicated with department chairs and faculty in determining which classes could or could not accommodate Hyflex or online only.

3. *How do we square the 1/3 reduction in contact hours for each class with our accreditors? There are rumors that faculty will be asked to provide the equivalent of 50 minutes of asynchronous instruction each week. True? How are we defining "asynchronous instruction"?*

Hybrid classes, by definition, involve a loss of seat time. We have been offering hybrid classes for years and we have blanket approval to offer fully online programs – NECHE is satisfied that we can effectively deliver direct instructional activities in online contexts. Like always, we are obligated to ensure that our instructional activities preserve NECHE's definition of the credit hour.

4. *What mechanism exists for faculty to ask questions about fall teaching and receive reliable answers? The current system--ask your chair, who doesn't know; have your chair ask your dean, who doesn't know; ask your colleagues, who may know someone on a workgroup who might have heard something but can't be sure; ask your faculty senator, who knows nothing; ask, in desperation, your colleague on UPBC, who knows nothing but promises to try to find out--clearly isn't working.*

Throughout the summer, factors affecting Fall 2020 were changing rapidly on a near daily basis. Nimble responding to these changes required rapid redirection of efforts. Sometimes communications being developed by the administration became moot within hours as new information emerged. General communications from workgroup reports and the COVID-19 website were available but were not tailored to specific questions. Communication between Deans and Department Chairs occurred but occurred differently across Schools and the College. The administration appreciates that the UPBC is one of the only shared governance bodies that meets over the summer (or winter for that matter). As such, the UPBC can serve as an information conduit between Fall and Spring semesters.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.