

Meeting Minutes of the Faculty Student Council  
Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 2:30pm – 4:30pm  
Via Webex

**Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes**

Luisa Borrell, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm. She announced that this meeting, which is being held virtually due to COVID-19, had a quorum. She then requested and received approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 26, 2020.

**Dean's Report**

Ayman thanked the faculty, students and staff for responding to the pandemic challenges with resiliency and strength. The transition from the 32 in-person courses to online courses was very smooth for the school. He suggested that some faculty may wish to convert their courses to online and, if they so choose, they will have the option for compensation upon signing the standard contract. Faculty/student evaluations for the 34 existing online courses will occur this semester as normal, but CUNY Central is suspending formal evaluations for courses that were converted to online. Faculty may wish to conduct informal student evaluations to get feedback for future quality improvements. At some point, CUNY Central may consider a pass/fail option for converted courses. He also noted that he is serving on the CUNY Central COVID-19 Task Force and he has been very involved in advising the Chancellor on issues like converting CUNY's childcare centers into centers to serve the State's emergency workforce and on student quarantine matters.

Turning to budgetary matters, he noted that the \$70 million in surplus for New York State's budget before the health crisis has turned into a \$4 billion deficit, which could increase. This may require the school to revise its expectations in spending, including for faculty hiring, for the 20/21 fiscal year. In order to keep the school financially sound the focus of the faculty and staff needs to be on new student recruitment, as well as continuing to develop new internal and external academic collaborations. He reminded the faculty that NYS has put a ban on tax levy travel for business purposes until further notice. Any faculty wishing to use non-tax levy funds for travel should share their plans with Doris for review and approval from the Dean. Discussion followed.

**Assessment Committee Report**

*Ilias Kavouras, Assessment Committee Chair*

Ilias provided an update on the COACHE survey, which was administered last year. The survey is a tool to evaluate and improve faculty life. Currently the task force on the survey is analyzing the data and will then create a plan for SPH which addresses issues and recommends improvements. He will report back to the FSC on the task force's recommendations at a future meeting. Ilias then asked the GSGA president to make an announcement.

Pavan Lohia, president of SPH's Graduate Student Government Association, announced that as of February 13, 2020, CUNY SPH has an official chapter, named Epsilon Chi, of the Delta Omega Honorary Society. He thanked Ilias for his support and requested that faculty interested in serving in the chapter contact him or Ilias. Ayman congratulated Pavan and the students for their initiative in this important endeavor.

### **Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs' Report**

*Ashish Joshi, Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs*

Ashish reported on the faculty and student preparedness survey and gave the FSC an update on academic continuity. The academic continuity working group successfully transitioned all in-person classes to online in short order and then rolled out the faculty and student preparedness survey to establish a data-driven approach to evaluate the course transition. The response rate for the survey was 100% for faculty teaching this semester and 59% for students. Students overwhelmingly reported that their needs for resources, like Internet connection and computers, were being met. Faculty also reported positive experiences with the transition. Next steps planned include developing a student questionnaire to evaluate their experiences with distance learning, doing an ongoing evaluation of course delivery, and measuring faculty satisfaction with distance learning support. He then thanked Susanna Marte for her work to meet the needs of students in the field practicum.

### **Dean for Research's Report**

*Michele Kiely, Associate Dean for Research, SPaR*

Michele reminded the faculty that proposals related to the COVID-19 grant program are due March 30. She said she would resend the announcement about this grant opportunity, as well as send a notice on federal grant opportunities related to COVID-19 research. She also requested that faculty review the Research Foundation's web page for direction on their research work during the pandemic.

### **Senior Associate Dean of Administration's Report**

*Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean of Administration*

Susan thanked the public safety, IT, facilities and business office staff for their dedication in taking care of the SPH community. She noted that there will be a skeleton staff onsite every Thursday; faculty and staff should notify public safety if they need to come to campus for any reason. Susan then asked the FSC to review the memo which was sent out from SVC Silverblatt, regarding "Distance Learning and Contractual Obligations, Tenure Clock and Appointment/Non-Reappointment Notices." Ayman noted that one of the provisions is that for those being considered for tenure this fall, the University will extend the tenure clock by one year and requests to do so should be e-mailed to Ashish.

### **Governance Plan**

Luisa opened the discussion on SPH's proposed Governance Plan revisions and summarized the three issues still open for discussion before a vote is taken. These are: have budget review authority reside within a committee of the Council; have the third candidate for chair selected by the dean after consultation with the department, rather than a vote by the department; and have the school-wide APT committee include the

dean and his designee as non-voting members and also have the dean chair the APT. Luisa noted that the academic departments have been meeting to discuss these topics and the other proposed revisions to the Plan, and she asked the department chairs to comment. In the commentary that followed, the chairs indicated majority support for the first two issues. However, there was mixed discussion and lack of agreement on the third proposal—some faculty thought it would be beneficial to have the dean participate as a non-voting member and others thought that the dean’s presence could negatively impact the committee’s deliberations. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the school have an ombudsperson and it was agreed to. Luisa said that the role will be added to the Governance Plan. Discussion continued on the pros and cons for a role for the dean as a non-voting member of the APT. One proposal might be to reserve a portion of the meeting for discussion without the dean present. Others suggested that committee members might be reluctant to express their opinions in the dean’s presence. It was noted that the non-tenured faculty on the Task Force were in favor of the proposal, while the tenured faculty were more divided.

Discussion then followed on the procedures for taking a vote. Executive Counsel Patricia Stein noted that the Open Meeting Law and the Freedom of Information Law required a public vote. Executive sessions, where votes are taken without the presence of the public, are limited to matters of public safety, investigations, litigation, discipline, and the like.

Pat then read the list of names of the eligible faculty and student voting members of the FSC. Then the voting members were asked to vote on the three items in the Governance Plan: have budget review authority reside within a committee of the Council; have the third candidate for chair selected by the dean after consultation with the department, rather than a vote by the department; and have the school-wide APT committee include the dean and his designee as non-voting members and also have the dean chair the APT. At the conclusion of the vote, the votes were tallied as follows: Q1: 29 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention; Q2, 22 yes, 7 no, 2 abstentions; Q3: 14 yes, 14 no, 3 abstentions. Pat noted that 2/3 of the voting membership of the FSC, which is 30 members, is needed to pass an amendment to the Governance Plan, thus none of the three items passed. After discussion, Luisa said that a special meeting of the FSC will be set up shortly to review these items again. It was stressed that all faculty will need to participate to achieve a quorum so that the requisite 2/3 of the voting membership can be achieved.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Luisa adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Doris Suarez