

Meeting Minutes of the Governance Council
Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 2:30-4:30pm
via Zoom

Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes

Glen Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:35pm. He requested and received approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 24, 2021. He thanked the Governance Council for entrusting him with his new role as chair. He also noted that a special meeting of the Governance Council will be added to the calendar on April 15. The purpose of the special meeting is to have a full and open discussion of the proposed new By-laws for the SPH. The By-laws will be sent the week before the meeting so that there is ample time for review.

Dean's Report

Ayman welcomed Glen Johnson as the new chair. He reported on the recent events held to celebrate the SPH's fifth anniversary as a stand-alone school, which included an event to launch Professor Freudenberg's latest book and a symposium featuring the frontline work on COVID-19 of our faculty, students and alumni. He invited everyone to attend tomorrow's culminating event—a special Grand Rounds conversation with the Commissioner of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Dr. Dave Chokshi. He thanked the faculty, staff, alumni and students for making these past five years such successful ones and for making his experience as dean of the school the most dynamic and pleasant period of his career.

Reporting on the budget, Ayman said that the university's financial forecast is much improved. The state legislature is now meeting to finalize the budget, which is expected to include funds to erase the TAP gap and a large infusion of funds for the capital budget. He also noted that the plan for the acquisition of the 8th floor for the school, which will be designated as research space, has been approved by CUNY Central and the negotiations and planning will now proceed. Ayman then shared the wonderful news that SPH was awarded the prestigious 2021 ASPPH Harrison Spencer Award for Outstanding Community Service for our work with the community on COVID-19, and he thanked all those who participated in this community-based work. This award is a reflection of the school's growing reputation, as is the ongoing increase in admissions. He said that he is resuming the searches for three new faculty hires that were suspended last year, and will seek approval from the VRB/CUNY Central to hire the final candidates. This is necessary to help maintain the current student/faculty ratio.

Ayman thanked Glen for taking over leadership of the ad hoc Governance Plan Task Force process to revise the SPH's By-laws. He noted the special April 15 meeting of the Council to discuss the by-laws, and he emphasized the importance of having substantial input from the Council before the draft is finalized and voted on. Shared governance, open discussion, and freedom to express one's opinion are critical not only for reaching consensus on the by-laws, but also to promote a culture of mutual respect and openness. Ayman then said that the Board of Trustees met this week and one item on the agenda was the unanimous approval of Nevin Cohen as tenured associate professor. The Governance Council expressed its congratulations to Nevin.

APT Committee Report

Christian Grov, APT Committee Chair

Christian reviewed the draft of the revised APT Guidelines, which was sent in advance of the meeting. He noted that the purpose of the revisions is to reflect current practices and to clarify the appointment, promotion and tenure processes. He reviewed the key changes and he invited faculty to email him comments and thoughts on these changes. He then noted that Diana Romero is the school-wide representative on the APT. He suggested that should an alternate be needed, Levi Waldron, the runner up to Diana in the election, could serve in this capacity. Discussion followed.

Assessment Committee Report

Ilias Kavouras, Assessment Committee Chair

Ilias reported on the Assessment Committee's faculty, staff and student survey "Working remotely and moving forward." He reviewed the participation rates in the survey, which were much higher for faculty at nearly 70% than for students at 17.5%. Next steps include assembling discussion groups, reporting back to the Governance Council and the SPH community on the Committee's recommendations, and providing feedback on the reopening process. These steps will take place between now and May so that the Committee's work can help inform the school's reopening plan.

Curriculum Committee Report

Sean Haley, Curriculum Committee Chair

Sean reported on three votes requested today for proposed changes to the curriculum and course catalogue. The first vote is regarding changes to the language for course PUBH 698, a capstone course. The Chair called for a motion to hold a vote, which was seconded and approved. The vote yielded the following result: 33 yes votes, 4 no votes, 4 abstentions. The Chair said that the motion is carried and approved by the Governance Council. Sean reported on the two proposed catalogue changes. The first is regarding transfer of credit and course residency. It changes the time transfer credits taken may be applied toward the degree from five to seven years preceding the time of the request. In the discussion that followed, concern was expressed about the quality of transfer courses and a suggestion was made that there should be a role for the department chair to review transfer requests. Sean said that he would table the motion and bring it back to the Committee for further review and discussion. Sean said that the second proposed catalogue change is regarding limits on non-degree student credits. The proposed language clarifies the limits on non-degree credits and master's degree matriculation. The Chair called for a motion to hold a vote, which was seconded and approved. The vote yielded the following result: 38 yes votes, 0 no votes, 2 abstentions. The Chair said that the motion is carried and approved by the Governance Council.

Associate Dean for Research's Report

Michele Kiely, Associate Dean for Research, SPaR

Michele said that the Research Foundation has developed training videos and updated manuals, which can be found on their training website. These videos provide faculty support in the RF systems and procedures. Additional training materials are being developed and the faculty will be notified when these become available. In the discussion that followed, Heidi Jones reminded Michele that at the Council's last meeting, a request was made that a summary of the substance of research grants be presented at a future meeting. Michele said she is now preparing this and will present the information at an upcoming meeting.

Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs' and Senior Associate Dean for Administration's Report

Ashish Joshi, Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs

Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean for Administration

Susan reported on the status of the opening plans for the fall, which are definitely in flux. She noted that the reopening plan is on the SPH website. CUNY Central has requested an updated reopening plan be submitted on May 25, 2021, which puts forth a plan for the school to operate at 25% capacity or more in the fall. CUNY Central has left it up to the individual schools to determine how to define what 25% capacity means, so there is flexibility in the school's approach to its reopening plans. She is working on a process for updating the current plan that includes all stakeholders and is expanding the Campus Reopening Committee to include center and institute directors, the chair of the Assessment Committee and the Governance Council chair. They will review and comment on the new plan.

Ashish said that he has completed a survey of students on the reopening, and a faculty/staff survey, including research staff, was just distributed. He discussed the approach for planning for in person courses in the fall, which includes mapping enrollment to available classrooms and the size of classrooms, taking into account the social distancing rules. He then reviewed the preliminary results of the student survey. So far, about 40% of the student body has participated in the survey and it remains open for additional input. He reviewed the data regarding master's and doctoral students' comfort with online and in person courses, according to different parameters. About 80% of the students would enroll if the school offered only remote classes and only 4% indicated they would not enroll under this scenario. Additionally, most of the students indicated they had no difficulty with their online courses, though they did express the need for additional social support and engagement with the faculty and their fellow students. Discussion followed.

Other Business

Distinguished Professors Luisa Borrell and Denis Nash reported on the teaching workload of distinguished professors. Denis said that there are 3 distinguished professors at CUNY SPH. Campuses traditionally provide one course release to these professors, but the decision to do so is up to each campus. The SPH administration decided not to provide the course release to the newest distinguished professors—Luisa and himself. However, the other, longer-standing distinguished professor, Nick Freudenberg, does have a course release. He also noted that this policy was not discussed with the former FSC. He said that as the newest distinguished professor, he and Luisa feel there should be equity for all such professors and also that there should be transparency about the policy. He said that he and Luisa are asking for a vote to revisit and discuss this policy, since the governance body has not had the opportunity to review and vote. Ayman noted that the course release decision is not a matter for the Governance Council since the policy is pre-determined via an official agreement between the University and the PSC. This agreement leaves it entirely up to the administration to determine an approach and practice that must be financially sustainable for the school. Thus, the school is fully compliant with the PSC bargaining agreement in its current position. No school policy is necessary since SPH follows the university guidelines fully. He also noted that SPH already has the lowest workload at 4 courses/year than all other CUNY schools which require workloads of 6 courses/year. He pointed out that the financial impact on the school going forward could be quite substantial, especially if he increases the school's number of distinguished professors, which is something he is committed to do. He also noted that Nick is the exception because his arrangement was with Hunter College, before consolidation, and the school is honoring this prior agreement. In the discussion that followed, several faculty members suggested that the issue be discussed at a future meeting of the Council or in further discussion with the administration. At the conclusion

of the discussion, the Chair said that it was important to give time to this topic at the meeting today in the spirit of transparency.

Spring Cooper reminded the Council that there is a faculty group on pedagogy and teaching and she invited other faculty to contact her if they want to be involved.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Glen adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Doris Suarez

Addendum to the Meeting Minutes of the
Governance Council of March 24, 2021
Special Meeting, Thursday April 15, 2021 2:30-
4:30pm
via Zoom

Call to Order

Glen Johnson, Chair, called this special meeting of the Governance Council to order at 2:35 p.m. The purpose of the special meeting is to have a full and open discussion of the proposed new By-Laws for the SPH, which were emailed to council members on April 5 and again on April 12.

Glen provided an overview of the major revisions of the By-Laws. The overarching goals of the revisions are to enhance inclusiveness and participation. The By-Laws define the roles, responsibilities, composition and terms for governing bodies within the school, according to University policies (By-Laws of the CUNY Board of Trustees and other CUNY policies) and the school's new Governance Plan. The new By-Laws require approval of the SPH Governance Council. He noted that there would be no vote at today's meeting; a vote would be held at the Council's May meeting. Glen then recapped the major changes in the Governance Plan which include: the inclusion of staff, adjunct and research faculty, and associate and assistant deans with faculty titles as members of the Council; expanded membership of the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committees; and the inclusion of centers and institutes as part of the School's structure. He also recapped the process of revising the By-Laws, which overall was a consensus approach, providing ongoing feedback to faculty on standing committees, departments, and centers and institutes, from the broadly-represented ad hoc working group.

Glen reviewed other changes in the By-Laws which overall harmonize the By-Laws with the new Governance Plan and SPH practice. They also define voting, selection and election procedures; define composition, duties and terms of standing committees; include two new committees, the Budget Committee and the Committee for Equity and Inclusion (he noted new language describing the duties of the Committee for Equity and Inclusion, which were submitted after the revised By-Laws were distributed); terms for directors and deputy directors and guidelines for Centers and Institutes; and new roles for the Council, including secretary, parliamentarian, and ombudsperson. He then invited discussion from the Council.

At the suggestion of the Council, Glen shared the By-Laws on open screen and the Council reviewed the document page-by-page, with Glen recording the changes to the text of the By-Laws agreed to as the discussion proceeded. Other suggestions included that a primer be offered on the roles of parliamentarian and ombudsperson after approval of the By-Laws, that a list of names for these and the secretary role be generated for selection according to the process as defined in the Governance Plan, and that the language in Article VI, item 5 be clarified. At the conclusion of the discussion, Glen said that he would share the revised By-Laws with track changes prior to the May 12 Governance Council meeting and invite further comment and changes. A final version with track changes will be distributed prior to this May meeting for discussion and a vote at the meeting.

There being no further business, Glen adjourned the special meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Doris Suarez