

Meeting Minutes of the Faculty Student Council
Wednesday, October 28, 2020, 2:30-4:30pm via
Zoom

Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes

Elizabeth Geltman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm. She confirmed that a quorum was present for the meeting. She requested and received approval of the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2020. She noted that the FSC meetings will adhere to Roberts Rules of Order for Online Meetings, and she reviewed the timeline for submission of the FSC agendas and materials for the Steering Committee calls and the FSC meetings.

Dean's Report

Ayman said that he is the new Chair-Elect of the Board of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH). He will serve in this position before becoming Chair in two years. He was elected by his peers who represent 172 members of the schools and programs in the Association, and he noted that he shares this recognition with the SPH community who worked tirelessly over the last five years to raise the reputation and excellence of the school. Turning to the budget, Ayman said that the situation has changed little since he reported at the FSC's September meeting. The school is still being funded month to month and the assumption is that there will be a 20% budget cut across CUNY for this fiscal year. The good news is that SPH is in solid financial shape. Turning to concerns about retrenchment, Ayman said that at this time the University is not considering this, nor is the school. For those interested, CUNY's policies concerning retrenchment are posted on the FSC website.

Assessment Committee Report

Ilias Kavouras, Assessment Committee Chair

Ilias said that the Assessment Committee is working on the AES evaluation (administrative and educational support units). The focus of the evaluation is on student satisfaction with the transition to a fully online operational mode, and input currently is being gathered from students, faculty and staff. He will report on these results at a future meeting in the Spring 2021 semester. He then reported on the COACHE faculty satisfaction survey. The report and a short presentation are available on the FSC Blackboard website. Next steps for review of the survey by faculty include a discussion board and a drop box for comments. He then provided an overview of the report. Six benchmarks, out of 25, received < 3 on a scale of 1-5: interdisciplinary work, mentoring, tenure clarity, tenure policies, governance adaptability, and governance understanding. Ilias said that two town hall meetings on the survey will be held later this month. The response to the survey should be finalized before the end of the calendar year. Additionally, the survey results and recommendations will be coordinated with the strategic planning process now underway. Discussion followed.

Admissions Committee Report

Ghada Soliman, Admissions Committee Chair

Ghada reported on the Spring and Fall 2021 admissions deadlines. The review of applications for Spring 2021 began on October 1st. The Fall 2021 first deadline is March 1, 2021, but admissions will be rolling until mid-August 2021. The Committee received a request to revisit the Fall and Spring deadlines. In response, the Committee collected the data on Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 applications and acceptances by date. The data show that applications and acceptances increase toward the end of the recruitment period, and continue to grow in all departments closer to the cut-off date. Thus, longer admissions periods are much more beneficial for acceptance and enrollment growth. She then reported on the GRE pilot in the epidemiology department which will reconsider the requirement for the GRE scores in the PhD and MPH Epi applications. Applications will be evaluated with and without the GRE score and assessed for impact on future admission. Reporting on Fall 2020 admissions, Ghada said that the school received a record number of applications this Fall – an increase of 45% compared to last Fall – and matriculated a record number of new students. She then reviewed the current admissions data for Spring 2021. Finally, she encouraged faculty to participate in the general and program-specific information sessions for potential students which the Admissions Office is planning for this Fall, and she shared the schedule for these sessions with the FSC.

Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH)

Bruce Lee, Professor, Health Policy and Management

Bruce Lee introduced the proposed new Center at SPH. The mission of the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH) is to develop and implement new technologies and approaches to help decision making in health and public health. This includes finding ways to help various decision makers and policymakers better understand and communicate key issues—such as obesity, health inequities, COVID—that affect public health. Health and public health are complex, involving complex systems that cross many different disciplines. New technologies such as computer modeling and artificial intelligence (AI), Big Data approaches, and other communications like social media can be utilized to help improve decision making. Bruce noted that he has many years of experience building and maintaining such a Center at Johns Hopkins University which spanned across multiple departments, schools, and disciplines and focused on applying systems approaches, methods, and tools to address obesity, H1N1, Ebola, and other non-communicable diseases, and was successfully grant funded. CATCH will also be multi-disciplinary and include faculty, staff and students throughout the school, as well as other schools, serving as a hub to provide opportunities for collaborations, research and teaching, and other efforts at SPH. CATCH will be funded by existing and future grants. Discussion followed on the distinction and differences between CATCH and the Center for Systems and Community Design (CSCD), another Center at the School, and the budget for the new center. The FSC Chair then called for a motion to hold a vote, which was seconded and approved. The vote yielded the following result: 32 yes votes, 6 no votes, 5 abstentions. The following motion carried and is approved by the FSC:

“Subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees of CUNY, the request to create a Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health, to be housed at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH), effective December 14, 2020, with projected financing of over four million dollars in extramural research and contracts, alongside modest contributions from the School, is hereby approved.

Explanation: The mission of the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy is to develop and implement new technologies and approaches to help decision making in the health and public health arena.”

Governance Plan

Executive Counsel Patricia Stein said that the proposed revised Governance Plan reflects the work of the Ad Hoc Governance Task Force over many meetings, as well as discussion at a March Town Hall meeting, at various departmental and other faculty meetings, and at a special April FSC online meeting. She referred the FSC to the blue-lined Plan in the meeting materials, which underscores the proposed revisions. She said that one issue remains from the September 16, 2020 FSC meeting where the proposed revised Plan was discussed. This issue—the composition of the School-wide APT Committee—should be polled in advance of the FSC considering whether to vote on the full Plan revisions. She then reviewed the two options concerning the composition of the School-wide APT Committee found in the meeting materials:

Option 1:

The Committee shall be comprised of ten members: the Dean or their designee (non-voting); the Chairpersons of the four departments; four other faculty members, one from each department elected by the voting faculty members of the respective department; and one at-large faculty member elected by the voting faculty members of the Council. Upon the affirmative vote of three faculty Committee members, the Committee may meet in executive session without the non-voting member present.

Option 2:

The Committee shall be comprised of nine members: the Chairpersons of the four departments; four other faculty members, one from each department elected by the voting faculty members of the respective department; and one at-large faculty member elected by the voting faculty members of the Council.

Discussion followed. At the conclusion of the discussion, the FSC Chair called for a poll on the two options. The poll yielded the following result: Option 1, 25 votes; Option 2, 9 votes; Abstentions, 5. Discussion then followed on the suggestion by Professor Heidi Jones to move forward with the option preferred by the majority so that the School can move forward with the revised Governance Plan, and also on the import of an abstention vote. It was recommended that a second poll be taken given the clarification on abstention votes just reviewed. At the conclusion of the discussion, the FSC Chair called for a second poll on the two options. The poll yielded the following result: Option 1, 32 votes; Option 2, 11 votes; Abstentions, 1. The motion to approve Option 1 carried and is “approved” by the FSC, and the Option 1 language is incorporated into the blue-lined proposed revised Governance Plan.

The FSC Chair called for a motion to hold a vote on whether to propose the amendments to the Governance Plan included in the blue-lined draft plan provided on October 19, 2020, as revised by the polling determination in favor of Option 1, noted above. The motion was seconded and approved. The vote yielded the following result: 33 yes votes; 3 no votes; 3 abstentions. With 20% of those present voting yes, the motion carried and is approved by the FSC.

The FSC Chair called for a motion to hold a vote on whether to adopt the proposed revisions to the Governance Plan. The motion was seconded and approved. The vote yielded the following result: 34 yes votes; 2 no votes; 5 abstentions. With at least two-thirds of those present voting yes, the motion to approve the Revised Governance Plan carried and is approved by the FSC.

Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs' Report

Ashish Joshi, Senior Associate Dean of Student and Academic Affairs

Ashish said that he is working with the Departmental Chairs on the spring course schedule. He will ask for faculty assistance in this endeavor as needed.

Dean for Research's Report

Michele Kiely, Associate Dean for Research, SPaR

Michele said that her report, which was emailed to the FSC, is submitted for the record. She also drew the FSC's attention to the new CUNY College rankings for research expenditures. CUNY SPH had a 23% increase in expenditures from FY2019 and moved up in the rankings from 13th to 8th place. She also reminded the faculty that the PSC CUNY proposal system is now open and reviewed the deadlines. Finally, Michele provided the dates for the RF University-wide seminar on the PSC grants.

Senior Associate Dean of Administration's Report

Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean of Administration

Susan noted that CUNY has purchased Zoom licenses for all faculty and staff; IT will contact faculty shortly to set up the new accounts. She also asked faculty interested in setting up a Microsoft Teams account to submit a request to IT.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Elizabeth adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Doris Suarez