

## Instructional Taskforce Minutes

June 24, 2020

Jeff Popke, Chair of the Faculty, welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he appreciated everyone's willingness to be involved in this important work. He said faculty officers have been concerned about the lack of shared governance around the reopening effort in general and want faculty to have input and voice in the plans. The Calendar Implementation Taskforce (CIT), relied mostly on volunteers, but in this case he and the officers thought it was important to work through our existing Faculty Senate committees. They are always sensitive about asking people to do double duty, but they think it is really important that the Senate not be bypassed in these deliberations and development of feedback. This work is important because it will shape in a aspects of reopening and instructional activities in a positive fashion, but it will also reinforce shared governance.

Jeff Popke acknowledged that there are still questions about whether any of this is even feasible. He recognizes that everyone is confronting some challenging circumstances and these are questions that should be asked at the Town Hall meeting in a couple hours. He thinks it is best to take for granted that the reopening will occur and that it is important to have faculty experience and expertise in the conversation. He hopes this group will engage in the work in a way that is productive, which is exactly what the CIT did, and it helped in a positive way to shape what our calendar looks like now. He referenced the email he sent yesterday that had a list of topics around instruction. They included topics like syllabus language, cleaning, masks, and expectations of students. That list comes from two different sources. One source is a compilation of concerns expressed to him and faculty officers from individual faculty members, as well as things mentioned in the reopening plan that did not have a lot of fine-grained detail. The second source is Provost Hayes. Provost Hayes reached out to him and said there are some specific things they needed more guidance on.

Jeff Popke said that in some cases he thinks this group will be able to help shape our policies. He identifies two different audiences for recommendations to come out of the committee. He wants to go back to administration and say this is what the Instructional Taskforce says we should do. Faculty Officers have weekly meetings with Academic Council and the Interim Chancellor and can discuss these recommendations there. In other cases, the audience will be fellow faculty colleagues, and he wants to give them syllabus language or some best practices to make sure reopening is safe as it can possibly be and maintain integrity of teaching and learning in these spaces.

He went on to note that the Faculty Senate committees that form core of this committee are Admission and Retention Policies, Faculty Welfare, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and General Education and Instructional Effectiveness. Most members represent one of those committees. There are also people at this meeting who have agreed to serve as resource persons. Wendy Creasey from Academic Technologies, Cyndi Bellacero from the Academic Programs and Accreditation section of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR), Sarah Williams from the Office for Faculty Excellence (OFE), Dawn Pilgrim-Dunn from the Space Planning section of IPAR, and Kevin Carraway from Materials Management. If the members feel other people can provide guidance or resources, they can be invited to join.

Jeff Popke referenced an email he sent about 90 minutes ago, which proposed a set of issues that this group might address and then grouped them into proposed subcommittees: Expectations and Practices, Contingency Planning, Physical Spaces, Laboratory Spaces and Policies.

He went on to say that the Expectations and Practices Subcommittee will consider things like syllabus language. It is up to this group to decide whether any particular syllabus language should be required or just a strong suggestion or best practice suggestion. This has to do with things like attendance, planning for absences, what kind of policies should govern attendance. We do not want to incentivize anyone to come to class if they have illness and strict attendance policies should probably be discouraged. Jeff Popke noted the suggestion in the reopening plan for seating charts to help with contact tracing. Someone needs to be charged with marking off seats so students will not sit in particular places. He explained that previous groups have not really considered what classroom spaces are used and in any given instance what does social distancing look like in those spaces. The officers chatted with Academic Council today a little about this requirement for 6 feet of distance. CIT recommended 50% capacity, but it is not certain whether in certain classrooms that will actually work to maintain 6 feet of distance. Another topic is face coverings and space cleaning. What should be communicated to students about cleaning their own spaces and mask wearing?

Beth Bee noted that this group will be making recommendations for faculty and instructors, but also for administration. She is a little bit confused because it sounds like faculty may need to be responsible for setting up their own classrooms for social distancing. Or is it that not known?

Jeff Popke said it is not known. This group may need to re-read those sections of the reopening plan. Unless this group feels strongly about this, he does not think they could make different recommendations about the distance (e.g., 8 feet instead of 6). Wherever those ambiguities still exist, the group can try to provide more guidance.

Dawn Pilgrim-Dunn provided some background on what her office has done to get to that 50% recommendation. The Facility Use group worked in tandem with the Registrar's Office to look at the available rooms and the courses. Ricky Hill determines a lot of classroom capacities based on past fire marshal rulings. They set the enrollment limit and 50% capacity cutoff based on their calculations of maintaining 6 feet of space between occupants and the room sizes. Most of the classrooms are able to reduce to 50% capacity and maintain 6 feet of social distance between the occupants. Some classrooms will only be able to maintain 3 feet of distance. One thing she would ask from this group is for recommendations that no desks be moved or flipped upside down. There is nowhere to store the extra desks and placing them in a hall would be a fire hazard. The Facility Use group thought some type of tape or stickers should be placed on the desks and a seating chart can be made after the students select their desks on the first day. The instructor can indicate that will be the student's seat every day of the course. The Facility Use group did not want to make the guidance too specific because they knew they could not cover every consideration for what will be best for your classroom use. When talking with the Provost, he thought stickers may be a good idea, but they are not sure of how everyone will be using the class space.

Rebecca Harris said that as an instructor, it would be immensely helpful or essential to know how many students the rooms that she is assigned to can hold. She assumes that somebody with background and authority to do this would go around and examine every single room to teach in to assess them for this new capacity. Her hope is that information would be available to faculty by August 1<sup>st</sup> at the absolute latest, which would give them 10 days to figure out how to manage the semester or block. The best option would be to have it by July 15<sup>th</sup> because faculty will have to make accommodations with the space that is available.

Jeff Popke said the reallocation of classrooms is still ongoing.

Dawn Pilgrim-Dunn said she has conducted an assessment of the spaces and Facilities is still thinking of the best way to publicize that information. A placard is possibly going to be posted in every classroom with the new reduced capacity. She believes it is very possible to have the new capacity of the rooms posted somewhere viewable by faculty by July 15. She will talk with the Provost about that. They have done some preliminary studies about what the new capacities are.

Jeff Popke noted that part of it is that faculty do not even know what classrooms they will be assigned.

Dawn Pilgrim-Dunn said her office had to do preliminary capacity study for the Registrar's Office so they can work on moving them.

Jean-Luc Scemama asked when her office was evaluating room capacities, did they consider that not all rooms are considered equal? Like some spaces are packed closer together?

Dawn Pilgrim-Dunn said they had taken that into consideration.

Jeff Popke noted that Jean-Luc Scemama came up with the list of issues and subcommittees, so he was working with his suggestions. He thinks it would be helpful to have a Physical Space subcommittee to work with Dawn on these things. Recommendations for cleaning is something that Provost Hayes mentioned to him and is one reason why Kevin Carraway was asked to be in this group. There will be an option for faculty to use a shield instead of a mask. Faculty will be able to use them, but he is not sure what the cleaning requirements for those shields will be.

Another subcommittee will be the Contingency Planning subcommittee. This one has to do with policies or suggestions for coping with eventualities of reopening in the midst of a pandemic. There are going to be illnesses for students and faculty, and the possibility that we will have to shut down and have every course shift to a Distance Education (DE) instructional method as we did in spring. There are a whole host of issues about communicating these circumstances to students and being prepared for them. Maybe some policies or practices can be hosted at the OFE website. The reopening document suggests instructors should provide alternative delivery when students are quarantined, etc. This group may need to set out recommendations for things like having designated note takers, what happens when a department colleague becomes ill and is no longer able to teach for a time. Should faculty be sharing syllabi and giving access to their Canvas shell so people are ready to step in.

The last subcommittee will be for laboratory spaces and field trips. Laboratories have a slightly different approach. Provost Hayes said they do not intend to use plexiglass for instructional classroom spaces, but they do anticipate using them in lab spaces to help create safer environments. This subcommittee may require more people directly engaged in laboratory work.

Purifi Martínez asked when should these recommendations be ready. One of the things that has been discussed is the possibility that this group will have some of these recommendations ready by the July 7<sup>th</sup> special meeting of the Faculty Senate. She would like to ask the group if they think they will be able to work that quickly, or if they think more time is needed for these topics.

Jean-Luc Scemama agreed that time is of the essence.

Jeff Popke said he feels that the group can work that fast and that it is not going to be that time-consuming. Things can be done through a combination of email and a few 1-hour meetings.

Puri Martínez said she really hopes the group can do that, because as Jeff had mentioned, they have been receiving a lot of questions from faculty about the reopening document. They are the same questions over and over again. If they could announce, even without sending the agenda for the special meeting, that they have formed the taskforce and that subcommittees are working on recommendations to be presented at the special faculty senate meeting, that would be really valuable. It will give faculty a little more certainty in the midst of the uncertainty. She thinks it is important that this group finishes their work by July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Josie Bowman noted that she is from the College of Nursing and they have been working on recommendations a lot, but not really with faculty. They are getting more direction from administration. She feels like they do need to have some input, but is confused about how it works with her College, given the work that might have already been done. She is really interested in the space issue, but she does not know if people in the College of Nursing have already had that conversation. It is important, but it seems like everything has been taken out of faculty hands and someone else will tell them what to do, and she does not know whether other departments are different.

Jeff Popke said he had invited Josie Bowman for that very reason, to get the perspective of someone working within the Health Sciences division. Health Sciences seems to have gone in its own direction. It released its own reopening plan, and the suggestion of items he put on the agenda from Provost Hayes seems to apply mostly to Academic Affairs. He thinks that because instructional programs are quite different between Academic Affairs and Health Sciences, and Health Sciences courses often have clinical responsibilities, there have been a very different set of recommendations that are not directly part of this group. He encouraged Josie Bowman to ask and find out if there are issues that are not part of our conversation that should be.

Puri Martínez pointed out that while it is true that Health Sciences has already put out some recommendations, faculty officers have received some questions from faculty in the College of Nursing with concerns about decisions that have been made. She thinks that Josie Bowman's experience with what Health Sciences division faculty are being told will be very important, not so this group can make specific recommendations to them, but so faculty officers can bring concerns to administration. This group will have the faculty audience and the administration audience, so if Josie Bowman can tell

the group what is happening on that side, this group may not have as much of a direct impact, but faculty officers can still bring it to administration.

Josie Bowman said she will follow up with that.

Jeff Popke said it is also true that Faculty Senate represents all faculty, so we need to represent interests of all faculty. He asked Josie Bowman to please follow up and let them know if there are other issues this group needs to consider as they have these discussions.

Jeff Popke said there is a document in the Teams site for this group that has a list of the subcommittees. Everyone should be able to go in and open that document and sign up for one of the subcommittees. They may need some expertise outside this group for the laboratory committee but interested members should sign up for that one as well. All of the incoming officers are members of this taskforce and will be distributed among them to take the lead in scheduling the first meetings and electing chairs if necessary. Maybe then the full Taskforce can reconvene and see what the subcommittees came up with.

Puri Martínez said that when she and Jeff were planning this taskforce and what Senate committees might be working on it, they agreed that Eli Hvastkovs from Admission and Retention Policies Committee should be included because this group might develop language for syllabi. The officers just learned yesterday that the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is already working on a document that has to do with what happens if a student does not wear a mask. They are working on a document that says the first time, this is what is going to happen, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, with increasing penalties. Someone from that office should serve on the subcommittee dealing with mask use. The officers can liaise with the committees and brainstorm whether additional resource persons would be useful.

Marty Tucker-McLaughlin said she is also on the Admission and Retention Policies Committee and she is happy to be on that subcommittee.

Jeff Popke said that once everyone signs up for subcommittees, the officers will follow up with them in due course. He asked if there were any further questions, and ascertaining there were none, adjourned the meeting at 1:45 pm.