

DIVISIONAL COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Attendees: Chair Tom Hansford, Vice Chair Robin DeLugan, Christopher Viney, Nella Van Dyke, Patti LiWang, LeRoy Westerling, Jay Sharping, Michael Scheibner, Erin Hestir, Michael Dawson, Asmeret Asefaw Berhe, Carolin Frank, and Josué Medellin-Azuara.

Absent: Linda Hirst

I. Chair’s Announcements – Tom Hansford

A. Assembly of the Academic Senate (June 10, 2020)

- i. The full results of the systemwide survey of UC instructors and the preliminary results of a similar survey to UC undergraduate students regarding remote instruction were discussed. Survey results indicated that both instructors and undergraduate students do not believe that remote instruction is effective. Instructors also had serious concerns about giving exams in a remote setting; students reported issues with locating quiet spaces to take courses and challenges with internet connectivity.
- ii. Academic Council sent a memo to UC President Napolitano in support of ACA 5, a Bill currently in the state legislature that proposes to place an initiative on the state ballot to repeal Proposition 209. UC employees are allowed to endorse legislation in their professional capacity while the Bill is in the legislature, however, employees are no longer allowed to endorse the Bill in their professional capacity if the Bill passes the legislature and is placed on the ballot. UC employees are free to endorse any legislation as private citizens.
- iii. Academic Council began a conversation about policing in the UC system. The Council is forming a subcommittee to address this issue. Chair Hansford will keep Divisional Council members informed.

B. Meeting with Interim Chancellor Brostrom and EVC/Provost Camfield (June 12, 2020)

- i. The main topic of discussion was the recent anti-Black discrimination petition from faculty and students. Many of the demands in the petition are administratively-oriented. The administration will be creating an anti-Black violence task force for which it will seek Senate representation.
- ii. EVC/Provost Camfield proposed the creation of a program that is similar in concept to the UC Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship Program that would create a pipeline for academically excellent, underrepresented undergraduate students to pursue graduate studies.
- iii. EVC/Provost Camfield has requested the Senate’s assistance in addressing campus climate issues as they affect faculty members. As an example, some department chairs have attended optional campus trainings regarding climate given that climate is under their purview as chairs. However, EVC/Provost Camfield would welcome a suggestion to make the trainings mandatory.

C. Deans’ Council Meeting (June 15, 2020)

- i. Chair Hansford requested that UGC Chair Sharping and GC Chair Westerling be added to the task force. EVC/Provost Camfield agreed.
- ii. EVC/Provost Camfield agreed to take into account non-STEM research spaces in discussions and planning about relaunching campus research activities.

D. Senior Leadership Team Updates

- i. As of a few weeks ago, summer session enrollment is at its highest in UC Merced history.
- ii. The fall 2020 Statements of Intent to Register are lower than desired which will have negative ramifications for the campus budget.
- iii. SNS Dean Dumont, who is leading the work group tasked with addressing fall 2020 remote instruction, reported that 45% of the 60% of faculty who responded to a survey want remote instruction. The rest of the respondents prefer a hybrid model of instruction or in-person instruction. A Divisional Council member raised two issues: 1) current online solutions do not address the input/output needs for classes working with large datasets, and 2) Cloud-based solutions are not necessarily optimal due to the unknown cost of required software. UGC Chair Sharping responded that he will convey those concerns to the subcommittee.
- iv. The Merced County Public Health Department offered tentative parameters for employees to return to campus in the fall semester. The County stated that three positive coronavirus cases would constitute an outbreak and the campus would be subject to curtailment. The threshold for a complete campus shutdown would be one-hundred positive coronavirus cases. Chair Hansford reported that some meeting attendees believed one-hundred positive cases is too high.
- v. SE1 is close to reopening. The building was found to contain bacteria that causes Legionnaire's disease; this is common in buildings whose plumbing is not used for a long period of time. The building is being cleaned and sanitized to eliminate the bacteria.
- vi. The campus's equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) practices were reviewed. The findings revealed two major points: 1) the campus has structural problems which are more general than EDI; a lack of appropriate institutionalization has led to a reliance on personal networks and friendships. This has made it difficult to properly address climate problems. 2) The campus has serious, ongoing climate situations.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. The Agenda
- B. June 3 Meeting Minutes

Action: Due to time constraints, this item was tabled.

III. Discussion: Anti-Black Racism in relation to the petition “We Charge Anti-Blackness: Petition to Value Black Lives at UC Merced, June 3, 2020”

On June 11, 2020, members of Divisional Council were invited to reflect upon concrete ideas for a Senate action plan to address anti-Black racism and the mistreatment of minoritized populations.

UGC, CAP, CAPRA, CoR, GC, and D&E provided comments. Chairs of these committees were asked to briefly summarize their comments.

UGC Chair Sharping summarized UGC's memo. He pointed out that most course and program policies require the existing faculty to initiate them. Therefore, they perpetuate programs a lack diversity. Senate Chair Hansford praised the UGC's recommendation that the campus create a campaign to expand best practices in mentorship.

CAP Chair Van Dyke summarized CAP's memo which called for the administration to revise the MAPP to better align with the APM's language on diversity. Chair Van Dyke added that CAP is currently drafting a memo to EVC/Provost Camfield and VPF Matlock that contains a list of suggested MAPP revisions for AY 20-21; she will add to the memo that the MAPP should require, not merely encourage, additional lines of teaching evidence in faculty personnel cases. Continued reliance on student evaluations to assess faculty teaching is problematic since such feedback can be biased.

CAPRA Chair LiWang summarized CAPRA's memo which suggested that in the academic planning process, CAPRA could assert its own evaluative criteria that prioritize the hiring of faculty of color and hiring of faculty, which the committee anticipates will attract and maintain undergraduate and graduate students of color.

CoR Chair Scheibner summarized CoR's memo which stated 1) the need to diversify the pipeline into academia through encouraging undergraduate students from underrepresented groups to pursue graduate degrees and subsequent academic careers. This process should begin even earlier, in middle school, and should also include the development of K-12 teachers so that they can advise their students on the various career pathways they can pursue with a college degree. 2) the university provide internships and other research opportunities to students from HBCUs and support UC faculty who mentor these students.

GC Chair Westerling summarized GC's memo which recommended a variety of ways to advance the campus's EDI efforts: 1) revision of the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook and Graduate Groups' policies and procedures to address the mentorship of graduate students and conflict resolution between graduate students and faculty. This effort was initiated by a work group of GC and FWAF members. 2) wider dissemination of existing (and new) campus support mechanisms for graduate students.

D&E Chair Berhe summarized D&E's position. The committee is deeply concerned about the lack of accountability in ensuring that diversity and equity are adequately addressed in the hiring process, both for faculty and high-level administrators. Despite the progress made at the campus level, D&E has found that there remains resistance within some departments to meeting the University's DEI goals.

In the absence of CoC Chair Hirst, CoC member Dawson stated that CoC is developing principles related to representation on Senate committees.

FWAF Chair Frank asked that Divisional Council keep in mind the service burden on faculty members.

CRE Chair Viney stated that the Senate bylaws and regulations should reflect our campus EDI aspirations. He added that faculty should educate themselves so they can be proactive and help their students to succeed.

Chair Hansford asked Divisional Council members what concrete steps the Senate should recommend. Divisional Council members recommended: 1) increase diversity in faculty hiring, 2) interrogate policies and procedures (e.g. MAPP and graduate groups' policies and procedures) to address EDI, and 3) make faculty accountable for improving faculty climate.

Chair Hansford stated that he will empanel a working group of Divisional Council to draft a short, coherent action plan. Senate Vice Chair DeLugan will chair the working group. Divisional Council members Josué Medellin-Azuara, Erin Hestir, and Christopher Viney volunteered to serve.

D&E Chair Berhe suggested that Divisional Council could endorse D&E's memo which has already been transmitted to the administration.

Action: Chair Hansford will solicit Divisional Council's endorsement of D&E's memo via email.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm

Attest: Tom Hansford, Senate Chair