

Arts & Sciences Chairs Meeting
Tuesday, February 2, 2021
9:00-10:30 am, via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Jose Alamillo, Sean Anderson, Dana Baker, Frank Barajas, Geoff Buhl, Stephen Clark, Sonsoles de Lacalle, Colleen Delaney, Erich Fleming, Blake Gillespie, Andrea Grove, Kimmy Kee-Rose, Liz King, Lynette Landry, Brad Monsma, Christina Smith, Michael Soltys, Vandana Kohli, Phil Hampton, Chanda Cunningham-Spence, Stephanie Guerrero

Guest: Provost Avila

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes were approved for January 26, 2021.

II. Information Items

Guest Provost Avila

Provost Avila gave introductory remarks and thanked the Chairs Council for the vital role that they play in the leadership of A&S programs and the university. He spoke to the importance of prioritizing instruction and indicated that he will be distribute a division-wide memo about the planning and intended modality for the fall 2021 semester. Provost Avila spent the remaining time responding to questions/comments from Chairs.

Provost Avila clarified that he wishes to better prepare and assist faculty in their career trajectories, most notably in areas of teaching and research. He spoke to the changes in roles and responsibilities that occur once tenure has been achieved, specifically in faculty's ability to focus on new areas of research. He hopes to provide resources such as reassigned time and travel funding for faculty to engage in research and scholarly work.

Provost Avila provided more information about the campus approach in determining the modality of course offerings and more specifically, the capacity at which campus should be repopulated. He indicated that approximately 25% of offerings will remain virtual with the remaining 75% to be offered face-to-face. Provost Avila assured the Chairs Council that the situation is being closely monitored and the campus remains committed to the health and safety of its students and employees. Provost Avila encouraged Chairs to consult CBA guidelines and follow shared governance when making their class schedules.

Provost Avila confirmed that he is actively committed to disseminating data on projections and enrollments patterns on a regular basis. He recognized that this information is especially important for programs such as Mathematics and English that serve majority of the incoming freshman population. Without this type of enrollment data and projections, it may become extremely difficult for programs to plan ahead.

III. Discussion Items

Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Council (AABAC) Update

Chair Anderson shared that there are no major updates to report at this time. The AABAC will reconvene toward the end of the spring semester.

Fall Planning

Dean Kohli addressed the fall scheduling information provided by Provost Avila and recommended that the Chairs Council use the remaining meeting time to develop three to five best practice recommendations on how fall 2021 schedules can be developed to achieve administration's target of 75/25% target. The following best practices were discussed:

1. Courses taken by first year students (freshmen and incoming transfers) should be taught in-person to support student success. Care should be used to ensure an equitable impact on lecturers.
2. Student success information from last year's virtual learning outcomes such as retention/attrition, grades should be reviewed when determining whether a class is better suited to a particular modality.
3. Those courses that require face-to-face engagement such as labs and studios should be prioritized.
4. All classes that embed high impact practices such as internships, undergraduate research and service learning should be offered face-to-face.
5. Instructor's teaching effectiveness and personal hardships should be considered as the schedule is developed.

Chairs raised a question about hybrid/blended classes that include both in-person meetings and online components. Chairs have experienced issues with being able to properly reflect the modality of these courses in PeopleSoft. Although learning mode 10 can be used to indicate a hybrid in-person and online (synchronous/asynchronous) modality in the schedule, and notes can be used to communicate with students, there needs to be a more efficient manner of indicating course modality to students. Kohli will discuss this need with Academic Affairs. Dean Kohli indicated that a target date has not been determined for when fall schedules are due. Chairs were encouraged to meet individually with AD Hampton and Dean Kohli if they needed assistance in planning their schedules considering the campus goal of having 75% of students in person.

Dean Kohli asked that Chairs inform her office immediately if and when changes are made to course modality. She thanked the Chairs for the excellent manner in which they have communicated this information to her already.

Tenure-track Searches

Two searches within A&S have been identified as critical to move forward this spring: Political Science and Anthropology. Dean Kohli informed Chairs that a memo should be forthcoming from the Provost regarding the direction he wants to take with faculty hires.