

**Faculty Senate  
Minutes  
Clarion University  
2/24/20**

Faculty Senate met on Feb 24, 2020 in 250 Gemmell. J. Lyle chaired the meeting, with the following senators present: S. Boyden, C. Childers, A. Connor-Love, J. Knaust, D. Knepp, M. Lepore, C. Li, A. Lockwood, J. Lyle, J. May, M. K. McConnell, J. McCullough, J. Phillips, S. Prezzano, A. Roberts, A. Rosati, A. Shannonhouse, B. Sweet, L. Taylor, P. Woodburne. P. Gent, R. Skunda, D. Pehrsson, and L. Cullo were also present.

- I. Call to Order – J. Lyle called the meeting to order at 3:30.
- II. Approval of the Minutes (1/10, 2020) – **No Motion made**
- III. Announcements
  1. Sabbatical Celebration – February 24 – 4:30PM, Gemmell 250/2
  2. Town Hall on Financial Sustainability, Feb. 25, in Gemmell MPR 12:30 pm
  3. FPDC Grant Proposals – due February 27
  4. Security Awareness Training – complete by April 6

As per discussion at last Senate meeting, L. Cullo appeared with D. Pehrsson to discuss the initial financial sustainability plan submitted to PASSHE. Any reports from committee were submitted electronically, so to give the maximum time to L. Cullo and D. Pehrsson.

IV. President's Report-- D. Pehrsson and L. Cullo

The President and L. Cullo presented the trends and realities behind the initial Financial Sustainability Plan presented to PASSHE, and what they hope to adjust in subsequent plans. As per the Chancellor, CUP is to be financially sustainable in five years. The initial plan called for approximately 40 retirees over the period, cutting costs, with no offsetting tuition or housing price rises to raise revenues. As the average deficit in the past several years is at \$6.5 million, and assuming a rough savings, in terms of cost of salaries plus benefits of approximately \$100,000 per retiree, the deficit will not be reduced sufficiently by retirees alone. D. Pehrsson has said, as has the Provost, each on multiple occasions, that we cannot simply cut our way to health.

Subsequent Plans must involve both a reduction of costs and raising of revenues. However, as D. Pehrsson pointed out repeatedly, the overarching vision for this must be that changes have minimal impact on student educational experience. To this end, she is asking for help from faculty, staff, the unions as well as administration and student leadership to fill a Financial Sustainability Planning Task Force, comprising 20 members. She is asking for creative solutions, where any suggestion will be taken seriously, so long as it does not negatively impact the student educational experience.

While Clarion has seen a significant decline in enrollments, and will see a decline in the foreseeable future, due to declining enrollments in K-12 education in surrounding counties, all but two PASSHE schools are seeing the same thing. We are not in a unique position. The Chancellor recognizes this, which seems to be the impetus behind his 'systemness' initiative.

One goal of the Chancellor is to raise faculty/student ratios. Clarion's ratio is about 16:1, while that of the PASSHE schools not needing a Financial Sustainability Plan is closer to 20:1. L. Cullo suggests that, were we to get to 20:1, our problems would largely be solved.

Some creative solutions were briefly discussed. One is the importance of developing smooth processes enabling schools to offer courses to each other's students. This must be spearheaded at the PASSHE level. Currently there is no requirement that one school enter into an agreement with another. Another creative solution discussed was to leverage our expertise in online education. Many PASSHE schools do not have much online education at all, or are where CUP was 10 years ago. This can drive new enrollments to Clarion, as seen in the English online major, or can drive students to us from sister institutions via systemness initiatives. Archeology and Chemistry have developed programs that we can market to other PASSHE and non-PASSHE schools. Perhaps we can become a magnet.

The Financial Sustainability Planning Task Force will have a virtual drop box which will welcome any suggestions.

Clarion is finalizing negotiations with the bondholders of all the various housing units. This will enable us to be more flexible on housing prices. As we hold the line on these prices and on tuition rises, our immediate revenues will remain flat. However, there are a couple issues related to this. One is that, as other schools continue to raise their housing and tuition rates, ours will look better. The sensitivity of students and families to tuition and housing costs may be such that we will gain enrollment, thereby raising revenues as actual prices remain flat. The other issue is to rehab Givan Hall to expand the availability of very low cost no-frill "flop and drop" housing available to those needing temporary living situations but not a traditional dorm situation.

PASSHE is willing to offer support to PASSHE schools, but cannot do so until they have done as much as they can on their own. It is unclear if funds would be 'loans' or 'grants'. The Chancellor is trying to get more money out of the Legislature. PASSHE will be more willing to fund creative initiatives that focus on specific things, like online education, that we specialize in, compared to funding continued deficits.

#### Other Topics:

The Dean at Venango will be hired. No decision as yet.

The VP of Student Success search is cancelled due to expense in the era of financial sustainability.

The search for the CENTRE is on hold at the moment.

Other expenses, such as the fanciness of the COT dinners are curtailed.

The President is reducing travel when possible, and will Zoom into meetings when possible.

#### V. Provost Report—P. Gent

No report

#### VI. Student Senate – R. Skunda

Wingo was this past Friday, we had close to 300 students attend.

Also on Saturday February 15th, five students and staff attended the first annual Western PA Voting Summit at the University of Pittsburgh. The organization recognized Clarion as a silver campus last year for having a civic engagement rate among students above 30%. Clarion is also above the average civic engagement rate is above the state average. At the conference, they discussed ways to continue to improve efforts on campus. They drafted their 2020 action plan and applied to make Clarion a "Voter Friendly Campus". They are currently working with Jenn Graham on CU census efforts with the 'Get Out the Count' Committee to address the fact that students are to be counted by their university, not their parents. Student Senate looks forward to continue its work for the rest of the semester.

#### VI. Committee Reports.

- i. CCPS – B. Sweet

CCPS Read-Ins have been 'read in'.

ii. Student Affairs – M. Lepore

No report

iii. CCR – J. Knaust

The nominating election will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. The nominations election occur via paper ballots. Ballots may be cast in the lobby of Carlson Library between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Voters casting ballots in person must sign the voting list. Absentee nominating ballots will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2020.

iv. Academic Standards – A. Roberts

No report

E. Budget – C. Childers

No report

F Faculty Affairs – D. Knepp

Sabbatical Celebration is today at 4:30 in room 250/252.

We have four faculty members planning on speaking about their work.

Light refreshments include cheese, veggies, cookies and coffee – thanks to our Provost Office.

I believe the last count was 6 retirees this year. Working on a date for retirement reception.

G. Institutional Resources – L. Taylor

No report.

H. Venango – J. May

1. Suhr Library is open and looks amazing! It is reported that foot-traffic is increasing in the library, study rooms and the ARC.
2. The search committee for the Dean of Work Force Development has concluded all 4 campus interviews with feedback from the campus community closing this past Friday. The committee will be meeting this week and will forward recommendations to Dr. Dale hopefully by Friday, Feb. 28th.

VIII. New Business

S. Boyden, A. Roberts and D. Hartley will come to Senate after break to present Middle States information.

IX. Old Business

No old business

X. Adjournment – B. Sweet moved (J. Knaust seconded). Unanimous passage.