



## Plenary Session

March 17, 2021 – Zoom – 3:00 pm

### MINUTES

Present: Faculty and Guests

- Adams, Jamie
  - Amare, Nicole
  - Beebe, Donald
  - Brazy, Martha
  - Broach, Ellen
  - Bowman, Ashleigh
  - Cesarini, Pat
  - Chow, Al
  - Cleary, John
  - Cloutier, Robert
  - Copeland, Donna
  - Dadzie, Charlene
  - Donaldson, Amanda
  - Feldvoss, Joerg
  - Fregeau, Laureen
  - Gecewicz, Chimene
  - Halbrooks, John
  - Harmon, Charles
  - Hartin, Charles
  - He, Jia
  - Henry, Alison
  - Henning, Jeremiah
  - Hossain, Delwar
  - Lynch, Colleen, excused
  - Madden, Ellen, excused
  - Manders, Jeannete
  - Mehari, Krista
  - McCready, Susan
  - Myers, Charlene, excused
  - O'Connor, Tracy, excused
  - Pai, Sachin
  - Pelekanos, Sharon
  - Prakash, Aishwarya
  - Raczkowski, Christopher
  - Rayner, Jonathan
  - Rinehart, Jason
  - Robertson, Alison
  - Sayner, Sarah
  - Scott, Shanda
  - Shepard, Beth
  - Sittig, Scott
  - Spencer, Edmund
  - Strickland, Jason
  - Swanzy, Debra, excused
  - Sweeney, Bob
  - Thompson, Tara
  - Turnipseed, David
  - Vandewaa, Elizabeth
  - Webb, Brett
  - Weber, David
  - Woodmansee, Brenda, excused
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- Meeting called to order 3:08 pm

- Approval of Minutes: Approved
- Approval of Agenda: Approved

- **President's Report**

- Covid Updates

Campus and community numbers continue to improve. There is some concern that as restrictions are lifted locally, there will be an increase in cases. The current plan is to keep restrictions in place for the rest of the Spring semester as a minimum, more on that below. Note that at this time even if someone is fully vaccinated, they are still required to wear their mask. There have been discussions about how to implement a system to allow fully vaccinated individuals to not wear a mask.

- Vaccine Updates

Vaccine rollout has been very successful. Most students are not eligible, so admin is holding off on communications to students about vaccinations. However, there is a plan to have vaccination clinics on campus, just waiting for approvals and logistics. There are also discussions about allowing individuals to self-report vaccination status to HR. This information would be useful as plans are developed to allow fewer restrictions for vaccinated individuals.

- Reopening Campus

Discussions are starting at the reopening committee and the subcommittee that I serve on regarding “fully” opening the campus. As you may have seen, the admin has announced that Fall Semester will be back to “normal”. As I understand, this is in regard to reduced classroom capacity and course delivery (i.e. only modes available are Web-Enhanced, Web Blended, and Web Online). There is still some discussion about what this will mean and what will happen if Covid increases in the Fall Semester. We continue to tell the administration that it is very important for faculty to understand what the potential plan is so we can prepare accordingly.

- Salary Survey

We discussed the need for a salary survey with the President's Council. Dr. Waldrop said that he was not opposed to it, but admin needed to discuss it. We will continue to discuss it with his team.

- Presidential Search

As you know, there is a search underway for the new president. I have been appointed to the committee (see full list below). You may notice that there are only three faculty on the committee (including myself). Dr. Alvin Williams is listed as faculty but is the Interim Dean in MCOB and I believe was the Associate Dean prior to being appointed Interim Dean. Also, there are no female faculty on the search committee. It is also my understanding that the committee membership is dictated by BoT policy. The committee is scheduling its first meeting for March 30th, so I will have more information next month. I think faculty input is critical in this process and hope to be able to discuss it at future meetings, in the interim, please work with your caucus's leaders on any thoughts on the search. Caucus leaders, please send me a summary of discussions and thoughts.

- Search Committee

Jimmy Shumock (ex officio), USA Board of Trustees Chair pro tempore;  
 Alexis Atkins, USA Trustee and chair of the search committee;  
 Lenus Perkins, USA Trustee and vice chair of the search committee;  
 Chandra Brown Stewart; USA Trustee and secretary of the search committee;  
 Jim Yance, USA Trustee;  
 Dr. John Cleary, USA Faculty Senate President;  
 Dr. Michael Chang, faculty in health sciences;  
 Dr. Alvin Williams, faculty;  
 Dr. Todd McDonald, faculty;  
 Sam Dean, hospital administrator;  
 Dr. Andrea Kent; academic administrator;  
 Owen Bailey; administrator;  
 Zeke Aull, administrator;  
 Kim Lawkis, alumni;  
 Tia Nickens, Student Government Association president;  
 Cameron Grier-Shepperd, undergraduate student;  
 Madeleine Boudreaux, graduate student;  
 Robbie Baker, community member

- Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee is still moving forward with work, but will be modifying the timeline to allow the incoming President to have input into the plan. The process is in compliance with SACS and we should not have any issues from that perspective.

- Budget Updates

There are no real updates on the budget except that there has been no change to the Governors recommendation of an approximately 6% increase, however it is still in

committee. **President search:** Dr. Waldrop will be stepping down July 1st. An interim/3 deans will step up until the new President is found.

- **Completion of Pending Business:**

- **Resolution Commending the Vaccination Program by USA Health:** Faculty Senate Executive Committee is proposing a resolution commending the vaccination program by USA University Health at the Mobile Civic Center
- Motion and vote held to approve the resolution with amendments made to commendations to USA Health, the admin, faculty, staff, students, and volunteers participating in the vaccination program.

- **Reports from University Committees:**

- **The University Fringe Benefits Committee:** met on February 23, 2021. The increase in healthcare premiums at the beginning of 2021, a summary of those changes can be found in the attached file "1b". The deficit of the university healthcare plan at the end of 2020 was only \$4,620,337. If you look at that deficit compared to where we were in August of last year, we recouped a fair amount. For those wondering how that happened, the cause seems to be the lack of healthcare visits due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- One cost that still increased when compared to 2019 was pharmacy costs. To help mitigate the ongoing increase in pharmacy expenses the FBC is looking into 340B and is considering putting out a bid for pharmacy plans to confirm that express scripts is still the best plan for the university. I have attached the 2020 financial report of our health plan, it is titled "1a - 2021 FBC - YE Experience" if you would like to dive into the details yourselves.
- The emergency PTO donation went well last year. Over 5000 hours of PTO were donated, with all donations used. The emergency sick leave donation had over 5000 hours donated, but only around 300 hours used.
- Some possible changes to be discussed further at the next University FBC meeting in May 2021:
- Eliminate Base Plan 1/1/2022 and move all those individuals to the Standard Plan, or those individuals could enroll in USA Select (replaced the Viva health plan).  
Difference between Base and Standard benefit design:
  - Prescription annual deductible increased from \$50 to \$100.
  - The copay amount changed from \$10/\$25/\$35 to \$10/\$50/\$75 and 50% of specialty drugs to \$5,000 individual and \$10,000 family. Out-of-pocket maximum subject to ACA limitation combined with medical.
  - The Standard Plan is a non-grandfathered group offering full coverage for preventive services, independent appeal review, and other ACA compliance requirements for non-grandfathered status.

- There is some discussion of adding a High Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account referred to as HDHP-HSA. A HDHP-HSA offers a very flexible tax advantage.
- Advantages:
  - Lower monthly premium resulting from the higher deductible (cost shifting).
  - Employee contributions to the HSA are tax favored under the Section 125 Plan and are not subject to federal taxes, Social Security (6.2%) and Medicare (1.45%).
  - Portability of employee ownership (no use it or lose it rule).
  - Encourages consumer to make better informed choices for cost effective health care.
- Disadvantages:
  - Lower paid employees may be attracted to the plan and may not be financially able to handle the deductible.
  - The deductible may cause rationing of healthcare including primary care and early detection of disease.
  - Tax regulations apply to the HSA such as a 20% penalty for early withdrawal.
  - Other plan coverage and secondary plan coverage (COB) may disqualify HSA pre-tax contributions.
  - Employer responsibility to educate employees on this type of plan.
  - Funding an HSA precludes funding a health care FSA.
- **Handbook Committee**
  - Amendments made to the Handbook to delete “when a class has five or fewer enrolled, the course instructor may request that classes from different sections be combined and then released to them.”
  - Additions include “when student perceptions are not released due to a low number of responses the course instructor may request classes from different sections to be combined and then released to them.”
- **Reports from Senate Committees:**
  - Faculty Senate Diversity & Inclusion Committee
    - The committee has begun to compile a list of suggestions to address diversity, inclusion and equity at USA to send to Paul Frazier upon the President’s request.
    - A Google doc will be shared with the entire Faculty Senate and will be categorized and compiled with the existing list to eliminate duplications and to prioritize the recommendations to be sent to Paul Frazier. The Faculty Senate is urged to make recommendations in the Google doc by the end of the week 3/19/21 so that the list can be sent by the first of next week 3/22/21.

- A program to on-board new faculty that includes an introduction to the culture of this area and cultural sensitivity
  - College level and/or university level mentoring committees that are charged with retaining faculty from underrepresented groups
  - Departmental as well as college level D & I committees
  - Diversity and Inclusion statements for each department
  - D&I statements to be included on syllabi
  - Mandatory implicit bias training for all faculty and staff
  - Mandatory in-depth diversity & inclusion/cultural competency and empathy training
  - Fully staff Dr. Frazier's office
  - Redesign social media and university websites to clearly state USA's stance against racism, sexism, classism, homophobia/heterosexism, linguisticism, religion and other forms of bias.
  - Officially recognize the Campus Diversity Coalition (an ad hoc group of faculty, staff and students who have been addressing diversity issues at USA since 1996)
  - Rename the Humanities Building giving it the name of a Civil Rights heroine
  - Include a female faculty member on the presidential search committee.
  - Consider a minor or major in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competency
  - Prioritize recruitment and success of students of color from local community colleges (given that just 1 in 12 Black and 1 in 10 Hispanic transfer students succeed in finishing their bachelor's degree within 6 years while 1 in 5 White and 1 in 4 Asians do)
  - hire staff to review what is posted on social media.
  - Develop a QEP with Project Based Learning that addresses D & I and cultural competency through collaborative problem solving in groups of students mixed by diversity categories and addressing issues (whenever possible) that relate to diversity in the USA and outreach communities.
  - give release time to women and other faculty from underrepresented groups if they are required to be on multiple committees
  - Balance the diversity of administrators
- Regarding **College level diversity & inclusion officers**
    - Demonstrate a deep commitment to diversity and inclusion (rather than checking the box) by selecting people who have a proven commitment to and knowledge of the broad spectrum of diversity and inclusion issues.
    - Include qualifications other universities have used.
    - External committees (or at least external committee members) for diversity & inclusion officer searches
    - Non-biased process with and external review of candidates by the University Diversity & Inclusion Committee or the Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council
    - Professional development budget to increase the knowledge and skills of diversity & inclusion officers.

- Assign these officers to review social media for their college/school for inappropriate material and review for inclusive and diverse nature of posts.
  
- **Reports from Caucus Leaders:**
  - A report was made from the College of Education and Professional Studies, which indicated that Drs. Tres Stefurak and Joél Billingsley held a previously planned event involving CEPS students, with the focus towards a dialogue, in part, about incidents similar to that in the MCOB and the climate they create, in addition to engaging in critical self-reflection and needs assessment with students about our college cultural climate.
  - As well, the CEPS Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee has finished working on a statement that has been crafted over fall semester that will be submitted to the Interim Dean for potential addition alongside the college mission statement that addresses how the college seeks to address diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns.
  - Finally, the DEI committee has finished reviewing and giving feedback on the new CEPS Diversity Manager role and the process will begin to fill the position. This person will assist in applying best practices to recruiting, interviewing, and retention practices for faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
  - No report
  
- **New Business:**
  - None

Meeting Adjournment: MMSA 5:00 pm

Minutes transcribed by Donna Copeland