Washington University in St. Louis  
Minutes of Faculty Senate Council Meeting  
May 10, 2021  

Attending: Vijay Ramani, Timothy McBride, Bruce Carlson, Amy Eyler, Derek Hoeferlin, Darrell Hudson, Bess Marshall, Stephen Nowlis, Guillermo Rosas, Adam Rosenzweig, Douglas Schuerer, Carla Siegfried, Victoria Thomas  

Ex-Officio: Beverly Wendland, Provost; Leila Sadat  

Meeting called to order at 2:31 pm  

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes – Timothy McBride, Secretary  

The minutes were approved.  

2. Provost’s Report—delivered by Provost Beverly Wendland  

The Chancellor reported that the campus has made a number of strides in recent months. On Strategic planning, this is now in full swing, and there is a website: https://strategicplan.wustl.edu/ where feedback can be left. All of the various committees have been set up, and the Deans have been engaged. What are the opportunities for leveraging multiple school plans? This will motivate donors. The faculty will receive a survey, to discuss ideas they would like campus to pursue. 

On commencement it will proceed with plans as approved by County Department of Public Health, with each student allowed only two guests. The Commencement Speaker will be Kareem Abdul-Jabbar who will be visiting to record his speech. On May 30th the campus, will do three ceremonies, with a live speaker at all three ceremonies: Julie Gerberding from the CDC. We need to limit to the number of people on campus, so faculty will need to stay at home. But it warms our heart that so many faculty want to show up 

Admissions: Last Monday was the deadline. While some campuses saw a big decline in enrollment, our applications are up 20%, over 2,100 deposits. We are expecting a reasonable melt. We are quite pleased by these strong numbers. This will help the schools obtain the tuition they need. 

COVID update: this continues to go extremely well we have a 0.05% positivity number, and it is declining. At last count, 15% of the students are vaccinated. It is hard to believe in some ways we made it through this year so well, but we came out great. 

Fall semester: we will use one organizing principle: in person safely. Anticipating density, our recommendation will change. Small classes will remain in person, 30 and fewer and that is 80% of classes in A&S. Decisions on class modality will be made by Deans and schools. Some of our international students are subject to processing of VISAs; we will have more clarity in June. 

Vaccines and testing: availability has moved the needle for planning for fall. We did recently announce that all students will need the vaccine. Religious exceptions will be allowed and diagnostic testing as needed. 

Gender impact of the pandemic: we have had conversations with the Deans about gender impacts and impact on untenured faculty. We generally agreed to allowing opt out, only for this year.
In general, there is a lot to be optimistic about. The Chancellor expressed his view that he is so appreciative of the leadership of faculty.

Questions and answers:
Q: Will vaccinations be mandated for faculty and staff?
A: This is under consideration for faculty and staff. Some groups that have vaccine hesitancy.

Q: Will we need testing in the fall?
A: The Chancellor is not generally in favor of doing things just for show, especially after we require the vaccine. In the past fall, we required the flu vaccine.

Q: In the past, have we ever required a flu vaccine?
A: No

Q: Did we allow opt out on course evaluations?
A: It is generally a good idea, but in generally the evaluations have been better than normal. The logistics will depend on the School.

Q: On the opt out policy, we need a strong signal to do a real opt out. For tenure track faculty this is included in packets, required language.
A: We are working on that. We did adopt a policy for the whole year. And it is posted on the Senate website.

Q: What will our policy be on travel? Can we travel anywhere if we want if vaccinated?
A: We cancelled study abroad. We are looking into travel policies after vaccination.

Q: What were the salary increase approved?
A: Maximum 5% at Danforth campus, and 6% at WUSM. The tuition increase is 2.6% for undergraduate students, and 0-3.4% for graduate students.

3. Report of the Chair – Vijay Ramani

First, an update on the student mental health issue. This was a topic at the Board of Trustees meeting. The University will be allocating more resources. We met with Rob Wild, and based on their recommendations, there will be mandatory training for faculty members; reports are that this will be borderline effective. There is a structure within each school; Deans will set up a procedure. We will report back to the FSC. The Provost reported that she went through some of this discussion while she was at Johns Hopkins. The Director of Undergraduate Studies is the right person to work on this. We have to make sure not to confuse faculty to be trained MH professionals.

On another topic – the Pay Equity study – we got off to a late start for various reasons, but work progresses.

4. Senate Membership and Voting Rights for University College Full-Time Faculty – Provost Wendland

A heads up. We are in the process of reimagining University College, as a stand-alone College. There will be some full-time teaching faculty, and they become members of the FSC.

5. Other Business
A Senator brought up an item not on the agenda: a petition raised by students with disabilities, particularly a student who is blind. The Provost replied that they are looking into this but noted that services are provided for students in this situation.

7. Executive Session

Executive Session called at 4:00 p.m. No actions were taken during the Executive Session.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy McBride, Secretary