

Executive Committee Minutes
April 4, 2022
via Zoom, 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Present: Karthika Sasikumar (Acting Chair), Brandon White, Julia Curry, Ravisha Mathur, Patrick Day, Stefan Frazier, Kathleen Wong(Lau), Winifred Schultz-Krohn, Kimb Massey, Anoop Kaur, Steve Perez

Absent: Charlie Faas, Tabitha Hart, Vincent Del Casino

1. Chair Sasikumar welcomed the committee back for the first in-person meeting in two years due to COVID. Introductions were made.
2. The Executive Committee approved the Executive Committee Agenda of April 4, 2022 (11-0-0).
3. The committee approved the Executive Committee Minutes of March 7, 2022 (11-0-0) and March 14, 2022 (11-0-0).

4. University Updates:

a. From the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA):

The VPSA is ready to begin having college and department level conversations about the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. Conversations have begun at the CSU system level, however, the various CSU campuses all have different markets/regions. VPSA Day is confident in the way we are headed.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications are down significantly across the country, a national study of the phenomenon has been carried out—VP Day promises to circulate. The decline is in returning students, sophomores and juniors, and we do not know why. This is a statewide challenge. The biggest decline is in the CSU and then the community colleges and UC.

Our Frosh enrollment is up, but our transfer student enrollment is down for Fall 2022.

Admitted Spartan Days will still be virtual and will run April 9th through April 15th. Normally, there are over 10,000 students on campus on Admitted Spartans Day along with friends and relatives.

New Student Orientation will be in person this summer. However, we will still be monitoring housing very closely due to COVID.

Questions:

Q: Could part of the issue with the decline in FAFSA applications be due to who is helping students fill out the forms? This semester many of my students have reported problems with the applications. My frosh and sophomores are really struggling.

A: It is a challenge across the entire state. We just don't know what is going on. We are going to do some focus groups. It could be a combination of issues. Statewide applications are down 200,000. The decline is very pronounced in the CSU and really hurting us.

Q: Do you have data on how many students have logged in and then don't complete the FAFSA? Could it be due to the non-standard lives people are experiencing during COVID?

A: It is federal data and we don't have access to that level of data. It is very plausible.

C: People are overwhelmed and tired after two years of COVID. This could be a contributing factor.

A: Absolutely could be the case in some instances.

C: It is a really good idea to do focus groups and work with faculty who are experienced in this type of research.

A: We would love to work with faculty on this.

Q: When you say enrollment plan are you talking about the strategic plan?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the timeframe for the enrollment plan?

A: A decade.

Q: With reference to the demographic cliff, what is our strategy?

A: The Midwest and New England are already seeing this demographic cliff with decreased enrollment, and we will see it soon. Our plan does not call for an increase in frosh. Currently we turn away 5,000 CSU-eligible students. It is a capacity issue. We are more concerned about transfer students, and we need to think strategically about graduate students. We also need to pay attention to our local competition such as CSU Santa Cruz.

C: It is interesting that right now we don't give a bump in GPA to E. Palo Alto applicants but do give a bump to Palo Alto. Some large colleges are denying eligible underrepresented students.

A: We have to negotiate our place in the CSU.

C: The community colleges are offering bachelor's degrees and we really need to watch what they are offering.

A: The community colleges are supposed to only be offering degrees that don't compete with degrees we already have. This is where we need to be thoughtful in enrollment planning.

Q: C&R was asked to give feedback on the Strategic Enrollment Plan but we are not sure what to give feedback on? If we are not meeting the demand in certain departments that is a real problem.

A: Academic planning decisions need to be made in Academic Affairs separately. The Provost and VPSA will meet this week with the Strategic Enrollment Group. We must figure out how to move from the broad plan to the department level. The next stage is for the provost to start having these conversations with the deans and departments.

Q: The Spartan Speaker Series is amazing. Can we publicize this more and can it be expanded?

A: We've had over 2,000 people attend via Zoom. Dr. Daniels handles this and doesn't have a large budget. When VPSA Day submits his budget request he will request expansion of the program. Zoom has been incredibly effective for us with the speaker series. Maybe in the future we can go 50/50 or 70/30 in person. There is no denying you reach more people having it virtually. It will also take some time to expand the program.

C: Please work with University Advancement to get funding to support the Spartan Speaker Series. This is a better program than I've seen at any other campus.

C: Dr. Daniels is really good at getting people students want to see. This may not always be the same people that faculty and staff might like to see.

A: You should anticipate controversial speakers that want to come to campus as we return. This is also an election year.

B. Update from the President:

This is a big week for us and WASC will be here Wednesday through Friday, April 6-8, 2022.

The Faculty Service Recognition Award event begins today and runs through Thursday, April 7, 2022.

The Celebration of Research is next week.

The Author and Artist Celebration is tomorrow, April 5, 2022.

There will be a celebration of life event at the football stadium Saturday, April 9, 2022 from 10 a.m. to noon for Lawrence Fan.

Questions:

Q: Are there any changes to SJSU's masking mandate?

A: Not yet. We will be talking about it. There are about six weeks left in the semester. The feedback the President has received thus far is in support of continuing it. Some believe we should keep it in the classrooms and loosen the requirement in eating areas. There is another new variant so things can change quickly. We continue to have a very low COVID rate at SJSU with less than ½ of 1%. We have not had any clusters. As for the mask mandate, people are generally strongly for it or strongly against it.

C: AS is leaning towards masks, but the board is divided.

C: There are some good arguments for wanting to drop masks.

A: There are various reasons people want to drop the mask mandate.

The reasons range from discomfort, legality, and the difficulty connecting with people while wearing a mask, but there are still vulnerable people out there. My sense from what I'm hearing from the Senate Executive Committee is that there is understanding of the challenges posed by masking but there is support to continue the mandate...at a minimum there is not opposition to a continued mandate.

Q: What is the thought process when the Senate is told about things after they have already happened instead of involving the Senate in the project or process? Specifically, naming the minor program HonorsX.

A: A committee was put together to develop it last academic year and it went through the curriculum process.

A: There was a group of faculty that reviewed and cleared it.

C: The name HonorsX was not discussed. What was approved was a minor program. This is the only minor that requires a student to apply on top of already being a student.

A: The president keeps the Senate involved even when the Senate is not a part of the decision-making process.

C: By calling it HonorsX, it gives the impression that it is an honors program. We already have a robust H&A Honors program. Faculty in the group discussed curriculum and not the title.

C. Update from the CSU Statewide Senator:

Senator Curry sent an extensive report to the Senate. There was a minor error regarding Mark Van Selst serving on the system committee. There are some exciting updates in the report. Please take a chance to read it.

It is exciting to see we are at a place where we are being transparent about complying with the Department of Justice (DOJ) requirements. We've come a long way. Every CSU campus will eventually have a Title IX audit. SJSU may be the poster child for Title IX.

C: I encourage you to be transparent with the local community regarding the DOJ compliance. My neighbors ask questions. The community needs to know this behavior isn't acceptable or common at SJSU.

C: There are no investigators in the Title IX Office. There is only one person in the office.

A: A number of searches are going on. It's a challenge to get qualified people but we are continually working to staff up and maintain our commitment to having a safe and healthy work environment

Q: Regarding wearing masks in the classrooms. Some of the classrooms have no air conditioning and the rooms get very hot. Last summer I taught a class and the room temperature was 115 degrees. I had to take the students to the library. The rooms need to have fans in them. Is there any way we can address this?

A: I know we need significant upgrades to our buildings. This is a very long process and is one of our top priorities.

C: In response to the investigators in the Title IX Office, we share investigators between the Office of Equal Opportunity and the Title IX Office.

5. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

These minutes were taken by the Senate Administrator, Eva Joice, on April 4, 2022.
The minutes were edited by Wynn Schultz-Krohn on April 8, 2022.
The minutes were approved by the Executive Committee on April 11, 2022.