

Senate Council
August 23, 2021

The Senate Council met in regular session at 3 pm on Monday, August 23, 2021 in 103 Main Building, although a video conference link was also available. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise.

Senate Council Chair Aaron Cramer (EN) called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:00 pm. The Chair welcomed those present. He informed everyone that the session was being recorded for notetaking purposes and noted that it was an open meeting. He asked that the SC members participating via Zoom to type their name and affiliation into the chat box and added that the chat function is generally only used for attendance and not monitored.

1. COVID-19 Discussion for Senators

The Chair opened up the floor for discussion, noting that he may need to strictly moderate comments, to ensure sufficient time for other items of business on the SC's agenda. Blasing (AS, University Senate member) shared that a small group drafted language for a possible University Senate (Senate) resolution and read that resolution for those present.

Whereas, on August 23, 2021, the F.D.A. granted full approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine;

Whereas, the F.D.A. approval is expected to lead to new vaccination requirements at hospitals, colleges, universities, and other employment entities across the United States;

Whereas, on August 17, 2021, the Commonwealth of Kentucky reached its highest COVID-19 positivity rate since the start of the pandemic;

Whereas, the delta variant of the COVID-19 virus is much more contagious and is affecting more young people in our communities than the alpha variant;

Whereas, hospital intensive care units across the Commonwealth are at or near capacity;

Whereas, some students, faculty, and staff on our campus are already subject to a vaccine mandate;

Whereas, as of August 23, 2021, 753 other colleges and universities in the United States already require vaccinations, including other flagship state universities, including the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and Indiana University; and three institutions in Kentucky, Bellarmine University, Berea College, and Centre College;

Whereas, the campus has not achieved through other means its target goal of 80% vaccinated by the start of fall semester classes, creating conditions that jeopardize the health, welfare, and lives of people on campus and in our local community, particularly children under 12 and others at increased risk;

And whereas, the University of Kentucky, the flagship university of the commonwealth has a long-standing legacy of playing a leadership role in Kentucky on issues of health, education, agriculture, law and many other fields that impact the citizens of the

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commonwealth, on this particular issue of health policy, the University of Kentucky has a responsibility to lead.;

Be it resolved, that, the University Senate:

Calls on President Capilouto to issue an immediate vaccination mandate for eligible University of Kentucky students, faculty, and staff;

And that such a mandate be implemented in a fair and equitable manner with input from the University Senate, Staff Senate, and other impacted stakeholders.

There were a number of comments from faculty and students (some being members of the Senate), and staff. The majority of those speaking expressed support for a vaccine mandate; a majority of those speaking about flexibility in course modalities for faculty and students expressed support for said flexibility. While supporting the basic premises of a vaccine mandate, there were also comments addressing the difficulty in enforcing a mandate (e.g. “would those in violation of a mandate be fired or expelled?”) Similar concerns regarding flexibility in course modalities were also discussed, such as the difficulty for faculty to teach in more than one modality at a time and the effect on students who enrolled in and expect an in-person class. Many attendees noted the large numbers of students who do not wear masks properly or at all, unless asked to do so. Hawse (SGA president) reiterated that students are generally supportive of whatever can be done to promote an in-person experience for all students. However, noting that the semester has already begun, it was critically important to let students know now if there are any campuswide changes regarding course modalities or a vaccine mandate.

The Chair suggested that Provost DiPaola offer some comments, after which the SC would deliberate on the discussion. After the Provost’s comments, the Chair asked SC members to consider next steps. SC members did not express interest in any further information gathering activities, such as additional surveys or forums. There was a clear sentiment that because the nature of the pandemic has changed in the past two months, it was reasonable that UK’s response would change, too. Collett (HS, vice chair) asked that the Chair have conversations with President Eli Capilouto and Provost DiPaola within the next 24 hours regarding next steps for a possible vaccine mandate.

There was a sense that action needed to be taken immediately, given that the semester had just begun.

2. Minutes from August 16, 2021 and Announcements

There were no edits to the minutes from August 16. Therefore, the minutes from August 16 were **approved** as distributed by **unanimous consent**. The Chair offered some announcements.

The University is suing the Commonwealth of Kentucky over the state’s use of the term “Team Kentucky.” He noted that senators may have questions about this.

Three faculty members (from Murray State University, Eastern Kentucky University, and Morehead State University) have been sent forward by Kentucky’s Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leadership to Governor Andy Beshear. The Governor will identify a single individual who will serve as the faculty representative to the Council on Postsecondary Education.

The SC has been asked for nominees to serve on a new committee to search for a permanent dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Chair has received concerns from Arts and Sciences faculty about

composing a new search committee and discarding the balanced and carefully constructed search committee from last year. He said it would be an agenda item for SC members next week.

3. Old Business

a. Appointment of University Senate Parliamentarian

The Chair reported that he had received some suggestions for a Senate parliamentarian. He plans to follow up on those and have something to report to SC members next week.

Moving to the next agenda item, the Chair explained that the strategic plan discussion was originally intended to be a discussion with the nominees who Senate Council sent forth for the strategic planning committees. Having read the draft, he opined that it was very important to discuss the content of the draft. He noted that there were large portions of the strategic plan that are solely in the purview of the faculty, but there have been no meaningful conversations with the University Senate, Senate Council, or the Chair to develop a shared sense of buy in for these items. For example, the proposed strategic plan proposed to reevaluate the undergraduate general education curriculum [UK Core] while suggesting that it lacked relevance. The Chair reported that the issue of UK Core has been an area that he previously and specifically requested President Capilouto to discuss with Senate Council and Senate members. He noted that the strategic plan draft was crafted with minimal input from faculty, who are responsible for many of the objectives, tactics, and metrics proposed. He expressed interest in hearing how UK administration plans to address that issue.

Provost Bob DiPaola offered a few comments and described the timeline for creating the strategic plan, noting that the strategic plan must be finished by the first week of October, which will drive all related deadlines for the draft strategic plan. The Chair commented that it would make the most sense for both strategic plan-related discussions to be combined.

4. Strategic Plan Discussion with Provost Bob DiPaola

5. Update from Strategic Plan Nominees

The Chair reminded SC members that they SC was asked over the summer, with a 24-hour turnaround time, to provide nominees to serve on the five strategic planning committees. The Chair invited those individuals to attend so that they and SC members could discuss issues related to the strategic plan that was being drafted. Oltmann noted that having one week to review it during the first week of classes indicated a lack of desire for in-depth feedback. She asked for an extension of the deadline and Provost DiPaola said he would try to change the deadline for internal campus input. Grossman asked Provost DiPaola if UK had asked SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges) about extending the deadline for completing a new strategic plan, noting that UK could not be the only institution that was having timing challenges related to the ongoing pandemic. Provost DiPaola said he would try look into changing the deadline for submission to SACSCOC.

SC members and the nominees to the strategic plan teams who were present discussed their work and experiences. Kevin Pearson (ME) expressed appreciation for the work of the team he was part of, noting that their draft was put together very quickly. He added that there was still a lot of work to be done. Wright (DE) concurred with Pearson's comments. In working with others on her team's report, she said she was interested to learn that faculty, staff, and students tend to be frustrated about the same sorts of issues, regardless of the college they are in. Blalock (ME) agreed with the other two comments and explained that they received notice of their assignment on July 25 and worked very hard to complete their work prior to the August 7 deadline their team had.

At the request of the Chair, Provost DiPaola said he would send him the compositions for each strategic plan team.

6. Nominees for Senate Council Liaisons to Academic Councils

a. Undergraduate Council

b. Graduate Council

c. Health Care Colleges Council

SC members discussed possible liaisons and identified three possible faculty members. There were **no objections** to sending those individuals forward as the SC liaisons, presuming they are willing to do so.

7. Nominees for Participants in President's 2020-21 Evaluation

SC members deliberated on possible faculty nominees. There were six faculty members identified and the Chair, **seeing no objections**, said he would send those names forward with **unanimous consent**.

8. Proposed Changes to 2021-22 PharmD Calendar

The Chair explained that the proposed changes involved changes to the start and end of various rotation blocks. Grossman **moved** to approve the proposed changes and Collett **seconded**. There were no questions of fact or debate. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

9. Committee Reports

a. Senate's Rules and Elections Committee (SREC) - DeShana Collett, Chair

i. Question Regarding Saturday after Thanksgiving (Academic Holiday)

Collett (HS), chair of the Senate's Rules and Elections Committee (SREC), explained the matter. There was brief discussion. Hawse **moved** that the SC recommend to the Senate that the Saturday after Thanksgiving be officially codified in the *Senate Rules* as an academic holiday. Vincent **seconded**. Charnigo **moved** to amend the motion by making every Saturday that immediately follows an academic holiday also be an academic holiday. Hawse **seconded**. SC members discussed the proposed amendment. A **vote** was taken on the amended motion and the motion **failed** with four in favor and six opposed. A **vote** was taken on the original motion and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

ii. Deadline for Permissive Withdrawals and Compressed Courses

Collett (HS) explained the issue. The Chair noted that the Senate's Admissions and Academic Standards Committee (SAASC) is charged in the *Senate Rules* with reviewing changes to Sections 4 and 5, so he suggested that the SAASC be asked to review the matter.

Collett **moved** to send the issue to the Senate's Admissions and Academic Standards Committee (SAASC) for consideration and Duncan **seconded**. There was no debate or discussion. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

10. Ex Officio Members

The Chair commented that the agenda item was more or less in error, given that the Senate's Rules and Elections Committee (SREC) was asked at the previous SC meeting to review ex officio titles in the *Senate Rules*.

11. Items from the Floor (Time Permitting)

Duncan asked what constituents should be told about SC's discussion regarding a vaccine mandate or flexibility related to teaching modalities. The Chair opined that members could describe the sense of the discussion and note that he was charged to talk with the President and Provost about the issue and

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report back within 24 hours. During discussion, the Chair noted that he had discussed concerns about course modality flexibility with the Provost's office for the last few months, both prior to and after Provost DiPaola began in that role. There was confusion both in the room and among faculty at large about the Chair's action over the summer (allow department chairs, on behalf of program faculty, to approve modality changes), with some not realizing that additional requirements for vetting at the dean's level, through an associate provost, and to the Provost's office were activities taken on the by the Provost's office after discussions about how to balance flexibility with managerial concerns.

Oltmann asked for (de-identified) details on how many requests the Provost's office has received for a modality change and how many were approved. Duncan noted that it was now impossible to socially distance because classrooms were not big enough to do so, nor was it possible for faculty to institute some social distancing by having part of the class online and part in person if the course was not already approved for distance learning delivery.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Aaron M. Cramer,
Senate Council Chair

SC members present: Blonder, Charnigo, Collett, Cramer, DeCorte, Duncan, Grossman, Hall, Hawse, Oltmann, and Swanson.

Prepared by Sheila Brothers on Tuesday, August 24, 2021.