

Senate Council Meeting
April 20, 2020

The Senate Council met in regular session on Monday, April 20, 2020 via video conference. Below is a record of what transpired. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise.

Senate Council Chair Jennifer Bird-Pollan called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 3:02 pm. The Chair welcomed those present.

1. Minutes from March 23, 2020 and Announcements

The Chair thanked everyone for good SC and "Senate" meetings the previous week. SC's decision that all undergraduate academic programs shall accept a grade of P in a course taken in spring 2020 as satisfying graduation requirements was announced via email from Provost Blackwell last Friday. The Chair has addressed questions and misinterpretations since the email went out and anticipates more to come. The Chair said that she would send an email to SC with the "Learn Anywhere" link, to the student resources page that includes FAQs and a searchable list of programs and whether or not they accept pass/fail grades for progression as well decisions regarding accepting pass/fail grading by the graduate and professional programs.

The Chair explained that SC would normally be planning their retreat at this time, but due to COVID-19, a six-hour-long electronic meeting is not reasonable. Instead, the list of retreat topics will be divided over the course of more than one meeting, likely including the summer meetings.

The Chair reported that no edits had been received for the set of minutes from March 23, 2020. There being **no objections**, the minutes from March 23, 2020 were **approved** as distributed by **unanimous consent**.

2. Committee Reports

a. Senate's Admissions and Academic Standards Committee (SAASC) - Bill Smith, Chair

i. Proposed Changes to *Senate Rules 4.2.8* ("Undergraduate Certificates") and *Senate Rules 4.2.9* ("Graduate Certificates")

Smith (EN) explained the proposal. The Chair added that in addition to what was proposed by the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering had requested modifications to *SR 4.2.8*, to clarify the language regarding electives. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there was extensive discussion. There was confusion about the revisions regarding the number of credit hours taken for a certificate that are also permitted to count toward required and elective courses for the student's bachelor's degree. Brion (EN) **moved** to table the proposal until the next meeting and send it to Senates Rules and Elections Committee (SREC) to review prior to the coming Monday's SC meeting. Blonder (ME) **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal and there was some. Those offering opinions about the changes to the passage on electives thought the clarity could be increased by removing the sentence altogether, but the Chair confirmed for Charnigo that silence in the *SRs* about an issue has historically indicated it was prohibited. There were a few comments about moving the interpretation in *SR 4.2.8* (regarding enrollment of graduate and professional students) up into the introductory text, so it was no longer an interpretation, but rather part of an officially approved rule. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed and three abstentions.

ii. Proposed Changes to PhD Sociology

Smith (EN) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were some. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAASC to approve the College of Arts and Sciences' request to change the second-year paper and oral defense requirements, and course requirements for the PhD program in Sociology. Because the motion came from committee,

no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal. There was none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

iii. Proposed Changes to Bachelor of Liberal Studies

Smith (EN) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were some. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAASC approve the College of Arts and Sciences request to: 1) change the Graduation Composition and Communication Requirement; 2) move the traditional Bachelor of Liberal studies program to a fully online degree; and 3) remove the admissions requirement of 45 credit hours prior to declaring the major. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal. There was none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed and one abstention.

b. Senate's Academic Programs Committee (SAPC) – Aaron Cramer

i. Proposed Changes to BA/BS Geography

Cramer(EN) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were none. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAPC that the University Senate approve the significant changes to the BA/BS: Geography, in Department of Geography within the College of Arts and Sciences. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal. There was none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

ii. Proposed New University Scholars Program between the BSEE Electrical Engineering and MSEE Electrical Engineering

Leslie Vincent (BE) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were none. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAPC that the University Senate approve the establishment of a new University Scholars Program: BSEE Electrical Engineering and MSEE Electrical Engineering, in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering within the College of Engineering. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal and there was some. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed and one abstention..

iii. Proposed New University Scholars Program between the BSME Mechanical Engineering and PhD Mechanical Engineering

Cramer (EN) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were some. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAPC that the University Senate approve the establishment of a new University Scholars Program: BSME Mechanical Engineering and PhD Mechanical Engineering, in the Department of Mechanical Engineering within the College of Engineering. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal. There was none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

iv. Proposed Changes to BSHPS Plant and Soil Science

Cramer(EN) explained the proposal. The Chair solicited questions of fact from SC and there were some. The Chair stated that the **motion** on the floor was a recommendation from SAPC that the University Senate approve the significant change to the BSHPS: Plant and Soil Science, in Department of Horticulture within the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Because the motion came from committee, no **second** was needed. The Chair asked if there was debate on the proposal. There was

none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

3. Postbaccalaureate International Students

The Chair welcomed Graduate School Interim Dean Brian Jackson. Dean Jackson explained that they are seeking guidance about admission of international students residing in their home country to be admitted in post-baccalaureate status for the purpose of enrolling in one (or more) online UK courses. All standard POBA academic admissions requirements would be applied. The applicant would be required to demonstrate English language proficiency through the submission of official TOEFL or IELTS scores that meet the Graduate School minimum requirements.

Grossman (AS) commented that it is within the Graduate School's own authority to approve and move forward and SC agreed. Jackson confirmed for Cramer that international students here domestically who were non-native speakers are already required to submit TOEFL or IELTS scores.

4. Spring Effective Dates for New Certificates

The Chair explained that many programs are anxious about the status of certificate proposals during the spring because they want a fall start date. If the proposals are not approved in time during the spring, they must wait until fall of the next year for an effective date. Because of this, the Chair consulted with Assistant Provost for Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Annie Davis Weber to see if there are any accreditation requirements that would prevent new certificate programs from beginning in the spring semester, in addition to the existing standard of beginning all new programs, including new certificate programs, in the fall semester. Weber reported that there are no restrictions from any bodies outside UK. The Chair also consulted with others around campus and found that historically it has been a problem because the Bulletin is published only once a year. She clarified a few times that she was only speaking about new certificates, not new degree programs.

The Chair suggested exploring the option of allowing programs to making new certificate programs effective for spring (instead of just fall) and asked SC for their thoughts. The Board of Trustees (Board) does not review proposals for new certificates but the Chair asked the faculty trustees if they had any thoughts about how the Board would think about it. Blonder (ME) and Grossman (AS) both said that the Board would support allowing spring effective dates for new certificates if it is in the best interest of the University. There was also some discussion about possible barriers to implementation. University Registrar Kim Taylor explained that the Bulletin would continue to be updated once a year in the fall. Grossman (AS) pointed out that even if the Bulletin isn't updated throughout the year, there was nothing to preclude a certificate program from being approved and ready for students to enroll in January.

There was additional discussion. In response to comments from Cantrell (ED) about the Bulletin being a contract with the student regarding program requirements, the Chair noted that if a certificate began in January, it would be appropriate to prepare an information sheet to students that included the Senate-approved details that would end up in the Bulletin, anyway. There was additional discussion but no objections to newly allowing new certificates to be effective for spring (and fall).

5. Renewal of Ombud Term for 2020-21

The Chair informed SC that Academic Ombud Kaveh Tagavi (EN) is eligible for reappointment for the 2020-2021 term and asked for their thoughts. Charnigo (AS) **moved** to endorse Kaveh Tagavi for a second term as the Academic Ombud. Brion **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate and there

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was none. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

6. Special Senate Council Meeting Roundtable (Time Permitting)

The Chair solicited comments from SC members about the special SC meeting. Grossman (AS) thought the meeting went smoothly and he was glad to see participation from senators. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and asked them to let her know if they have any thoughts.

7. COVID-19 Ongoing Policy Discussion

The Chair explained that SR 5.3.2.2 addresses probation and suspension for undergraduate students whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 for two semesters. This may cause students to be put on probation if they elect to take all classes pass/fail during the spring 2020 semester due to COVID-19 because pass/fail classes are not factored into a student's GPA. Students already on probation are not allowed to take courses as pass/fail so if this is enforced for spring 2020, the students most at risk will be affected. The consensus around campus is to not enforce the rule for the spring 2020 semester and many people have reached out for guidance.

There was extensive discussion about suspending the probation and suspension policies for the spring 2020 semester. Grossman (AS) **moved** that for purposes of determining if undergraduate students are on probation or suspended, spring and summer 2020 shall not be considered in those calculations. Hamilton (SGA) **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate. There was discussion about whether to include the summer semester and students who do not take all their classes as pass/fail.

Soult (AS) moved a **substitute motion**, that for purposes of determining if undergraduate students are on probation or suspension, spring 2020 shall not be considered in those calculations. Vincent (BE) **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate. There was discussion about the possible implications to students' financial aid and the consequences of tabling the discussion until more input can be gathered. There was also discussion about giving students a mechanism to get off of probation if they are already on it. There was concern about how cumulative GPA will be affected in the future.

Associate Dean of Advising Ruth Beattie (AS) explained that colleges get a report at the end of each semester with students in good standing, currently on probation, newly eligible for probation, and newly eligible for suspension. They review the students on a case-by-case basis and putting a student on probation can allow for interventions to help the student, if necessary. Beattie said that Arts and Sciences did not plan to suspend any students for academic performance in spring 2020. However, colleges do not currently have any discretion under the Senate Rules regarding putting students on probation.

There was more discussion about possible scenarios that students in different situations might face.

Brion (EN) moved a **substitute motion**, that grades recorded during spring 2020 will not be used to suspend undergraduate students. Grossman (AS) **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate. There was discussion about tabling the motion and also about the short amount of time left during the spring 2020 semester for students to make decisions.

Cramer (EN) suggested that students could be suspended if:

1. They fail to earn a 2.0 term GPA for any term (excluding spring 2020) while on probation;
2. They have three consecutive UK terms (excluding spring 2020) in which their cumulative GPA remains below 2.0; or

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3. Their GPA is below 0.6 after their first term (excluding spring 2020), if the semester's GPA is based on at least 9 hours of grades A, B, C, D or E.

There was discussion about encouraging deans to use their discretion to not suspend students due to performance for the spring 2020 semester.

Brion (EN), Soult (AS), and Grossman (AS) withdrew their motions, with approval from the seconders.

Grossman **moved**, on behalf of the Senate, that the dean or the dean's designee has discretion for the spring 2020 semester regarding placing students on probation or suspension for all programs in the university. Charnigo (AS) **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was debate and there was some.

Brion (EN) **called the question**. Andrade (ME) **seconded**. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

A **vote** was taken on the motion that, on behalf of Senate, the dean or dean's designee has discretion for the spring 2020 semester regarding placing students on probation or suspension, for all programs in the University. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** with none opposed.

The Chair informed SC that she will share their guidance during the Associate Deans meeting the following day.

The Chair encouraged everyone to continuing sharing their thoughts with her.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 pm by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Bird-Pollan,
Senate Council Chair

SC members present: Andrade, Bird-Pollan, Blonder, Brion, Cantrell, Charnigo, Collett, Cramer, Grossman, Hall, Hamilton, Richardson, Shaikh, Soult, and Vincent.

Guests present: Joshua Abboud, Carmen Agouridis, Ruth Beattie, Anna Bosch, Roger Brown, Rick Durham, Brian Jackson, Davy Jones, David McNear, Bill Smith, Janet Stamatel, Kim Taylor, Annie Davis Weber, Matthew Wilson

Prepared by Stephanie Woolery on May 28, 2020.