

Senate Council
May 18, 2020

The Senate Council met in a specially called session at 10:00 am on Monday, May 18, 2020 via video conference. All votes were taken via a show of hands unless indicated otherwise. Below is a record of what transpired.

Senate Council Chair Jennifer Bird-Pollan called the Senate Council (SC) meeting to order at 10:02 am. The Chair welcomed those present. The Chair asked everyone to enter their names in the chat box to take attendance.

The Chair explained that the meeting was called to compile SC feedback about the four Contingency Planning Team Reports, to share with administration on behalf of the Senate. She emphasized that the goal was not to reach a decision regarding a recommendation during the meeting, but to provide feedback regarding pros and cons for each scenario. She suggested that each SC member share their feedback in turn about each of the four scenarios. Below are comments regarding each of the four scenarios.

Feedback for Scenario 1: Normal Start

- If a normal start is feasible at all, it would require a truncated calendar.
- There are many logistical challenges with social distancing.
- Staying in compliance with safety standards.
- Putting public health needs first.
- There may not be a one-size-fits-all solution for the semester.
- Maintaining safety for faculty and staff.
- Logistics of implementing safety standards like temperature checks and cleaning.
- Overextending faculty and staff.
- Availability of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Would cause greatest amount of stress and anxiety for faculty, staff, and students.
- There would need to be more contingency planning in the event of a total shutdown.
- Additional sections of courses will cause a greater risk of exposure to faculty members and more work.
- Technology should be utilized to allow some students to attend remotely.
- Online fees should be waived for the fall semester.
- Additional accommodations for faculty and staff who are uncomfortable returning in person to campus in the fall.
- Consider waiving the *SR* about distance learning courses not previously approved to facilitate online teaching if necessary.
- More data/projections would be helpful in identifying the best plan.
- Exception process needed for experiential learning and clinical experiences.
- Legal liability of the University.
- Additional costs of cleaning, testing, and contact tracing.

Due to their similarities, the Chair suggested that SC members discuss pros and cons of the next two scenarios together.

Feedback for Scenario 2 (Delayed Start) and Scenario 3 (Hybrid Semester):

- A delayed start could be problematic for some colleges that require more time for students to complete work.
- A condensed semester creates more workload for faculty and advisors.

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- How will learning outcomes of short courses be measured/compared to regular-length courses.
- A delayed start would give faculty more time to prepare for courses.
- A three-week delay probably will not change much.
- A hybrid start would allow for an easier transition to fully online if the health situation warrants it in the fall.
- Additional faculty support would be needed to successfully teach both in person and online.
- More difficult to coordinate scheduling, use of space, safe distancing, and workload.
- Evaluation of the spring semester may provide insights for the fall.
- Experiential learning and learning outcomes are especially important for students preparing for a career.
- Delayed start/hybrid semester has many of the same drawbacks as a normal start, like COVID testing, contact tracing, and development of face-to-face and online course development.
- A hybrid start still leaves students with uncertainty.
- Outdoor classrooms do not seem feasible.

Feedback for Scenario 4: Fully Online

- The Senate needs to act if the University goes fully online.
- One size does not fit all. There will still be students that need hands-on and lab experiences.
- From a public safety point of view, it is the most feasible option.
- The fall calendar would not need to be altered.
- Retention may go down.
- Possible loss of learning outcomes.
- Loss of in-person experiences could cause students that are graduating to be less competitive in the job market.
- Students may opt for a gap year.
- Distance learning fees should be waived.
- Exceptions for experiential learning will be needed to maintain accreditation requirements for some programs.
- Faculty would not have to develop two versions (online and in person) for each course.
- Perception of lower quality and learning outcomes.
- Diminished student experience.
- Students should know as soon as possible if they will be on campus in the fall, and if courses will be online.
- Online delivery may be necessary if public schools are closed.

The Chair asked Assistant Provost for Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Annie Davis Weber to clarify SACSCOC requirements for contact hours. Weber explained that a compressed semester could require longer course meetings times. She shared that another possible solution would be to offer fewer hours awarded for fewer contact hours. Also, achieving learning outcomes will be important to demonstrate for courses without in-person meetings.

The Chair asked SC to consider:

- What if the semester is shortened, what will a course look like and what will be set as the minimum number of instructional minutes?
- What if the semester is started in person, but a faculty member needs to teach a course online that is not approved for distance learning?

- What should be the policy for excused absences for students?

Feedback from SC about these considerations included:

- General public health/safety concerns. Difficult to imagine testing, tracing, isolating, quarantining, etc. of every member of UK's on-campus community. May be cheaper financially (in terms of ensuring safety) to be totally online.
- Very difficult if faculty have to create face-to-face teaching plans and online teaching plans. This might be the worst option. Students and faculty would have more to have to deal with to plan for/accommodate both in-person and remote delivery of instruction.
- **There is not a single solution that works well for every student/discipline.** Moving entirely online would solve many problems for most programs but is not practical for every program. Experiential and clinical activities cannot be accomplished via online learning. Some students may take a year off to be able to ensure they get hand-on training.
- Breaking up one large class (100+) into smaller sections doesn't really lessen the chances of transmission. Large classes would have to be moved online. Teaching outdoors isn't really a practical solution.
- Flexibility is key.
- Shortening the semester to 13 weeks would be very difficult to do. Would likely involve potential of many courses to be offered for one or two credits, not the full (typical) three credits. SACS expects learning outcomes would not be met if courses were shortened, but decreased credit hours would be acceptable to reflect the decreased instructional time. Would definitely affect students in Education who need classroom hours. If credit hours remain the same, then the course automatically becomes a compressed course, with the same content in a shorter-than-intended time frame.
- There needs to be much more data available (projected enrollment, potential layoffs, etc.) to help people make decisions and offer suggestions.
- Differential tuition for distance learning should not be applicable if courses are moved wholly or in part online in the fall. Some students may have to choose online when they otherwise normally wouldn't, or they would not choose online at all if they could avoid it. Need to know what these numbers would be, to help make informed decisions.
- No one is bound to accept either in full or in part exactly the four plans submitted by the three committees.
- Students should know as soon as possible if they will or will not be able to be on campus in the fall, and if courses will or will not be online.
- Online delivery may be necessary if public schools are closed.
- Senate has some formal responsibilities that must be recognized. (Calendar, course delivery, etc.) SC appreciates ability to comment on broader swath of concerns, as well as be consulted formally in the case of closing departments, etc.
- If courses will be online in some way mandatorily, there should not be any barriers to allowing faculty to change from in-person delivery to online delivery.
- Faculty should be kept more in loop about administrative decisions being made. Can consult with SC or Senate if broader faculty input would not be appropriate for PR purposes.
- Is not entirely clear who is making the final, very important decisions.
- Things that apply to undergrads can also apply to grads and professional students, but not all issues are the same for both groups. Research mission is important – need to have clear rules for conducting research so specific faculty advisors and grad student committees aren't developing these policies individually.

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The Chair thanked everyone for their thoughts and hard work. A bulleted list of SC's feedback from the meeting will be passed on to Provost Blackwell. The Chair will share any details with SC members as they become available.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Bird-Pollan,
Senate Council Chair

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

Guests present: Karen Badger, Anna Bosch, Sheila Brothers, Rolf Craven, April Hatcher, Davy Jones, Susan Roberts, Hollie Swanson, and Annie Davis Weber.

Prepared by Stephanie Woolery on July 28, 2020.