



Academic Senate 2020-21

Minutes

July 7, 2020

Location: Zoom

1:00 PM

Members present: Frank Accardo, Dana Arazi, Michelle Bean, Angela Cheung, Marie Ekstrom, Rebecca Green, Yunior Hernandez, Jupei Hsiao, Jorge Huinquez, Erin Irwin, Shirley Isaac, Steve Johnson, George Kimber, Andrea Kirton, Michael Koger, Todd Lim, Jeannie Liu, Sheila Lynch, Marina Markossian, Angelica Martinez, Juana Mora, Farrah Nakatani, Katie O'Brien, Tyler Okamoto Dorali Pichardo-Diaz, Angela Rhodes, Rudy Rios, Matt Schleicher, Kevin Smith, Stephen Smith, Shelly Spencer, Razvan Stoian, Diana Valladares, Adam Wetsman; **Members absent:** Robin Babou, Robert Bethel, Tammy Camacho, Fran Cummings, William Currington, Carley Mitchell, Gerson Montiel, Matt Pitassi, Irma Valdiva; **Ad hoc members present:** none; **Guests:** Melissa Rifino-Juarez, Leigh Ann Unger

I. Call to Order – 1:03pm

II. Approval of Minutes: May 19, 2020 - approved.

III. Public Comment – none

IV. President's Report

A. **COVID-19 Taskforce** – The Taskforce has not met since before spring break and no meeting is scheduled. Administration has asked division deans to submit plans to return to campus so that safety protocols will be standardized. R. Rios, K. Smith, and S. Rivera are advocating for a meeting so that they can be a part of the return to campus discussion. A. Wetsman suggested that faculty leadership work together with classified and student leadership to create a sub-taskforce that can discuss the situation and explore what other colleges are doing and in turn share these findings with the taskforce when it reconvenes.

B. **Budget Taskforce** -The District presented a budget to the Board of Trustees at the last board meeting. The Board approved the budget with the understanding that there would be adjustments to the budget based on negotiation outcomes. R. Rios shared that the board asked a number of questions and were not happy with cuts knowing that the cuts were not yet negotiated. R.Rios explained that the budget had to be approved to be sent to LACOE to continue receiving funding, but that there is the understanding that any faculty pay cuts have to be negotiated. There will be an August update to the budget, and we will know more then. Negotiations have to occur before the taskforce can move forward.

- i. K. O'Brien asked if the budget presented to the board listed specific cuts, as the information presented at PFC was not clear. K. Smith clarified that what went to the board was a high-level budget without details listed, but rather only a percentage that would be cut to achieve a balanced budget. Release time is unknown at this time. Leadership Academy, IEC Co-Chair, and Outcomes are all on hold. K.Smith has contacted board members to discuss this issue and is pressing to get answers as to whether or not these positions will be filled.



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- ii. A senator asked if we would be returning to campus in the spring semester. K. Smith shared that there have not been any official conversations regarding when we will return to campus.

C. Administrative Reorganization

- i. Yolanda Emerson will be Dean of KDA and no longer oversee Non-Credit
- ii. Gita Runkle will be Dean of Non-Credit and scheduling at the centers
- iii. Alice Mecom will be in charge of Staff Development and no longer oversee LAC
- iv. Mike Garabedian will oversee LAC
- v. Lisa Chavez will oversee Equity and TRIO and manage master scheduling for all counselors
- vi. Melba Castro will oversee EOPS, DSPS, CARE and continue to manage Outreach
- vii. Loy Nashua will be the Financial Aid Director, in addition to Dean of Student Life, and will oversee Admissions & Records, Student Health and Veterans Services
- viii. VPSS will not be replaced at this time, Dr. Reyes will step in for the time being. K.O'Brien expressed concern with lack of continuity with regards to student service representation on President's Cabinet. Concern was also expressed by multiple senators regarding an academic dean being appointed who does not have an academic background. Additional concerns were shared, including having an Athletic Director without experience in athletics and faculty not being given an opportunity to voice their thoughts on the matter. It was shared by a senator that administration voiced to the Board of Trustees that the dean assigned is competent to perform the job.

D. Ideas for 20-21 – Senate Exec would like to support a broad push for OER and K. Smith will work closely with OER on this effort. Culturally responsive pedagogy is also a priority this academic year and moving forward. Library staff shared that students have raised concerns that some textbook content may be racist

E. Staff Development/FLEX - K. O'Brien shared that she raised a concern to administration that switching from Flex Reporter is not a good idea. Teresa Martinez will continue to be a part of flex.

V. Vice President's Reports

- A. 1st Vice President** – no report
- B. 2nd Vice President** – no report

VI. Unfinished Business - none

VII. New Business

- A. Executive Motion: Resolution in Support of Synchronous Instruction for Honors Classes**
Background (Attachment A): Honors classes have never been taught online. M. Rifino-Juarez asked that Senate support a resolution encouraging synchronous learning for Honors classes. However, this modality remains under faculty purview. The Honors Advisory will be meeting to discuss the long-term plan for online/hybrid sections of Honors courses in the future. There are currently no curriculum restrictions from transfer partners. The committee will also be discussing the program acceptance requirements when they reconvene in the fall semester. S. Lynch asked about the blended courses that include honors and if the honors section would have separate synchronous learning, or



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would it be that the entire class meet synchronously. Discussion ensued regarding a date of the resolution. S. Lynch suggested that these honors courses would meet separately with the honors students synchronously. A. Wetsman does not envision a separate synchronous discussion for students.

- i. **Motion** to amend the resolution to include, “during remote learning.” to the resolution made by S. Spencer, 2nd by A. Wetsman

26 yea, 1 nay, motion passes

- ii. **Motion** in favor of the revised motion

22 yea, 0 nay, motion passes

B. Executive Motion: Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter and Social Justice

K. Smith read resolution (**Attachment B**)

- i. **Motion** to amend the first whereas in the resolution to say, “all black lives matter” in lower case. Made by S. Lynch, 2nd by D. Arazi,

24 yea, 0 nay motion passes

- ii. **Discussion:** S. Spencer asked that the word “equality” be added to paragraph three. Also suggested to add the word “all forms of oppression” to the last paragraph.

Motion to amend paragraph three and five as indicated in the discussion made by S. Spencer, 2nd by K. O’Brien 2nds

27 yea, 0 nay motion carries.

Motion to accept the motion as it now stands

28 yea, 0 nay

C. Synchronous Instruction

Executive Motion: We encourage when possible, for faculty to offer some portion of their class in a synchronous fashion to improve student engagement and success.

Background: While the expectation is that there should always be an asynchronous component, senate exec recommends faculty to offer synchronous learning options during remote learning, as there are students that seem to do better when learning is synchronous.

Discussion: K. O’Brien asked if we could offer both asynchronous and synchronous learning to ensure there are options for all students. K. Smith said that he will include in an email to faculty that asynchronous learning should always be available. S. Spencer asked for clarification regarding supporting the previous senate request to favor asynchronous and not synchronous. D. Arazi, shared findings that show an increase in student retention and success when at least some portion of the class is synchronous. Discussion ensued regarding the faculty making possible some portion of their class synchronously.

- i. **Motion** to amend the motion to, “We encourage faculty to make some portion of their class available in a synchronous fashion to improve student engagement and success during remote instruction, while also offering an asynchronous option.” made by S. Lynch, 2nd by D. Pichardo

22 yea, 0 nay motion to amend passes

- ii. **Motion** to pass the revised motion

27 yea, 0 nay motion passes



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D. EWs for Fall 2020

- i. K. Smith presented a summary of Excused Withdrawals (EW) and the difference between an Excused Withdrawal (EW) and a Withdrawal (W). In spring and summer, we passed a motion to automatically award an EW if the student earned the grade of an "F" or "W". Eleven thousand EWs were issued in Spring 2020. K. Smith went on to present some options for moving forward with the EW policy for Fall 2020:
 - a) If we do not recommend an EW policy change for Fall 2020, students can still get an EW. Students must petition for it by filling out a form and provide the reason as COVID-19. Anything related to COVID-19 will not require documentation. Any reason not related to COVID-19, supporting documentation will be required.
 - b) Automate a W to become an EW.
 - c) A student can still receive a W. The student would have to petition to have the grade changed.
- ii. **Motion** to automate all Ws to become EWs made by D. Arazi, 2nd by S. Lynch.
Discussion: K. O'Brien recommended going with automation since COVID-19 will still be an issue in the fall semester. A. Wetsman supported going back to regular grading and practice. We have had an influx of students that may not normally be in our system. With this policy in place, they may not be as vested in passing the class. An EW process is in place for COVID-19 and that will take care of those students that need the flexibility. L. Unger shared that it will be difficult to retrain our students that EW does not normally give students a refund and they will have to petition for an EW. S. Lynch stated that we can retrain students to get back to normal when the time comes. A. Rhodes implored that we all should support our students in any way that we can for many reasons, including mental health.

22 yea, 2 nay, motion passes.

E. EW and F Grades

- i. K. Smith shared the spring policy for NP and F grades - automated all F/NP grades to EWs. Unforeseen consequences occurred when a student thought they received a "D" grade and the faculty member felt that an EW might be more helpful, and gave a student an F grade so that it could become an EW when a student didn't want an EW. Some options:
 - a) Automate F/NP grades to become EWs
 - b) Do not automate the process. A student can still receive an F/NP and petition to Admissions and Records to have the grade changed to an EW.
- ii. **Motion** to automate F/NP grades to become EWs for Fall 2020 made by D. Pichardo Diaz, 2nd by A. Rhodes
Discussion: S. Lynch supports not automating the process if we can be clear to all students from the first day of class that all students have grade options. A. Wetsman asked for clarification as to how this is granted - does the student have to have a COVID-19 related reason.

9 yea, 13 nay, motion fails



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F. EW Deadline

- i. K. Smith shared EW deadline for spring and summer – students could petition for an EW after grades are posted for spring, and students have one week to petition after grades are posted for summer. Some options for fall semester:
 - a) If we do nothing, faculty and students can drop through Banner until 75% completion of the term. After that date, a student would still be able to get an EW through a petition process.
 - b) Delay the date until the last day of class.
 - c) Petition after the semester, but students will have to supply documentation.
- ii. **Motion** to delay the date until the last day of class made by A. Wetsman, 2nd by S. Lynch

Discussion: A. Rhodes asked to clarify if the senate just removed the EW option for fall. K. Smith clarified that this is not the case - all W's become EWs. Any student or instructor has until the last day of class to drop a class with an EW in Banner until the last day of class. After the last day of class, the student would have to petition for an EW via Admissions and Records. A. Wetsman pointed out that if the EW deadline is extended beyond the term, this resolution would allow student to “non-automate” an F to an EW. This decision would create a tremendous burden on admissions and records staff and students. With the option of delaying the EW deadline until the last day of class, students have an option.

Call to question by K. O'Brien

10 yea, 0 nay, motion to call to question passes

18 yea, 2 nay, motion to delay the EW date until the last day of class passes

- G. P/NP – no information from transfer institutions. We will wait until there is further guidance from transfer institutions.

VIII. Announcements - none

IX. Adjournment – 2:48pm



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Attachment A: Resolution in Support of Synchronous Instruction for Honors Courses During Remote Learning

Resolution in Support of Synchronous Instruction for Honors Courses During Remote Learning

Whereas, Honors classes at Rio Hondo College have never been taught in an online format before;

Whereas, Honors class size limits are smaller to allow for greater interaction and support; and

Whereas, Rio Hondo College has declared that lecture classes, including Honors classes, will be held remotely for Fall, 2020;

Resolved, the Academic Senate implores faculty teaching honors classes to conduct classes synchronously during their scheduled times; and

Resolved, the Academic Senate implores faculty teaching honors classes to allow for asynchronous learning if a student is unable to attend synchronously.



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Attachment B: Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter and Social Justice

Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter and Social Justice

Whereas, in response to both currently and historically disparate treatment of and systemic racism against Black communities, RHC faculty assert that all black lives matter;

Whereas, the RHC faculty have a responsibility to understand, and intentionally work to challenge forms of injustice in our curricula, our classroom cultures, and our relationships with our students, and each other; and

Whereas, the RHC faculty are committed to making our community a safe space for the practice of equality and equity, for the building of understanding, and for the active engagement of social justice;

Resolved, the Academic Senate encourages faculty to engage students in ongoing critical reflection and discussions concerning systemic inequities and racial and ethnic bias; and affirm the right of Black students to be free of hate and violence and treated with respect and dignity; and

Resolved, the Academic Senate condemns racism in all forms and implores faculty to denounce hate, violence, and all forms of oppression for communities of color.