Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Monday, August 3, 2020, 12:30 PM

In attendance: Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Elizabeth McNie (Vice Chair AY 2020-2021), Keir Moorhead (Vice Chair AY 2019-2020]), Sarah Senk (Secretary), Matt Fairbanks, Christine Isakson,

university is considering the very specific circumstances. Maybe we include some general language like "Thou Shalt Consider the impact of COVID-19 on all three categories."

- Yip and Senk argue that we need to have the student evaluation data. Faculty should have every right to contextualize that, and the self-study can be an opportunity to contextualize that. Committee discusses additional concern that we've already had one semester of no teaching evaluations, which is technically in violation of the CBA. Tsai adds: how are we going to track if people opt in or out? Is that us? Is that HR? It's a logistical nightmare.
- Pinisetty agrees with Yip and Senk that opting out shouldn't be an option, but faculty should have the opportunity to contextualize. Yip adds "I can't imagine that a department wouldn't be able to contextualize this. People seem to be worried about things being fair. But to my understanding the RTP process is fair, allows for contextualization and rebuttals, etc." Pinisetty notes the bigger challenge is the evaluation process. What if there aren't synchronous sessions to observe?
- McNie agrees we should provide specific guidelines for reviewers.
- Committee discusses potential problem with IBL department chair being the same person as School Dean: department chair's letter is optional. Yip adds there's a prescription that "no one person can be in multiple levels of review" because of the substantial amount of weight that one individual's decision would have. For example, if someone is on the Senate RTP committee, they can't be on the department one. The same rules will apply. Pinisetty adds that the policy doesn't allow the department chair to evaluate a class. It can be included as a supplementary thing, but if the faculty member says no, the chair does not write an evaluation.
- Senk suggests making a separate evaluation form for online classes. Senk says she could see the questions that are already problematic on our current evals – the ones asking if the instructor is effective, or "explains things in a way I can understand" might be skewed online. Senk notes online course evaluations she's seen at other schools are much more objective, they include things about the frequency of communication, the organization of the course materials, the sequencing of assignments, etc. Pinisetty notes that Aparna Sinha has proposed a revised set of course evaluation questions to help eliminate gender bias; we may want to coordinate and use this as an opportunity to improve our evaluations in general.
- Senk adds: what would the mechanism be? If we don't have Qualtrics by the end of fall semester, how will we do online student evaluations? We need to figure out a mechanism early this semester.
- McNie suggests we move forward with two solutions: working on an evaluation specifically regarding online pedagogy writing a statement for RTP committees regarding the review process and explaining that they should take into account the conditioning factors when reviewing candidates' evaluations.
- Pinisetty notes there is a separate issue with people on sabbatical going up for promotion but not teaching this fall due to sabbatical. But that's a violation of CBA. Senk suggests one option might be to allow the RTP committee to review recorded materials from late Spring 2020; so if a faculty member is on leave this fall, the RTP committee member assigned to evaluate his/her class could review those recorded materials and that could count as an "observation." Committee tables the issue for now, but it will need to be addressed.

- Action item: Fairbanks will draft an RTP policy addendum and memo for use by faculty and departmental RTP committees.

III. Departmental Appendix K updates
- Former senate chair sent the approved Science and Math Appendix K to Provost Opp in August 2019. However, the document was never advanced to Cabinet.
- Pinisetty sent the S&M Appendix K, along with the C&C Appendix K to Jennifer Hembree, who will forward to Cabinet.
- Committee asks what Cabinet must approve Appendix K, or who, specifically on the Cabinet beyond the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs. Committee considers whether

- As an outgoing Senate Exec member, Tsai was not CC'd on Kamdar's email, and asks for a synopsis. Committee describes key points:

  Kamdar noted that during a Zoom meeting on May 15, "President Cropper explained that his decision to appoint the Dean was driven by his desire to see the IBL department succeed and because he was troubled by: 1 Declining enrollment and retention in IBL, 2. Deep divisions in the department, and 3. The fact that faculty-candidates for the IBL Chair position lacked experience in enrollment and retention."

  Kamdar noted that at no time between October (when she submitted notice that she intended to resign) and the May meeting was the IBL department informed of any of these concerns; she noted that, accordingly, the explanation was surprising.

  - Regarding point 1 (declining enrollment and retention in IBL), Kamdar noted that after the May meeting, she reviewed from our own office of Institutional Research and found that total IBL enrollment increased 44.5% between Fall 2012 and Fall 2017, remained steady in 2018, and then only dropped in Fall 2019. She also noted that the President's claim that "IBL had the worst retention rates on campus" was questionable. (She noted it was true in Fall 2017 but not in Fall 2018, the last year for which data is currently available.) She attributed the Fall 2016 retention rates to the fact that there was a 33% increase in the incoming class but no additional resources allocated to the department, which had the highest student-faculty ratio on campus. She noted that as tenure-track faculty were added in 2017 and 2018, retention rates improved, and "in 2018, the IBL retention rate for first-time first-year students was 76% ---below MT and ET, tied with ME and higher than GSMA."
  - Regarding point 2 (alleged divisions in the department), Kamdar noted the glowing IACBE review the department just received, which included "no action findings, no recommendations and 8 recognitions (commendations)."
  - Regarding point 3 (the claim that both faculty-candidates for the chair role lacked experience in enrollment and retention). Kamdar notes that recruitment and enrollment "have not traditionally been Chair responsibilities at Cal MariT/S.(t recru)-y-10(t)21(h)-(a)-10(c)21(u)-99(wh)-9(i

        - Kamdar noted that "Unilateral decisions such as this one undermine confidence in the shared governance process, not just in IBL but throughout campus."
        - Kamdar noted that "Placing the Dean into what would ordinarily be a faculty position is a centralization of power and responsibility that should not be taken lightly. The checks and balances in the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process are undermined by removing a layer of review previously controlled by faculty and placing it into the hands of an administrator who already administers another layer of review."
- Committee discusses Kamdar's four requests with which she concluded the letter: that the academic senate 1) Take any reasonable actions, in accordance with guidance from the American Association of University Professors, that may help to assure that departmental recommendations for faculty and Chair positions be respected; 2) Establish written guidelines and protocols for Administration to follow when overriding a department's recommendation for department-related matters; 3) Craft a revised department chair policy that clearly specifies the duties and responsibilities of the Department Chair; and 4) Work with Administration to lay out a clear strategy to return departmental governance to IBL faculty and appoint Dr. Tony Lewis, the 6-1 winner of the vote for IBL Department Chair, into that position.
- Yip notes that the first three recommendations can be achieved by creating a robust Department Chair policy and encouraging the Administration create those written guidelines and protocols for conservatorship.
- Committee emphatically agrees with Kamdar and the AAUP guidelines that departments should be chaired by faculty members, and agrees to 1) prioritize the new Chair policy, making it the primary agenda item for the first General Senate meeting of the year, and 2) to draft a senate resolution using Kamdar's letter as a guide.
- Pinisetty says he would like to meet with the Provost to discuss the issue. Senk and McNie remind committee that according to the new bylaws the preferred mode of communication by senate is resolution

- Tsai asks if he should follow up with Julianne Tolsom about Qualtrics. Committee says “why not?”
- Yip asks when this group can expect to meet with the new provost. Pinisetty reports that her Provost Council meets start August 17 but he can schedule a