

FS meeting Aug 25th

Motions made:

1-

Whereas, the start of the academic year is only a week away; and

Whereas, the Pandemic Recovery Committee (PRC) has worked for many months on the development and deployment of an operational plan for that academic year; and

Whereas, the Faculty Senate has, since its foundation, established a working relationship with the Administration based on mutual respect and reasoned communication; and

Whereas, the appropriate timing of such communication is important, and

Whereas, the transmission of a long and detailed last-minute list of Covid-related motions from the Faculty Senate to the Administration at this specific moment might seem counter-productive or disputatious; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Executive Committee of Faculty Senate will send to the Administration a single brief summary of the deliberations from the Aug 25th meeting, rather than an exhaustive report on all the many motions debated.

2 -

The Faculty Senate requests that the Pandemic Recovery Committee (PRC) and all of its subcommittees be constituted with representation from stakeholder groups including students, professional staff, Instructional Staff, and Faculty. For the PRC, there should be at minimum one representative from each group and at least 2 Faculty members. Per the principles of shared governance, stakeholder groups should choose their own representatives.

3 –

The Faculty Senate requests a survey of current NJIT students to gauge their experiences and satisfaction with converged learning this fall. The survey should also assess whether students would plan to take a gap semester or year if classes were largely held remotely. This survey should be designed collaboratively by the Faculty Senate, LEC, Student Senate and Institutional Research. Complete, unedited results should be provided to each group.

4 -

The Faculty Senate requests that all decisions related to Covid be made with the goal of reducing the negative impact to the greatest number of stakeholders.

Reports:

5 –

The Faculty Senate requests any reports the administration is in receipt of from Risk Management, consultants, or others, be disseminated to the campus community.

6 –

The Faculty Senate requests a report on the fall 2020 plan from the Director of Risk Assessment. That report should include the risks for illness, outbreak, death, and litigation against NJIT and its employees.

7 –

The Faculty Senate requests the dissemination of the full recommendations and reports of the industrial hygienist(s) and any other consultants engaged by NJIT in the pandemic recovery planning process.

COVID testing:

8 –

In cooperation with the Faculty Senate, surveillance PCR COVID testing protocols should be implemented that include free testing of all NJIT community members at least once every two weeks throughout the semester, beginning with the time of their last test before returning to campus.

9 –

The Faculty Senate requests any COVID testing protocols be opt-in. If free testing is available, it will not be mandatory.

10 –

The Faculty Senate requests an accounting of the costs associated with free bi-weekly testing and an explanation of how such costs will be paid.

11 –

The Faculty Senate requests that the Pandemic Recovery Dashboard should list the number of PCR tests conducted per day as well as the number of new cases per day.

Teaching:

12 –

The Faculty Senate requests the ability for instructors to opt-in to teaching on-campus converged courses for fall 2020 and spring 2021. An opt-in system would mean that any

instructor willing to teach in-person converged courses will affirmatively choose that course modality. By default, all other instructors will teach remotely.

13 -

All instructors have the right to choose the modality of their course delivery in consultation with their academic supervisors and in accordance with learning objectives and best practices from a set of agreed upon options based in the five modalities accepted by NJIT, including fully in-person (COVID conditions permitting), hybrid, Hi-Tech, converged, and fully remote.

IRC Funds:

14 -

The possible deduction of IRC funds without discussion with the faculty

Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting
August 25, 2020
WeBex, 11:30-1:30PM

Convening of the Meeting — Ellen Thomas, President

The meeting started at 11:34AM

Voting Members Present: M. Bandelt, L. Rodriguez-Freire, D. Blackmore, D. Bunker, E. Farinas, I. Gatley, H. Grebel, R. Goodman, Q. Jones, B. Khusid, P. Armenante, N. Steffen-Fluhr, E. Michalopoulou, R. Dent, A. Borgaonkar, R. Rojas-Cessa, A. Rosato, U. Roshan, M. Schwartz, R. Sodhi, D. Sollohub, E. Thomas, Y. Perl, A. Gerbessiotis

Non-Voting Members Present: K. Belfield, R. Lazer, F. Deek, A. Dhawan, L. Hamilton, A. Hoang, M. Kam, M. Stanko, K. Riismandel, B. Kolarevic, B. Baltzis, K. Sandell

Guests Present: Alison Lefkovitz (History), Amitabha Bose (Mathematical Sciences), Andrew Christ (Real Estate Development), Andrew Klobucar (Humanities), Burt Kimmelman (Humanities), Carol Johnson (Humanities), Charles Brooks (Humanities), Daphne Soares (Biological Sciences), David Horntrop (Mathematical Sciences), Deborah Morrison-Santana (History), Farzan Nadim (Biological Sciences), Gabrielle Esperdy (HCAD), John Wolf (CSLA), Jay Meegoda (CEE), Joel Bloom (President), Karen Roach (Biological Sciences), Kristen Severi (Biological Sciences), Magarita Vinnikov (Informatics), Melodi Guilbault (MTSM), Michael Kenoe (HCAD), Miriam Ascarelli (Humanities), Neil Maher (History), Phillip Barden (Biological Sciences), Shamay Carty (Biological Sciences), Sreyas Das (student), Stephen Pemberton (History), Heidi Young (Humanities), Jorge Golowasch (Biological Sciences), Scott Kent (History), Vanessa Velez (Humanities), Megan O'Neill (Humanities), Risa Gorelick (Humanities), Sotiri Ziaavras (Graduate Studies), Calista McRae (NJIT), Maurie Cohen (Humanities), Jake Slovis (Humanities), Julie Ancis (Humanities), Gal Haspel (Biological Sciences), Bernadette Longo (Humanities)

Report of the Faculty Senate President

Discussing the motions that were sent by Faculty. Denis Blackmore and Anthony Rosato shall be Faculty Senate President and Vice President, respectively, starting Sept. 1, 2020. Joel Bloom mentioned the Governor's budget address in regards to state funding for FY21.

Motions made:

1-

Whereas, the start of the academic year is only a week away; and
Whereas, the Pandemic Recovery Committee (PRC) has worked for many months on the development and deployment of an operational plan for that academic year; and
Whereas, the Faculty Senate has, since its foundation, established a working relationship with the Administration based on mutual respect and reasoned communication; and
Whereas, the appropriate timing of such communication is important, and

Whereas, the transmission of a long and detailed last-minute list of Covid-related motions from the Faculty Senate to the Administration at this specific moment might seem counter-productive or disputatious; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Executive Committee of Faculty Senate will send to the Administration a single brief summary of the deliberations from the Aug 25th meeting, rather than an exhaustive report on all the many motions debated.

E. Thomas: This motion was made in regards to the long list of motions and questioned the effectiveness of sending the administration a laundry list of demands/requests. It might be better to send administration a discussion of all the major concerns. Motion by E. Thomas and seconded by I. Gatley. D. Bunker: What would the summary entail and who would approve it? Fear that the role of Senators would be watered down. Should vote on motions as usual. K. Riismandel: Do we send both the motions and the summary? E. Thomas: Would send the discussion and the summary instead of the list of requests. H. Grebel: Can send the motions and add the discussion as an addendum or appendix. D. Sollohub: How is this different than meeting minutes? Is it different, if so in what way? E. Thomas: Could write up the minutes of the meeting, have everyone vote on it, and then send it to administration. D. Sollohub: Do we wait or make a special arrangement for voting? E. Thomas: Would do it immediately. D. Blackmore: This motion is too confusing to be considered. The motion did not pass with 4 yes, 16 no, and 3 abstentions.

2 -

The Faculty Senate requests that the Pandemic Recovery Committee (PRC) and all of its subcommittees be constituted with representation from stakeholder groups including students, professional staff, Instructional Staff, and Faculty. For the PRC, there should be at minimum one representative from each group and at least 2 Faculty members. Per the principles of shared governance, stakeholder groups should choose their own representatives.

Motion by E. Thomas and seconded by R. Rojas-Cessa. D. Bunker: Faculty, lecturers, and staff have real concerns about the pandemic recovery plan. PSA polled their people and not even 20% believe that the campus will be safe during the fall semester. Less than 15% of faculty, instructors, and staff believe their opinion was solicited regarding returning to campus. Faculty Senate did a survey and 70% of senators that instructors should have the option to teach online or in person or some combination of the two. Don't feel they were appropriately consulted about the plan. E. Thomas: Was there concern that stakeholders did not get to pick their own members of the current pandemic recovery sub-committee? Faculty Senate did pick faculty members for committees they were serving on. Had reached out to the departments and submitted names to the subcommittees. N. Steffen-Fluhr: What is the ongoing role of the pandemic recovery committee? A. Christ: PRC will operationalize the plan and continue to meet and discuss any modifications that need to be made and how we are reacting to circumstances that are presenting themselves. A. Borgaonkar: Can someone explain the logic on how the committees were formed. Who decided who gets to represent? A. Christ: Reach out to University and Faculty Senate and get representation that made sense for those that participate in these specific areas. Made suggestions, had recommendations, and volunteering to be part of the sub-committees. F. Deek: Other considerations for membership was to ensure strong

University functional representation and have logic expertise. D. Bunker: From the surveys, many members of the community feel that they were not consulted and did not have the opportunity to participate in the committees. Possibly reach out more broadly and also in a more specific ad hoc way to find people and make sure people know they are included in the larger planning decisions. The motion passed with 17 yes, 2 no, and 2 abstentions.

3 –

The Faculty Senate requests a survey of current NJIT students to gauge their experiences and satisfaction with converged learning this fall. The survey should also assess whether students would plan to take a gap semester or year if classes were largely held remotely. This survey should be designed collaboratively by the Faculty Senate, LEC, Student Senate and Institutional Research. Complete, unedited results should be provided to each group.

Motion by D. Bunker and seconded by H. Grebel. A. Borgaonkar: How can this be tested in one survey? D. Bunker: Important to have assessment and understand if our methods are effective and how students have responded to our converged classes. H. Grebel: Seems redundant and should concentrate on other thing. F. Deek: Such a survey is already in the planning phase. B. Khusid: Last sentence should be rewritten. D. Sollohub: If this kind of survey is already underway what is the role of the Faculty Senate, LEC, students, and staff in assembling that poll. F. Deek: Once we have a draft, we will bring it to the attention of stakeholders. A. Borgaonkar: Make a friendly amendment to language-that we are interested in getting information on students' experience as well as their actions if we went fully remote and faculty senate be consulted before the survey went out. Motion to accept the clarified language by A. Borgaonkar and seconded by B. Khusid. Discussion on what the language should be. Motion to accept the language passed with 13 yes, 6 no, and 0 abstentions. Motion to pass the amended motion by D. Bunker and seconded by H. Grebel. The motion passed with 11 yes, 4 no, and 0 abstentions.

4 -

The Faculty Senate requests that all decisions related to Covid be made with the goal of reducing the negative impact to the greatest number of stakeholders.

Motion by E. Thomas and seconded by H. Grebel. A. Borgaonkar: language is vague, not sure what this motion is helping with going forward. D. Sollohub: Very vague and not worth considering. Motion to table by D. Sollohub and seconded by I. Gatley. Q. Jones: Should be withdrawn and not tabled. Should not have to vote on a motion with this wording. Haim takes away his second for the original motion.

Reports:

5 –

The Faculty Senate requests any reports the administration is in receipt of from Risk Management, consultants, or others, be disseminated to the campus community.

Motion by E. Thomas and seconded by D. Bunker. M. Schwartz: Concerned about this information going to the public. Legal issues and being sued. The motion passed with 11 yes, 5 no, and 1 abstention.

COVID testing:

8 –

In cooperation with the Faculty Senate, surveillance PCR COVID testing protocols should be implemented that include free testing of all NJIT community members at least once every two weeks throughout the semester, beginning with the time of their last test before returning to campus.

D. Bunker: Need to know the prevalence of covid-19, actual infections. Need to know if our measures are working or not. Right now, don't see that in the plan and that is problematic because if we rely on only sick individuals to get tested, we are going to get it too late. Fear of having an outbreak and shutting down. R. Sodhi: Every two weeks is too much. NJIT testing should be done under medical supervision. A. Christ: Administered by University Hospital, but the test is self-administered. L. Rodriguez-Freire: We are one of the only universities doing waste water testing, and more efficient than PCR testing. This will give us an advantage to see the viral load in the waste water. If we see something that is concerning, we will move to mass PCR testing of community members to identify numbers of positive cases and react after that. N. Steffen-Fluhr: Random testing might be more helpful with transmission, especially with asymptomatic people. A. Christ: We are continuing to create a plan for surveillance testing. Want to use pooled testing. Hard to find a healthcare provider to administer. Y. Perl: Will accept this every two weeks testing. A. Christ: Have already committed to twice a month testing. D. Sollohub: Is the mandatory testing only for those coming to campus? A. Christ: Yes. D. Bunker: the key point of this motion is we need some form of testing, either a random sample or the entire population. I. Gatley: Maybe rewrite the language. D. Bunker: If we rewrite the language it might take too long, hope that some sort of testing comes out of this. The motion passed with 16 yes, 2 no, and 1 abstention.

9 –

The Faculty Senate requests any COVID testing protocols be opt-in. If free testing is available, it will not be mandatory.

E. Thomas: Uncomfortable with the idea to undergo medical testing every two weeks whether we are sick or not sick. D. Blackmore: Maybe make the wording voluntary instead of opt-in. The motion did not pass with 3 yes, 8 no, and 0 abstentions.

10 –

The Faculty Senate requests an accounting of the costs associated with free bi-weekly testing and an explanation of how such costs will be paid.

11 –

The Faculty Senate requests that the Pandemic Recovery Dashboard should list the number of PCR tests conducted per day as well as the number of new cases per day.

Motion by D. Bunker and seconded by H. Grebel. D. Bunker: Need to know how many tests have been administered and know the test positivity rate. Help to know how prevalent the virus is in our community. H. Grebel: When you say testing do you mean faculty, staff and students? D. Bunker: Everyone in the community would be tested, to know how many positive cases there

are in the NJIT community. The dashboard would breakdown how the tests were done and the frequency of testing, and how many tests were positive. All the data should be there so everyone can make informed decisions. L. Rodriguez-Freire: This semester will not have everyone on campus. Would not need to test everyone, but everyone on campus that is a risk to everyone else on campus. Just want to clarify that. The motion passed with 15 yes, 2 no, and 1 abstention.

Teaching:

12 –

The Faculty Senate requests the ability for instructors to opt-in to teaching on-campus converged courses for fall 2020 and spring 2021. An opt-in system would mean that any instructor willing to teach in-person converged courses will affirmatively choose that course modality. By default, all other instructors will teach remotely. D. Blackmore: Wouldn't it be simpler to say the FS requests that teaching of on-campus converged classes be voluntary for fall 2020 and spring 2021.

13 -

All instructors have the right to choose the modality of their course delivery in consultation with their academic supervisors and in accordance with learning objectives and best practices from a set of agreed upon options based in the five modalities accepted by NJIT, including fully in-person (COVID conditions permitting), hybrid, Hi-Tech, converged, and fully remote.

Motions 12&13 are being discussed as one. D. Bunker: This is a pedagogical question, and instructors should decide the best way to teach their classes. Administration should afford instructors more flexibility. Motion to discuss #13 by E. Thomas and seconded by Q. Jones. R. Sodhi: What are the guidelines by the state? E. Thomas: Because this about Spring 2021 and in course design in general this is something that we can bring up in our next meeting. E. Thomas: Basil, can you clarify if all students opt out of in person learning then the teacher does not have to be in the room. B. Baltzis: Students cannot opt out for the whole semester, they can change their mind any time they want, responding to back to classroom. Q. Jones: There could be a case where only 2/3 people are in the class and the rest decide to do class from online. This is how the system is set up. B. Baltzis: In some cases, by reading comments in different social media, students have been approached by instructors to pick a particular mode, and we don't want that. Q. Jones: Why don't we want that? Not clear about what is going on. B. Baltzis: We will maximize the use of space, there are students who do not want come and then the invitation will go to others in the class so that we have as much of a usage of space as possible.

Motion to table 12&13 by I. Gatley and seconded by D. Sollohub. Motion passed with 11 yes, 2 no, and 0 abstention.

IRC Funds:

14 –

The possible deduction of IRC funds without discussion with the faculty
This motion was not discussed due to time running out.

The meeting ended at 2:12PM