

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE
University Environment Committee
Meeting of July 8th 2020, 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Online meeting (Zoom)

Attendance: Thomas Wilson, Frederick Walter, Malcolm Bowman, Michelino Puopolo, Jeanne Charoy, Sarah Battaglia, Xinwie Mao, Hiya Panja, Sean Deery, Joanna Kaczorowska

Meeting called to order at 3:10PM.

Consideration of the May minutes: Thomas Wilson entertained a motion to accept the minutes. It was noted that two corrections were needed: 1) typos to Frederick Walter's name and 2) Sarah Battaglia was not noted as present even though she was. Joanna Kaczorowska moved and Jeanne Charoy seconded. The minutes were approved, as corrected, without any opposition.

Chair report. Wilson and some others are representing the senate on the COVID-19 task forces. Richard Larson has sent out some information on July 1st, which Wilson offered to forward to anyone who had not received it.

The first University Senate meeting will be held on 8/21/2020. The administrators might submit a written report ahead of the meeting that everybody could read and to then have more discussion about it on the floor. There may be the option of submitting questions in advance. The goal is to have more discussion. Walter noted that this idea of having more deliberations within the Senate has been tried in previous years.

The delayed Spring elections will be held in August as well. There should be a call going out in August for Senate positions - including positions in this committee. Wilson is running for reelection. Matthew Eiseman (absent at this meeting) is up for reelection. Wilson asked whether Michelino Puopolo was planning to stand for reelection. Puopolo answered that he would likely not run for reelection as he is serving on three other committees and it is too much. Wilson thanked him for his service to the committee.

Puopolo's position was at HSC - there are 2 positions opened there for this committee, and 1 in the Humanities and Fine Arts. In addition, the committee needs 2 Undergraduate student representatives and 1 Graduate student representative. Wilson asked Hiya Panja if she would be interested and told her he could recommend her. Charoy (current Graduate student representative) may graduate in December. Malcolm Bowman noted that people from Sustainability studies would likely be interested.

The Senate task force has continued to meet, with an additional 6 representatives for a total of 13. University COVID Task Force meetings are on Mondays, where up to 70 people talk about overall things. NYS is improving and will enter Phase 4 as of Monday 8/13/2020. On Long

Island there have been 2 days with 0 deaths (and 9 deaths statewide). There are now about 50000 tests a day in New York State and less than 1% come back positive (which is good, especially compared to other states).

Bowman asked whether anyone knew how many students are out of state. Wilson answered that there are some, but NYS is requiring a 14 days quarantine and SBU is trying to make arrangements so students can do that. Wilson noted that NYC is currently in a modified phase 3, in part because airborne transmission is an issue. This rolls into ventilation problems on the SBU campus. Generally, a higher MERV number is better. Some buildings on campus can support MERV 13, while others can go to MERV 11.

A reopening plan was sent to the official members of the committee. It is a 13 page document with links to other information. This plan went to Albany and was approved by SUNY and the Department of Health. There should be a presidential communication - the Senate has asked for regular presidential communications. This plan is not set in stone and has a lot of wiggle room so that if circumstances change, it doesn't need to be sent to Albany again. Bowman added that Governor Cuomo could also veto things at any time.

Wilson said that there are 90 class sections that cannot be placed yet. An online screener should be released the following week (7/13/20 - 7/17/20). Out of 169 Registrar-controlled classrooms, only 69 are usable, and classes will be held from 8am to 9pm. With 6ft circles around students and the space in the aisles, there is about 49 square feet per person, so 10 people can fit in a 500 square foot room.

Walter noted that that seems large and is more around 10 square feet per person. He added that he has been working on a paper with Mathematicians and Physicists on understanding the R factor. It can be seen as the product of the distance between two objects and the amount of time they spend near each other. And the simplest way to reduce R is to use a mask and to distance oneself. Walter also noted that he had glanced through the reopening report and had found it vague. Sarah Battaglia agreed.

Wilson added that on top of this, now there must be at least 1 in person class for every international student because of new ICE regulations. Bowman asked about international PhD students who are already done with classes. Wilson explained that the government finding is that international students on F1 visas who only take online classes have no need to be in the U.S. and they want them to leave. So SBU has to make sure that every international student has at least one class in person.

Bowman said this was not going to work and Walter added that this policy makes no sense given the epidemic and would hurt the economy. Wilson noted that the government has also apparently put all H-1B visas on hold and many Indian nationals are now at risk of deportation. Bowman talked about a Music PhD student who is back in Vietnam and is stranded there but needs one more recital before he can get his degree. Walter said that Harvard and USC have

already announced they would go online for graduate students. Wilson added that Yale's plan for the Fall is to have Freshmen, Juniors and Seniors on campus while all Sophomores take online classes; and their plan for the Spring is to have Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors on campus while Freshmen take classes online.

Bowman asked about whether there had really been rampant cheating for online classes and, if true, how could it be avoided. Wilson said that there are lockdown browsers and that the IT committee is evaluating how to proctor exams remotely. Bowman suggested oral finals as a solution for graduate student classes.

Old and New business. There were no further old or new business. Wilson asked whether this time (3pm-4pm) works for everyone. The next meeting was scheduled for August 12th 2020, 3pm - 4:30pm.

Wilson entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Battaglia moved and none opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Charoy