

Arts & Sciences Chairs Meeting
Tuesday, May 4, 2021
9:00-10:30 am, via Zoom
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Jose Alamillo, Sean Anderson, Dana Baker, Frank Barajas, Geoff Buhl, Nancy Chen (for Christina Smith), Stephen Clark, Sonsoles de Lacalle, Colleen Delaney, Erich Fleming, Blake Gillespie, Andrea Grove, Kimmy Kee-Rose, Liz King, Lynette Landry, Brad Monsma, Michael Soltys, Vandana Kohli, Phil Hampton, Chanda Cunningham-Spence, Stephanie Guerrero

I. Information Items

Budget Reports

Dean Kohli informed Chairs that program budgets have been finalized with updated SFR comparisons across CSU campuses. Chairs were encouraged to reach out if they would like to converse further regarding their targets and use of reassigned time, as well as to discuss ways to capture salary savings when faculty are performing work outside of the program. AD Hampton will be reaching out to programs who are coming in lower or higher than allocated targets to identify adjustments to the Fall 2021 schedule, especially considering the anticipated spring melt. MAR Cunningham-Spence will send the budget reports to Chairs following the meeting.

II. Discussion Items

Tenure-track Hiring

There are no official updates regarding the allocation and approval of tenure-track searches. Provost Avila indicated to Dean Kohli that within the week there should be confirmation regarding hiring; he indicated that not all requested lines will be supported. Four areas of concern were identified in the subsequent discussion regarding tenure-track hiring: 1) approval status of tenure-track lines funded in previous budgetary cycles which were partially completed, 2) when the call for new lines will be made and whether this is based on growth in campus enrollment, 3) clarification surrounding replacement lines, and 4) status of the cluster hires.

Chairs spoke to the extent to which lecturers should be involved in program conversations surrounding tenure-track hiring. They stressed the importance of including lecturers in discussion of hiring plans as this directly impacts their employment, as well as including faculty of all ranks in long-term program planning. Dean Kohli encouraged being inclusive of lecturers and keeping in mind the conflict of interest that may arise when discussing specific tenure-track job descriptions and recommended that these conversations only take place among tenure-track faculty. Other Chairs spoke to the fundamental role that lecturers play in shaping departments and expressed the belief that they should be as involved as they choose and that their feedback is valued but not expected.

Fall Modality Messaging

Chairs raised concerns about students requesting accommodations from faculty regarding fall modality, with some students requesting exemptions to attending in-person classes. A question was raised regarding how to accommodate students and of the need for messaging by the university on this modality. Dean Kohli informed Chairs that the Provost has clearly stated that

the schedule is as it is in the schedule of classes. She indicated the intent by the campus to compensate faculty for extra workload associated with providing students who are approved with an accommodation to take an in-person class in an online modality. Dean Kohli also stated that students will be referred to the Academic Advising office should they choose to seek accommodations. Chairs felt this to be an inappropriate role of Advising. They expressed concern that a program's accreditation is dependent upon course modality and that programs may not receive further dispensation from their accrediting agencies for teaching courses online that are originally (and solely) taught in person. Other Chairs stated that even with compensation, it is a great burden on faculty to prepare hybrid courses and that their academic research may suffer as a result of having to spend more time preparing for multiple course modalities. They expressed the need for global messaging from the university that faculty could refer to regarding expectations placed on students. Chairs indicated they have been approached by students regarding whether they need to be vaccinated if they are taking only online courses. Dean Kohli responded that students should be aware of the requirement for vaccination should they plan to visit campus at any time in the fall semester. She noted that the campus expects there will be more clarity surrounding social distancing requirements in the upcoming month and that the Environmental Health & Safety office has expressed optimism that labs and other in-person activities will be offered without the need for social distancing or reduced class sizes.