

## June 18 Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes

Presiding: Binh Q. Tran, FA President

Date/Time: June 18, 2020 @ 12:30PM

Attendance/Location: There were 68 participants. Meeting was conducted via zoom video call.

The meeting was called to order at 12:30pm.

A meeting agenda was proposed and shared on screen. No additions were offered. Motion to approve agenda unanimously carried.

### Roll Call of Schools:

- Faculty from the following 9 schools were present: Arts & Sciences; Canon Law; Engineering; Law; Music, Drama & Art; National Catholic School of Social Service; Nursing; Philosophy; Theology and Religious Studies

**Minutes of May 21, 2020 FA Meeting** were unanimously approved. The minutes are posted at [www.cuafacultyassembly.com](http://www.cuafacultyassembly.com).

Faculty Assembly (FA) Recent Activities:

- An interesting [Discussion Board](#) is open at the [Faculty Assembly Website](#).
- Results of the [FA COVID survey](#) and the subsequent FA Statement with detailed recommendations remain posted at the [Faculty Assembly Website](#).
- The FA COVID Survey is still the only all-University survey distributed to date
- The University has not acknowledged nor responded to the FA survey results or subsequent report.
- The [FA Statement on Covid-19 and Austerity Measures](#) (5/29/20) includes:
  - Summary of FA Survey results:
    - Faculty evaluation of faculty response to change to online teaching
    - Faculty response/concerns to the question of whether to reopen campus
    - Faculty response to Austerity Measures
  - Six Key Recommendations Based on Survey Results were briefly reviewed.
    1. Prioritize the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff when considering whether or not to reopen campus.
    2. Improve shared governance.
    3. Increase financial transparency.
    4. Ensure equitable budgeting.
    5. Protect the most vulnerable.
    6. Maintain teaching capacity.

Report of 6/18/2020 Meeting - Collaboration with Faculty Leaders from Other Universities

- The FA Executive Board have been in touch with faculty leaders from George Mason University (GMU AAUP Chapter Chair), George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University.

- The FA Executive Board met with faculty leaders from these universities. A pan-regional faculty working group is taking place as issues occurring at CUA are shared by local peers.
- The above have issued faculty statements strikingly similar to the CUA FA Statement.
- Future meetings are scheduled. Faculty from additional universities will be invited. Faculties all over the country are working to face similar challenges. We welcome your suggestions and your contacts with other university faculties.

### **Reports from invited guests of Reopening Committees:**

#### **Fall Instruction Planning Committee (D. Cloutier, invited)**

- Fall Scheduling/Academic Calendar was priority #1. A precise plan should be released within the next 2 days.
- The entire 30-member working group of this committee was surveyed about schedules
  - Already announced by Provost: start one week early (August 24) , and continue instruction as online after Thanksgiving.
  - The Administration will announce more precise details
- Instruction
  - A survey from the provost was sent out 6/17/2020 to all faculty to gather initial data to understand what kinds of accommodations need to be made for faculty. Once these data are obtained then can make specific decisions about classroom assignment
- Teaching Protocols Subcommittee (Presenter- David Cloutier- Chair of Subcommittee of the Fall instruction Planning Committee)
  - The subcommittee is working on a document to address requirements for syllabus template; ways to promote uniformity across different courses, such as policies regarding Covid requirements, attendance, DSS, special components of syllabi. Draft of document should be ready for larger Fall Instruction Planning Committee next week. Seeking suggestions from faculty for what protocols might be needed. Send suggestions to [coutierd@cua.edu](mailto:coutierd@cua.edu)
  - Facilities is determining social distance capacities for all of our classrooms. Once this is determined then will be able to think about what type of instructional strategies to recommend to faculty. Considering opening up other spaces on campus to provide more capacity.
  - Everyone is working as quickly as they can, this is a difficult process, because at the same time, the University also must negotiate with D.C. government for approvals.
  - The subcommittee recognizes that opening up additional sections of courses to accommodate a reduced class size will create a large burden on faculty. The hope is that every classroom will be capable for offering “blended” teaching, meaning simultaneous remote and in classroom teaching of students.
  - Everyone should realize that all safety protocols will be approved by the DC Department of Health.
  - All faculty should prepare to simultaneously teach students remotely, and in the classroom (blended teaching)
- Online exams and cheating- how this is going to be handled requires clarification.
- Student attendance
  - It is unclear if students will be surveyed about their expectations for fall attendance

- The default expectation for students enrolled in person-to-person classes is that this mode of teaching will continue.
- Students will not be given the option to indiscriminately choose to attend online if they are registered for a face to face class; quarantine accommodations will be made as needed. Policy to be decided by Administration.
- Safety protocols
  - Facilities is preparing a working draft that should be ready next week for the larger committee to review.
  - Facilities is currently determining social distancing capacities of classrooms.
  - The safety measures that will be in place will be approved by the DC Department of Health such as social distancing, wearing of masks, etc. Report of CUA's pandemic safety measures plan is due to the DC DOH by July 1. Must be approved by the DC DOH before CUA can reopen.

#### **Faculty Well-Being Sub-Group (J. Paxton, invited)**

- Meeting weekly- The biggest concern of the subgroup is the uncertainty that faculty feel about what is going to happen; the information that is needed for faculty to plan for fall but have not received. Have emphasized this with the larger working group.
- A response to this is the Provost survey sent late last night to gather data about faculty need for alternate teaching accommodations.
- Until we have a sense of who is not able to teach in person or not, it will be difficult to address planning issues.
- Acknowledged the questions raised in the Chat box about the problematic format of the survey but emphasized that it is still important to answer it.

#### **Communication Subgroup (J. Paxton, invited)**

- The subgroup is assembling a list of FAQs – please send your “Q’s” - Questions about reopening issues should be sent to [paxton@cua.edu](mailto:paxton@cua.edu) (Jennifer Paxton).
- Very helpful to hear what faculty are wondering and worrying about. If these questions/concerns are on a document, this will drive getting answers.
- Two things that will help reduce uncertainty include:
  - Clarification of the safety protocol: the University pandemic safety protocols are due to the DC Department of Health by July 1, so these should be known soon
  - Figuring out what percentage of faculty will be able to return to teach face-to-face classes online will greatly help with the planning, so please answer the Provost's survey as that will help reduce the uncertainty.

#### **Announcement: Invitation to Participate in Study Extended to Faculty by Dr. Jairath (nursing)**

- “Lived Faculty Experience of Planning and Phased University Reopening During the COVID-19 Pandemic” P.I. Nailini Jairath
- Link to study is: (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W97CQW9>)
- Your participation is encouraged, and your assistance is greatly appreciated. This is a historic moment and faculty are going through a lot.

### Report/Update of Classroom Upgrades (M. Farber, invited)

- Attended a demonstration of upgraded technology meant for a “large” classroom; “large” defined as one that accommodates 25+ students.
  - She saw two large monitors, one for display of content, one for seeing remotely connected students at home.
  - This will not be every classroom. The issue is which classrooms will get what, and for faculty to be informed about what their course classroom will have or not have.
  - Smaller classrooms ( $\leq 15$  students) will pretty much be the same.
- The plan is to upgrade 90 classrooms- does not know what these means for small, medium or large classrooms, and number of students enrolled in courses.
- Now has no idea how many students will be able to come to campus or stay at home.
- Unknown if students are going to be surveyed
- Concerns re: management of classroom updates:
  - How to manage handling seeing monitor, face to face students and remote students
  - Remote students on same screen as content- will distract the classroom students.
  - How to manage use of several blackboards and whiteboards in a physical classroom. Where will the camera be?
  - Big concerns:
    - Training of faculty to use new technology
    - Adequacy of technology support
    - Estimated Cost of Upgrades - is \$4.2 million (Source: Austerity Measures, Scenario 2, presented at 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Hall)
      - Line for Classroom Upgrades- \$3.3 million
      - Instructional support cost – \$930,000
      - Perspectives:
        - Is it meaningful to spend all of this \$? Why overwhelm faculty with technology that may only be sporadically used?
        - Not appropriate to pull technology upgrade funds from faculty/staff salaries.
        - All faculty should be prepared to teach some students remotely in every course due to anticipated quarantine needs, Technology install is meant to help faculty.

### Training (A. McRae, Director of CTE, Invited)

- In same boat as faculty- planning without knowing what to plan for.
- Gathering resources for trainings to prepare faculty for fall
- Communications about upcoming trainings will be coming out soon after July 4. Timeline is to begin faculty training sessions sometime soon after July 4
- Priority topics: How to do hybrid teaching, blackboard trainings more specific to doing a lot more teaching online.
- Faculty urged to utilize the CTE for online exams, prevention of cheating.
- Contact CTE to set up individual or small group meetings to talk about your class
- Has a personal, vested interest in making sure that faculty are feeling comfortable and prepared; would like us all to go into the fall semester feeling somewhat confident about how we are going to be able to provide the instruction we need.

## Austerity Measures (B. Tran)

- There is uncertainty about implementation of the June 8 version of the Austerity Measures plan presented by CFO Rob Specter at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Hall Meeting.
- In the June 8 version, furloughs have been omitted from Action Group B. The estimated savings of \$3.6 million from the now omitted furloughs is now moved to the salary reductions in Action Group C (\$8.7 M).
- 403b reductions in Action Group B may have been approved to start September 1, 2020, not June 2020 (previous). It is probable but not yet publicly announced.
  - The Academic Senate Chair has not heard anything new about this.
  - The Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees has NOT yet been informed that elimination of 403b contributions is a definite decision.
  - The Chair of the Academic Senate Budget and Planning Committee believes that the time period for elimination of 403b contributions in Action Group B is now extended from 10 months to 12 months, but has not been informed that this decision to eliminate 403b contributions has been made.

### Faculty Discussion/Suggestions for Alternate Austerity Measures:

- The Academic Budget & Planning Survey that was rolled out last Friday regarding furloughs as of today has > 230 responses from both faculty and staff.
- Survey indicates high interest in furloughs
  - 81% of faculty and staff are more interested in taking furloughs, perhaps because there are unemployment benefits available with furloughs.
  - Non-tenure track faculty and contingent are very concerned if there are furloughs that they will not be hired back at the end of a furlough period.
  - Tenure track faculty questioned if 8.5 month contracts and their salary scales would qualify them for benefits during furloughs.
  - Noted that if staff were furloughed before July 31, 2020, they would be eligible for additional benefits from the CARES Act (\$600/week + unemployment benefits). For example, a minimum wage person earning \$25,000/year could make the equivalent of \$43,000/year if furloughed.
    - The DC Government Department of Employment Services (DOES) provides explanation of three new unemployment benefits offered by the CARES Act here: <https://does.dc.gov/service/unemployment-compensation-process>  
Note- #3 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC). This explains the additional CARES Act benefit of \$600/week in addition to other unemployment benefits. **This benefit expires July 25, 2020.**
    - Certain groups could be furloughed in the summer and benefit from the CARES act. Could be a win-win for University and employees. Does not have to be 100% furlough to get benefits. Could help take care of staff and save \$ for University.
    - If there is a salary cut, when will it end?
- Proposed - Scaled Salary Cuts
  - CFO Rob Specter at the Faculty Town Hall indicated that salary cuts would be 5-10%
  - Members of the Academic Senate Budget & Planning committee have outlined an alternate scheme to avoid pay cuts- a graduated salary cut scale. The hope is NO PAY

CUTS and the University could look elsewhere for \$. The hope is that they will not do a flat across the board pay cut. This would hurt the lower paid employees the most.

- A graduated scheme favors protecting the lowest paid; this is similar to the U.S. tax system. For example, if annual salary is < \$75K, no pay cuts should occur. For those who make \$100K, perhaps their pay cut would be 5%; The cut would increase as you proceed up the income levels. The graduated scale will depend on salary amount. Those who make more would lose a higher percent of their pay. Still hammering details in the B & P committee. Plan is to bring it before the Academic Senate in their last meeting.
- At this point the B & P Committee is still working out details. Not in favor of a flat salary cut. Emphasized that this is a proposal
- Desire is for administration look at other sources of funding- not payroll cuts.
- Elimination of retirement 403b contribution would result in a ~10% reduction in compensation for many employees.

#### Open Floor – Faculty Comments

- Administration is talking AT faculty, not WITH faculty. Much concern expressed about not allowing faculty to participate in any decision-making- The lack of Faculty Shared Governance is a big concern.
- Removal of religious from the Board of Trustees is a contributor to the problem. We are being run as a corporation not on principles of Catholic social justice.
- Because of pre-existing medical concerns, one faculty member noted “I am *terrified* to return” to campus.
- Answers to questions by Academic Senators at Town Halls are repeatedly ignored or responded to as “we’ll look at it”.
- Faculty are at a breaking point.
- Questions asked of Rob Spector at the last two administration-run Town Halls still remain unanswered or ignored. President Garvey remains silent.
- There may be some action at the next Senate meeting to address the issue of shared faculty governance.
- The diplomatically worded statements released by the FA have been ignored.
- Appreciation expressed for the work of the Reopening committees are doing.
- The Administration is making it up as they go along
- What are our next steps? What is the ACTION plan?
  - Attendance at FA meetings is a concern.
  - Would like to see a solid statement from the Provost/President’s office about the official plan for Austerity Measures. Administration seems to be making it up as they go along. What are the cuts and where are the cuts? Need to hear – is there a just formula. Can we formally ask for a plan here. Would like to know our salaries for fall!
  - The Administration is telling faculty in a patronizing way what has been decided.
  - We need a faculty Town Hall with the Administration that is a true Q & A session- Need to revisit this as the answer was “we’ll look at it”.
  - Academic Senators could bring this issue up at the Academic Senate meeting
- Action:
  - Initial Step: The FA Executive Board is working with faculty from other institutions to gather data and ideas. There is a plan to make a public joint

statement/Op-Ed in the near future. Ongoing meetings have been scheduled to continually meet with faculty leaders from additional universities.

- Binh Tran was interviewed by the CUA Tower. Please review the June edition of the Tower: <http://cuatower.com/2020/06/underpaid-catholic-university-faculty-and-staff-facing-additional-salary-cuts-amid-covid-19-financial-crisis/>

Meeting adjourned at 2pm.