

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
FACULTY SENATE RULES COMMITTEE
Minutes

Friday, April 24, 2020 @ 8:30am
Zoom

Present: Richard Bogartz, Lisa Green, David Hoagland, Sarah Hutton, Jennifer Normanly, MJ Peterson and Wilmore Webley (in charge of minutes).

1. Minutes

Approved Minutes (as amended) of the meeting held April 3, 2020 submitted by Jennifer Normanly.

2. Assessment of holding Faculty Senate Meetings on Zoom

- With the continued pandemic and uncertainty about fall classes, we might have to continue senate meetings via Zoom.
- The general feeling is that these meetings have been going well.
- We have had better attendance to the Zoom meetings than face-to-face. This might be because of individual curiosity by senators wanting to receive updates from the administration.
- There were up to 83 people on yesterday's faculty senate meeting call.
- There need to be a system to acknowledge individuals who have raised their hands so that there can be full participation. This might require assigning this role to someone who will feed that information to the presiding officer.

3. Anticipations for summer 2020

- Vice Chancellor Mike Malone is planning to have a committee to determine how to restart research on campus at an appropriate time.
- The Rules Committee might have to reconvene over the summer months to handle any new policy that might come about because of the COVID19 pandemic and new insights from the administration.
- Committee members expressed a desire to have a report after the semester has ended on the P/F policy and if GPA for the semester fell overall compared to the previous semester.
- Rules committee members would like to know if there is a plan to systematically assess the impact of the remote teaching/learning on students. For example, are there internet connectivity issues and how widespread? Is IT looking at this? Is there a difference with low-income students and how much did this impact change in teaching modality impact their learning?
- Some faculty members have not heard from some students in their classes once we went to remote learning and have no idea how to reach them or know what happened to them.

4. Our ground-eye view of campus adjustment to Covid-19 restrictions.

- MSP, in conversation with the Provost, received clarification that there should be no restriction on grant spending. This might be different for RTF. This might not be clear at the

college dean level and in the departments since faculty in CNS for example still need to get approval.

- D. Hoagland reports that they have two postdocs whom they currently have to support since they cannot return home.

- Faculty members are having some anxiety about how cost cutting will affect them. It will be good to hear about the process that is going to be used and urge the Chancellor to have a transparent process. It is possible that this will be dictated by union contracts.

- We need to revisit the conversation with the Provost about using a specific software to proctor online exams to add some stringency and credibility.

- We might need to go to an honor code system in order to ensure some level of integrity.

- Prioritize making Moodle smarter to integrate the new dates correctly since it is so laborious to correct the dates when you are copying a previous course.

- How will wet labs be handled? Should we prioritize having seniors who need lab courses on campus? First year student retention is important especially for low income and minority students