Provost’s Council Minutes
May 27, 2021

In Attendance: P Campbell, J Connell, D Couzens, S Frees, S Gaulden, J Gronbeck-Tedesco, S Hangen, L Keller, A LePore, A Lorenz, P Miyashiro, D Nast, F Papalia, E Petkus, C Romano, E Saiff, E Shannon (for N Choudhury), and N Varma

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes from the April 22, 2021 Provost’s Council meeting were approved.

Report from the Provost:
S Gaulden summarized information on recent executive orders issued by Governor Murphy and updates from NJ OSHE, which include the following:

- Executive Order (EO) 241, which retains EO 192 provisions that include requiring all individuals to wear face coverings in indoor spaces except their own offices, removed requirements for outdoor masking.

- EO 242 stipulated that counties and municipalities could retain an indoor face covering mandate, if they so choose, but removed all state-imposed social distancing requirements, maximum capacity limits, and most indoor face covering requirements. Individuals were encouraged to follow CDC recommendations. Degree-granting public and private institutions of higher education are not required to implement policies for social distancing in classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, and other areas across campus. EO 155, which required IHEs to accommodate faculty and students who were unable to come to campus is “superseded to the extent it conflicts with the provision of this Order.”

S Gaulden provided a brief update on how Spring 2022 course schedules would be developed. Specifically, course schedule development would begin by using the course mod app in early September 2021 to allow additional time to apply revised NJ state mandates, CDC guidelines, and any additional information for the current pandemic conditions.

C Romano shared that a number of NJ colleges located in Bergen County (e.g., Ramapo, Felician, and FDU) are discussing return-to-campus policies and guidelines. At present, Ramapo is not mandating vaccinations for faculty, staff, or employees but students are required to be compliant with the College’s vaccination policy. A number of religious and medical waivers are expected.
S Gaulden reported we are still waiting on OSHE to update its Restart Guidelines document, and this will be communicated when the updates are ready to be shared. She asked Council members to follow what has been communicated already: please encourage faculty to come back to campus in Fall 2021 to the extent possible and direct students to virtual or online classes only if they are not willing or able to come to campus.

Discussion around Fall 2021 operations included the following especially relevant points:

- D Nast reported that OSS was not seeing an extreme increase in the number of accommodation requests related to anxiety disorders;
- C Romano noted that the vast majority of students will be vaccinated, but there will be students who have been approved for medical and religious exemptions on campus;
- J Connell emphasized that we cannot share which students were approved for exemptions or the reasons the exemptions were approved;
- A LePore opined that the upcoming fall semester would still not be back-to-normal conditions and we must accommodate students who do not want to come to campus (i.e., we are still operating in some form of emergency mode). J Gronbeck-Tedesco shared this opinion, stating that we need to be compassionate and supportive and meet our students where they are;
- S Hangen and E Petkus noted the anticipation that social distance requirements would not be in place in Fall 2021 classrooms, labs, etc.
- C Romano noted that since the students registered in April, huge changes related to pandemic conditions have occurred, and it is likely this will continue through the fall semester;
- E Shannon expressed concerns about challenges asking faculty to “amp up” (e.g., teach from campus two times per week rather than one) if conditions improved; he also suggested the College set up outdoor classrooms and that faculty be permitted to continue using WebEx for office hours;
- A Lorenz said we must make sure students are aware of changes anticipated in the fall semester; and
- P Campbell strongly advocated for the removal of the long text field in the course schedules that indicates “Students may request permission from their instructor to participate remotely…”

Policies/Procedures to be Voted On/Approved

Policy/Procedure 300-V Certificate Programs

**Issue:** The Policy/Procedure contains outdated information (e.g., it references CIPL) and needs to be updated.

**Meeting Notes:** A Provost’s Council committee led by T Laprey shared a redlined updated procedure to this policy. F Papalia stated that academic certificates are currently treated as minors and are added to degree audits and transcripts after the certificate program is completed.
S Gaulden noted that the NJ Presidents’ Council Academic Issues Committee Manual (https://www.njpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-21-AIC-Manual-with-schedule-1.pdf) defines certificates and rules to follow. S Hangen shared her thoughts that, although the certificate programs at Ramapo typically enroll Ramapo students, academic certificates elsewhere usually attract non-matriculated students and professionals who want to add credentials to their portfolios. Certificates should target a specific clientele/cohort of individuals who are not Ramapo students. E Petkus thought certificate may add retention benefits, as these credentials add value to the students’ degree. C Romano suggested the need to strategically advertise/market the certificate programs Ramapo offers, which presently include Spanish for Healthcare, Business Essentials, Web Development, and Middle School Teacher certification.

The edited policy/procedure will be discussed again, if needed, and voted on at the September 2021 Provost Council meeting.

Provost Council Bylaws

**Issue:** The Provost’s Council Bylaws have not been updated since 2007.

**Meeting Notes:** A discussion took place on the possible changes that should be made to update the Provost’s Council Bylaws. The consensus was that each School should continue to have a representative on the Council even if one individual from the School is serving in another capacity as a member of the Provost’s Council (e.g., S Frees is the Chair of Graduate Council, so another faculty member should serve as TAS Representative). E Saiff asked who each member reports out to. S Gaulden asked if any College entity that should be represented on Provost’s Council given the scope of our work is left out, and D Couzens noted that some policies cover international education, which means a representative from that Unit might be warranted. S Hangen suggested inviting representatives from other Units to specific Provost’s Council meetings when agenda items indicated a need for their specific input/expertise. A few Council members felt that current membership could represent diversity and equity interests rather than officially adding an EDIC representative to the body.

Some comments that are particularly important to consider are as follows: S Gaulden asked whether a Vice Chair and/or Secretary needed on Provost’s Council; J Gronbeck-Tedesco suggested adding “and anything else within the purview of the Provost” to the scope of the policies considered by the Provost’s Council; C Romano reminded all that we still need to audit the College’s policies to determine who/what Division each policy “reports to;” and D Couzens suggested the policy areas should be refined.
**Policies/Procedures to be Revised/Clarified**

**Policy/Procedure 300T Online Courses Policy // Remotely-Delivered Courses Manual:**

**Issue:** Given the pandemic-caused remote delivery of many courses, it is important to review this policy and perhaps expand it to include “virtual courses” and “hyflex courses.” This policy references the Online Course Manual rather than a Procedure, which should be updated as well. Particular attention should be paid to the content in the Manual on recording classes, which has FERPA implications as well.

**Meeting Notes:** S Gaulden shared a revised draft/edited Manual that incorporated input from the subcommittee, which is being led by A LePore. There are still 14 issues that were identified but remain unresolved, which were summarized in a handout provided by S Gaulden. The subcommittee should review and comment on these issues through the Google document. Ultimately, consensus/final decisions on these issues must be incorporated into a final draft of the manual. The manual will be revisited at the September 2021 Provost’s Council meeting.

**New Business /Additional Announcements**

There was no new business brought forward at this meeting.

Co-Director of the College Honors Program, R Root, has requested review of the College Honors Program Policy (Policy 300L). A redlined version prepared for R Root will be shared and included on the September 2021 Provost’s Council meeting agenda.

At the April 2021 Provost’s Council meeting, it was suggested that two policies/procedures be created/reviewed by the Council. These policies include Professor’s Title Changes (is this an academic policy or an HR policy?) and Double Master’s Degrees (begin discussed at Graduate Council).