

Academic Senate Minutes

April 14, 2022

3:00 - 5:15 Via Zoom

Note: This was an unusual Senate meeting due to news that appeared in the Press Democrat on 4/14/22 regarding a \$600,000 settlement agreement with the former Provost and allegations of inappropriate behavior of the President's husband and retaliation against the former Provost by the current President. These issues are addressed in the meeting. Additionally, the recommendations from the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Working Group proved controversial and created substantial conversation.

Abstract

Agenda - Approved. Minutes of 3/17/22 - Approved. Consent items: From EPC: Electrical Engineering B.S. revisions; Business Administration BS Revisions - Approved. Information item: From SAC: Student Learning Objectives for SSU's 2022 Orientation developed by SAC and AAS. Chair Report. President Report. Provost Report.

Present: Lauren Morimoto, Bryan Burton, Emily Clark, Richard Senghas, Sam Brannen Michaela Grobbel, Carlos Torres, Wendy St. John, Doug Leibinger, Ed Beebout, Angelo Camillo, Florence Bouvet, Elita Virmani, Jennifer Mahdavi, Hilary Smith, Ben Ford Jordan Rose, Ben Smith, Kevin Fang, Rick Luttmann, Judy Sakaki, Karen Moranski Monir Ahmed, Michael Young, Erma Jean Sims, Christina Gomez, Kate Sims, Emily Acosta Lewis, Emily Asencio, Richard Whitkus, Karen Thompson

Absent: Wendy Ostroff

Guests: Allison Gibson, Mike Visser, Austin Murphy, Elizabeth Wade, Chingling Wo, Tia Watts Kaylee Tornay, Corinne Asturias, Catherine Nelson, Kaitlin Springmier, Gillian Conoley, Michelle Jolly, Gerry Ann Olson, Missy Garvin, Aidan Humrich, Aimee Graham, Ajay Gehlawat, Ashley Simon Alvarez, Ayumi Nagase, Billie Barlett Johnson, Bonnie Cormier, Brent Hughes, Brook Tester, Christine Cali, Caroline Banuelos, Chiara Bacigalupa, Christine Renaudin, Carla Stone, Claudia Molloy, Cynthia Boaz, Damien Hansen, Daniel Soto, Andy Collinsworth, Deborah Paterinti, Diana Grant, Eliza Hemenway, Elizabeth Ducey, Ellen Carlton, Emily Kyle, Fawn Canady, Gillian Estes, Michael Balasek, Hollis Robbins, Hope Ortiz, Jenn Lillig, Jo-Ann Dapiran, Jonathan Smith, Joshua Glasgow, Julie Shulman, Julie Wood, Jennifer Bethke, Aja La Duke, Colleen Shalby, Puspa Amri, Lori Rhodes, Marissa Endicott, Gillian Parker, Chong Uk Kim, Patricia Kim Rajal,

Shannon Edwards, Susan Pulido, Jenny Bent, Kyuho Lee, Alexis Boutin, Justin Lipp, Karen Schneider, Kari Manwiller, Karin Jaffe, Katie Musick, Kendall Newman, Kent Porter, Kevin Nguyen, Kim Hester-Williams, Kim Purdy, Kylie Lawrence, Laura Alamillo, Laura Monje-Paulson, Leigh McTaggart, Lena McQuade, Letha Ch'ien, Linda Eichhorn, Liz Burch, Lorian Negri, Lynn Prime, Martha Shott, Martin Espinoza, Mary Wegmann, Matthew Paolucci Callahan, Maych Rowell, Megan McIntyre, Melinda Milligan, Merith Weisman, Michelle Goman, Mike Ogg, Missy Brunetta, Napoleon Reyes, Neil Markley, Nina Medina, Rachel Carbone, Rajeev Virmani, Rhianna Casesa, Victor Garlin, River Shoptaugh, Rosa Flores Celestino, Shelly Stephens, Stefan Kiesbye, Stephanie Dyer, Stephen Arneson, Stephen Bittner, Susan Herring, Suzanne Rivoire, Troi Carlton, Natalie Villanueva-Nieves, Viridiana Ruiz, Willow Ornellas, Charlene Tung, Noelia Brambila, Claudia Molloy, Eliza Velasquez, Julia Gonzalez, Jen Johnson, Ianthe Brautigan Swensen, Ronald Lopez, Stacey Bosick, Laurel McCabe, Don Romesburg, Mike Uhlenkamp, Sadie Pettit, Brigitte Lahme, Vanessa Pedro, Janet Hess, Tai Russotti, Robert Chase

Approval of Agenda - Approved.

Approval of Minutes of 3/17/22 - Approved

Consent items: From EPC: Electrical Engineering B.S. revisions; Business Administration BS Revisions - **Approved.**

Information item: From SAC: Student Learning Objectives for SSU's 2022 Orientation developed by SAC and AAS

Chair Report - L. Morimoto

L. Morimoto noted that the Special Report from Chief Oweis will be postponed. What a day, and what a week; it has been interesting. She said she wanted to leave as much time for the President and Provost to speak because she suspected the Senate wanted to hear from them more than herself. As she read the LA Times article, she did have concerns and questions that came up for her, including questions that she would like answered which are similar to the independent investigation called for when Joseph Castro was leaving and even after he resigned. Most of the Senates in the CSU are still requesting an investigation of who, what, when, who was involved in decision making in the Castro matter. She wanted to see something similar here. The CSU has hired a Philadelphia law firm to conduct an independent assessment of Title IX practices across all campuses. She didn't know how detailed they are going to be or if they will get to the level of information that she would like, but she was hoping we can use that investigation that has already

been conducted on behalf of the CSU to find out how things unfolded and what was the exact timeline. The other question she had was about the retaliation piece. With the way the information was presented in the Times, that our former Provost had exemplary reports, and then suddenly not so much, she would be curious to know if there is a way to know how many problems or concerns were there prior to the reporting of this situation and after. The last question is, why was our Title IX office not involved? It seems as though this went straight to the CSU office. She noticed the wording was very careful in our statement about the issue not rising to the level of a Title IX violation, and that is probably true. Title IX is tricky; however, she said, the institution still could have made a choice to pursue an investigate and that decision was not made, so she wanted to know was our Title IX office even informed of this? Why it went straight to the CSU Title IX office was unclear to her from the media stories and maybe in talking to the President and Provost that will become clear.

There have been some calls to make a statement or a vote of no confidence, and, as your representative, if that is what the faculty decides to do, she will take it forward. She will not be leading that, and she explained why. A vote of no confidence has not done anything. The no confidence vote against Ruben Armija is an example, but also at other institutions. She knew it is one of the few ways we can make our voice heard. The other reason she was not interested in leading the charge is she doesn't control who the President is at SSU. The CSU Chancellor's office decides and frankly she didn't think they give a damn what we think. She was not saying that she was not going to try to find out what happened here because it is important to have accountability and know what happened, who was involved and if the administrators are still here. Two that were named are conveniently no longer here. She wanted to see some accountability and some explanation for the campus.

On the other hand, she is bringing tenure track faculty to this campus next week. She is focused on that, and they are great, and if she has to sell the hell out of this place, so be it. We have good people here, and she is sure they will ask, and she will tell them honestly that she knows what everybody else knows who read the *LA Times*. That is the first thing she is concentrating on. The second is SeaWolf Decision Day which is in two weeks roughly. She is going to be a part of that and sell the hell out of the university because we need the enrollment, and, again, if people ask, she will tell them honestly what she thinks. She thinks it is embarrassing and inexcusable. It is troubling, and it is shocking. On the other hand, there are some good people here who do good work, and she is not going to pretend that doesn't occur, just because we have this series of situations coming up. That is not to condone what happened. She is not saying it was handled properly, but her focus on what is good for the

institution and for our students. She said that most who know her would know if she felt a deep need to charge the ramparts, she would.

If people feel very strongly that there should be a no confidence vote, and she should be leading it, then maybe she is not the right person to lead right now. She wanted to look forward and not get caught up in who did what, except to know who we need to hold accountable, not so much going after people who aren't here anymore.

President Report - J. Sakaki

J. Sakaki said this is a tough time, and she was going to be as honest as she can be with the Senate and answer every question to the best of her ability. She began by reading a statement because many people have said they didn't see it. It was submitted to the Press Democrat, but it didn't make the article. It made the third page or fourth page, so she would read it so that we're all on the same page. Then she would answer questions.

"Sexual harassment discrimination or retaliation in any form are unacceptable on our campus, at the CSU, or anywhere and I, as your President take seriously any allegations of this kind of behavior at Sonoma State. It doesn't matter who it comes from. I'm very proud of our work to transform the campus culture, and it is because of all of you, into a more student-success oriented, inclusive, diverse, and safe environment. The record shows that at Sonoma State and throughout my 40-plus-year career in leadership positions at the CSU, and you see that I have mentored and supported many, many students, staff, faculty and administrators and continue to do so in their career advancement, and this included Dr. Vollendorf. Let me be clear, I would not and never have retaliated against anyone, any one person who raises any kind of concerns or questions my decisions. The claims of retaliation are without basis, and, out of respect for Dr. Vollendorf, for her privacy, I do not feel it would be appropriate to comment further. I was surprised and really saddened to learn about allegations against my spouse. While no formal claims were filed, the Chancellor's office led, even before I knew, and oversaw investigations into these allegations. Not Sonoma State, not our Title IX office or me. Although my husband denies engaging in any inappropriate behavior, it was important for him, and for me, to learn about those concerns, and there have been no complaints since we were informed of the concerns."

The President said another statement that came out to the campus community about where to file any claims pains her a lot and she hoped that Senators had seen

that because she heard that some faculty were concerned about what they could say, or where they would direct student concerns.

The President said she was very sorry. She would want a front page story about all the good work that we're doing at Sonoma State, about why parents and families should choose to send their children here, or they should come here. She was sorry that this kind of sensational story takes precedent, takes the lead, takes our time, takes your energy. She said she felt badly about that, and she was embarrassed. This has been the most difficult personal challenge in her entire 40-plus-year career. It is complex.

She said, many are asking, why couldn't we hear more? Why couldn't we know in advance? Why do we have to read something about our campus in the newspaper. She said we are part of 23 campuses in the CSU. She is one of 23 Presidents, but there is a system office, there is a Board of Trustees and policies and practices and decisions, even settlement decisions, are made at the system level. She was told that we could not get out in front of the story in any way, shape or form and that essentially she could not speak even on campus about the story. She apologized. Those who know her well would know that she would want to be open, would want to tell, but there are privacy issues, and there are settlement constraints that prevented her from doing that. She couldn't talk about the details of the case. She can answer questions and maybe others here who have been involved and know of the campus can speak to some of the issues that she can't speak to. There are different styles of leadership, and that doesn't make one style better than the other style. It just means they are different, and her approach is a team collaborative type of President that wants to create a cabinet team that works together and that makes decisions together, that works with shared governance together. She was selected as that President, just as Lauren Morimoto is your Chair of the Faculty. There is a Vice Chair. There are not two chairs. There are not co-chairs. People could have different opinions, which she welcomes, and in leadership, taking in all those different voices, in the end there is one President. She had to act, using the best knowledge she had, in the best way to work and protect and lead this institution, and that is what she has been doing with faculty input, with faculty support, with students, with community members, with donors. There are diverse voices here and we have worked hard to address all of those things. Not everyone always agrees. There were differences. She listened to many faculty, she listened to many student leaders, she listened to staff. She believed as she is leading this institution that she has the best interests in heart for Sonoma State. When we made changes at the Green Music Center, when we made leadership changes, when we spoke about our new directions and what we're doing to address enrollment concerns, all of those things are done with input. She

did have the chance to meet with Noelia Brambila and Christina Gomez and appreciated very much the student voices and student concerns and student leadership. She will be meeting with more groups of students in the days to come.

The Chair said the floor is open for questions; please wait until you're recognized, so we can make sure there is order to all this.

Questions for the President

A member said he knew how tremendously difficult this was for everyone, and especially the President. He wanted to comment on a couple of things that involve optics. For instance, anybody who reads the stories, if they've ever had a situation of sexual harassment on campus for instance, this could have a chilling effect on their willingness to come forward. In other words, do they think the university will have their back? He wanted to piggyback on what the Chair said and say that he has not made his own mind up about any of this. At this point he is still taking in as much information as he can, which is why he appreciated the President's comments here today. But he did have concerns about the optics. For instance, of the quote in the statement that said "The CSU entered into a settlement with Dr. Vollendorf, so that campus leaders could devote their energy, resources, and effort on what matters most - serving students and leading Sonoma State through and beyond the pandemic. The University has liability insurance coverage, which is used to pay these kind of legal settlements." What concerned him was noticing how similar that statement tracks with the reasoning given by former Chancellor Castro, for him giving a golden handshake to an alleged sexual abuser, and, although they are entirely different cases, this CSU attitude of we are going to resolve things out of expediency is not a good look for us as a campus and as an institution. The second thing that concerned him was a quote from the Press Democrat yesterday, which was from our campus spokesperson, which read "the nature of complaints brought to administrators, even if they were substantiated would not likely constitute sexual harassment." That feels like we are splitting hairs between what Title IX says and what the mandated online sexual harassment training we all have to take says, which, according to that, something that is alleged would be considered sexual harassment. With the optics of a \$600,000 pay off and quotes like that, are you concerned that, if it is the official position of the administration that no wrongdoing occurred and that there was no retaliation, that the optics look bad, and it could have a detrimental impact both on the campus reputation and on people's willingness to come forward when they are sexually harassed?

The President said the settlement issues are difficult because the amounts are not always in the control of the campus or the campus leader. This settlement was signed off by the former Chancellor. She did not know of any of the allegations that were against brought against her husband. She did meet with the current General Counsel for the system yesterday and for the first time, and he did say to her that the settlement was the right settlement and that if we were to do it again, it was the right amount. What is different is that in the UC, which she used to work for, there was a deeper bench in the Office of General Counsel, and they try cases. Her concern was a settlement looks like there is something wrong, there is something amiss, there is something that you have to settle on, and that was not the case. But the way that the CSU decides on settlements is they look for, would they have to hire trial attorneys? The time and the money would have been well over \$1 million to try the case, and so that is how they make their decisions, and that is not a campus decision, and it is not an individual decision. She did think it makes the appearance that there was a strong case.

In terms of the Title IX complaints and how they were handled, she returned to the complaint that was made to the General Counsel's office. As she understood, it was referred to Title IX in the system office. Then the Title IX person conducted the investigation and came to campus and spoke with people. That was well before she knew anything about it. The intention was to keep her out of it and to allow the system to handle it. In our Title IX office, we have a fantastic new Title IX officer who's going to spend more time in education and following up with cases, so that we can be better than we've been. That is why her opening statement is about any unwanted feelings, any feeling that someone is not comfortable, it is not acceptable. It doesn't matter who it is. It means that everyone, and if faculty have students that feel uncomfortable or have staff that are uncomfortable, people need to be encouraged to come forward. To the point about retaliation, this is one that often the system office is very conservative about what they say because they are nervous about risk. But that statement, which every word that she said which can be printed has at least 10 lawyers and 10 communications people reviewing it before she can say anything, and she was sure they are nervous about her speaking here without reading from a script, but this who she is. They said very clearly that the CSU looked into this, and there was no retaliation. She wants everyone to know retaliation on this campus that will not be tolerated. If you feel something, you need to come forward, whatever it is. That is not the climate of collaboration and teamwork and openness. Creating a more student centered and faculty and staff centered university is what she came here to do, what she was asked to do. When she came, we didn't have that in the same way on the campus, and those of you that have been here longer than she has, know that. We have made some very positive changes to the campus to

help students be successful, to be a more and more inclusive campus, to better serve faculty and staff and students, and so she hoped that this is not a chilling effect. That would upset her if that were the impact of this.

A guest said thank you President Sakaki for coming to this meeting this afternoon. First, he was surprised to hear that you didn't know about the complaint until later from the system General Council. There are two issues. One is the allegations of sexual harassment, the allegations of retaliation, and then the response. He didn't know anything about the nature of the sexual harassment or the allegation. He didn't know anything about the allegation of retaliation. But he wanted to ask about the response. He has been handling Title IX cases in his capacity as a faculty rights chair of the CFA, and they know for a fact that every time there is an allegation of sexual harassment, the alleged respondent is put on preventative suspension to protect the complainant, whether it is a student, a staff member, or faculty. The allegation said that there were a series of sexual harassments. With all these complaints, why are we allowing your husband to keep coming to campus? If that would have been a student or faculty member, immediately preventive suspension to protect the complainant would have been done, but that did not happen in this case. Why was our own policy not followed? Why was the CSU EEO policy not followed in this case?

The President said those are good questions, and it is hard. She wasn't briefed on the situation until much, much after, and then she was told that there was an investigation done by the Title IX person. She didn't know that. She didn't know that the Title IX officer came to campus and spoke with people. Then she was told that there was no finding. She was directed by the Chancellor to simply make herself aware and make her husband aware that there were concerns. There have been no complaints since that time. She could only say what she was instructed to do, and she followed the procedures that were outlined for her.

A guest said the President keeps referring to what you were told to do. It sounds to him that the President is not taking responsibility for the response. He is focusing on the response. The President is responsible for what happens to the university.

The President said she does take that very seriously and one of the things that she was asked to do was to make this a warmer, more friendly campus. When we came to this community, and especially after the fires, and before COVID, people didn't come up to people and shake hands. It is a culture of care that has changed. She said both my husband and herself have changed our behaviors. Of course, there's also COVID now. We don't shake hands, but elbow bump. She did take it very seriously and thought that if the allegations rose to a level that she felt she would have

needed to protect students, staff or faculty, she would have certainly taken that direction.

A member said thank you, President Sakaki, for being here. Like many of us, when she read the news yesterday, she was really rocked by it and not in a good way. She has been thinking about it a lot and what she has come to is she does not feel safe in her role as a faculty member at Sonoma State right now. She didn't feel safe to advocate for her students. That word - retaliation, those allegations of retaliation are really triggering for her because she was removed from her position as a department chair in a way that she felt was retaliatory. She knew personnel issues could not be spoken of and the grievance is still in the works. What she wanted to share right now is she doesn't feel safe, and she doesn't feel good. She loves Sonoma State, and she loves her colleagues, and she loves her students so much. And because of this, she doesn't feel good and doesn't feel safe.

The President said she was so sorry, seriously, to hear that, and there is no place for retaliation on this campus. She was sorry that the member felt that way and could hear in her voice the emotion, and we need to be better as a community about this. She hoped that members see that there are lots of unique cases, and there are many things that can overlap, and she would say that this particular case was very complex. There is a lot of it that she cannot speak about because of the terms of the settlement. She has acted in the best interest, in the best way she knew, given what she knew when she knew it and under the constraints that she had and as a leader. That is the best that she can offer. Honestly, she loves this campus. She would not have survived the fires without the care of this community and the CSU pulling together and having that WASC review two weeks after the fires if it had it not been for the excellence of the faculty, the excellence of the staff. She cares so deeply, if you can imagine how painful this is, but that is not the point. The point is we have fantastic and excellent people here. We have excellent work that we are doing and that is what we need to support and that is what we need to pull together on because we are getting there. We are being better. She was just at the President's meeting and the Northern California campuses that are all experiencing budget problems and enrollment declines. She heard President Gail Hutchinson speak about the impact of the fires on Chico state. The President thought she was speaking for us. It sounded like her narrative was exactly ours. Their enrollment decline, their budget is terrible, all these things, and she said to the Acting Chancellor, don't forget, we had the fires, and she was sitting there thinking we had the fires too, but that is not the point. The point now is that we are doing great things, and we are not going to be the campus that is always about fires. We have a lot of other fantastic things that we're doing, and we need to address any feelings that are negative. If

they are worried about reporting, we have hired a new excellent Title IX person that has a not only a law degree, but a degree in Student Affairs background, so she gets how to educate and work with students and faculty and staff as well. We are going to get in front. We are going to be better than we were and better than we are at supporting students, staff, and faculty in the work that we do.

A member said she was puzzled by the point made that no retaliation occurred or was involved because a settlement was reached at the CSU level, and it looks like there is some basis for that. Would the President say that the CSU made a wrong decision, and would you speak out against that? She also wondered about some other points. In regards to the feeling safe on campus, and she knew that was very important to you, but it is hard to feel safe when we see that a university volunteer, for example, is more important to be protected against accusations against him than faculty and employees that have spoken out and made reports. In terms of the reporting, what fell apart here? We now have an excellent Title IX person, but did things fall apart earlier? What went wrong so that our processes on campus were not followed? Finally, has a decision has been made that your spouse will not be at future university events anymore or on campus?

The President said regarding your first question about retaliation and whether she thought that any settlement was wrong, she is a part of the CSU system. She is one of 23 Presidents. She reports to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees. This was a decision that was made, so she cannot say that was wrong. It was in the best interest of the system, not necessarily our campus community, but it was it was made in that best interest of us being a part of this larger Cal State system. In regards to feeling safe and not being protected comment, she said she was always concerned. She wants people to feel safe. We need to feel safe. There were allegations, and she hoped the Senate would understand, they were allegations. She saw someone in the chat say, was your husband ever interviewed? He was never interviewed. He wasn't aware until she was informed much later. It is going to take all of us to create a campus community that we feel safe in. One person can make someone feel unsafe, but we as a community need to come together and not accept that. We need to say this campus community for our students, staff, and faculty is a place where we will not tolerate that. She will not tolerate that. Did the process fall apart? The process was never brought to our campus. The process was handled at the system office, and that was a decision that she did not have any hand in. Now she is hearing because of this - "oh I've reported this and nothing's happened, and I don't know what's going on." There are some privacy issues always in these cases, but she shouldn't be hearing repeatedly that we don't think our Title IX office is doing what it should be.

We are going to take a look at that as a system. The Title IX audit across the system is being done in the wake of the allegations at Fresno state.

The member said, is your husband supposed to be at present at university events and on campus?

The President said he is a volunteer. A part of her job is she is fundraising for this campus. She is also very sensitive to the campus community and the feelings. Out of his privacy and mine, she will say that we haven't made any decisions about that, but there were again allegations with no findings and so she is sensitive to how other people may feel. She is also sensitive to the rights and responsibilities of employees and volunteers and others who have allegations against them, not just my husband, that can't be addressed.

A member said he was concerned about, specifically, the message that went out this afternoon that was entitled "University statement regarding media coverage of personnel matter." He confessed to feeling some measure of disappointment at having this represented as a "university statement" and it seemed as if this was implicitly the voice that included the faculty and the larger university community expressing a statement about what has happened and how to construe it. As a person who feels like his name has implicitly signed on the statement as a member of the community, it is worrisome to see this characterized as a "personnel matter" and not in some of the other ways we characterize it in terms of retaliation, or what have you. He had a concern about how we are messaging and he wanted to hear the voice that he would feel a part of here with the faculty and other groups as a part of how that gets represented in a public facing way and to make sure that is not misconstrued. A more specific question is thinking about the role of a personnel spokesperson: what is the relationship between a message like this which goes out on behalf of the university community and then messages that might come out signed by a personnel spokesperson on your behalf?

The President said that's a good point. That message could have come out from me, but in the rush to get the message out, she didn't know whether that was thought through well. She did know that we were under deadline. A lot of people were saying you have got to say something, and she was in EPC this morning, and she heard from faculty saying get something out fast. It's very hard to operate fast when probably 10 attorneys and 10 communications people on campus and people in the system office have to review every word that is going out. She didn't see the last title change before it went out. But that doesn't mean that a lot of people are not looking at it and thinking it is the best way to go, and some of them have more experience in

communications or certain legal perspectives. She is asked to be a part of that team, but faculty have been loud and clear, and we'll look more carefully at how those messages go out. The intent was certainly not to say it was from faculty, staff or students.

A guest said when you are 86 years old and you read a newspaper article as he read yesterday, two of them, and the *PD* and the *Los Angeles Times*, a lot of things go through your mind. He came to Sonoma State in 1970, and he has been through an awful lot of presidents and an awful lot of provosts. One of the Provosts he was through was Dr. Vollendorf. Dr. Vollendorf was a Provost here for three years. When she left there was very little discussion of the circumstances of her leaving. He didn't know why she left. He didn't know that she went to a position in the Chancellor's office, and he now knows that we paid for it. He read in the newspaper that Presidents Sakaki and Dr. Vollendorf negotiated a separation agreement, which is, just judging from the from the newspaper article, that at the time the separation agreement was negotiated and agreed to civilly by the University and Dr. Vollendorf. No issue of sexual harassment or retaliation had been raised by Dr. Vollendorf. If he is wrong about that he wanted to be immediately corrected. His understanding is that the issue arose when Dr. Vollendorf sought other employment, and she has since been given two new positions. She is the interim Provost at Northern Colorado University, and she has just been appointed President of SUNY Empire, a college in New York. His understanding is that the the charge of retaliation came because allegedly President Sakaki interfered with her efforts to seek employment after she had agreed to an amicable settlement. The real question is, after this too-long speech, would Presidents Sakaki please contextualize for us the separation agreement that the university achieved with Dr. Vollendorf as she was leaving or as part of her departure from this campus as its Provost for three years?

The President said there was a long break and a long timeline there. There were several memorandums of understanding and she couldn't speak to the detail of that, unfortunately. When she heard the question, she thought "I did the best I could."

The member said he was not addressing them at all, and he is in complete sympathy with the sentiments that have been raised by other members of this body. The fact that he did not speak to them does not mean he is out of sympathy, but this particular question has not been discussed, and it is important that it be raised and discussed. He was sorry that President Sakaki couldn't answer it because to him, as a lawyer, it is an obvious question.

The President said, "I hear you."

A guest said it is important to acknowledge that it is very possible some of the victims of this behavior are in this Zoom meeting, so she wanted the members and attendees be aware of that as we talk about what happened. There have been a lot of responses to the *Press Democrat* and the message that went out this afternoon then also was published on a website and on our social media feeds. This assertion that there was no wrongdoing, she was a little troubled by; even in circumstances where it doesn't reach a legal threshold, she always thinks that there are things that could be done differently. Could the President speak specifically to what the changes are that we want to make on campus? What will your office do? What is Strat Com essentially is going to do differently, since these are all people that report to the President? Given what we know now or given what has happened with former Provost Vollendorf and with the accusations against a volunteer on this campus, as the leader of our campus, what specifically are you going to do differently in the future, based on what has happened and as is laid out by the media reports?

The President said she would do a range of things. In terms of Title IX, ensure that everyone knows that they have a duty to report, as well as to report without any fear of retaliation, and that will happen through and with many faculty and through our Title IX office. The system is also conducting the Title IX audit. There are policies and practices that come to us from the Chancellor's office that are being clarified through that practice. She is also listening and hearing from many faculty, and that will inform us as we go forward. We have lots of issues and things to address to make us better, and she was confident that together we can do that. She stands by that there were many issues, most of which she cannot speak about, that led to this agreement and this settlement that were in the best interest of a campus as a whole.

The guest said she appreciated that answer. She didn't think it was an actual answer to what specific changes should happen on our campus given this. She wanted to be as much a part of that and the support this campus for as long as she was here, but she was not hearing a lot of responsibility taking, of specific actions or specific plans moving forward, which is what she would like to see as a faculty member and a member of this community.

A guest said she is a very direct person. She is empathizing with the women who come forward. She thinks they want an apology from Patrick McCallum regardless of whether he is innocent or not. Even though the allegation might not meet the threshold, it's already on the borderline, and there are enough woman who can't come forward according to the news. Being responsible would be to have Patrick McCallum apologize.

The President said she appreciated that suggestion.

A member said for those who don't know, he is a Statewide Senator on our Academic Senate CSU and he is currently serving on the Faculty Affairs Committee, and one of the issues on our agenda that we are dealing with in various ways currently are Title IX issues and how faculty are pushing for different kinds of changes at the system level, as well as how system level things may entangle or get involved in local campuses. Regardless of how all this plays out, what he would find very helpful is for anybody who's involved in this, in whichever kinds of aspects, if you're willing to meet with him outside privately or whatever and talk to him about what works in our Title IX systems processes and what doesn't work and if you have any specifics. We might be able to fix the system because clearly it is not working in all kinds of different ways, on all kinds of different campuses and even on the system wide level. Please do reach out to senghas@sonoma.edu. He would be happy to follow up on that. This is very important, and especially in the wake of the whole Castro incident. Title IX is front burner right now at the statewide level, and we want to get faculty input on that.

The Chair reminded the Senate that the meeting is being record for the preparation of the minutes and media is in the room.

The CFA local President said the California Faculty Association is calling on the California Legislature to launch its own independent investigation into the handling of the Title IX cases throughout the CSU. There is a petition that has been circulating on campuses asking the legislators to investigate Title IX complaints, misbehavior and allegations. The faculty here at Sonoma State and the staff are committed to creating a safe, respectful environment free of harassment and abuse, and one that is inclusive and conducive to learning. The systematic mishandling of Title IX complaints is inconsistent with our campus' commitments. It damages the reputation of Sonoma State University, and it undermines the CSU's goals to be a place where all Californians have access to an inclusive, equitable, safe, and high quality education. CFA is calling for an independent investigation by the California Legislature because we have little or no confidence that the Trustees will do a complete, thorough, and transparent investigation and that the CSU will not provide that kind of investigation as well. As part of our Lobby Days, which are on April the 19th and 20th, we will be asking the California Legislature to launch its own investigation into the handling of Title IX cases throughout the CSU.

A guest said her comment feels a little bit tangential, but also maybe central. There has been a lot of talk today about a caring campus community, about feeling safe, about retaliation. It is not just a faculty issue; it also happens in the staff world, and she would be remiss if she didn't once again speak up for staff. She had a direct quote from a staff member that asked for ways to provide input anonymously, to avoid intimidation. She was wondering if the President would be meeting with staff and taking questions in a similar way as today with the Academic Senate.

The President said she would welcome the chance to meet with staff. She thought she was scheduled with the Staff Council. The guest said she was scheduled for late May, but wondered if it could be sooner. The President said she would look in to doing that.

A guest said her comment was related to an experience that was almost like a déjà vu of what happened in December, when the faculty expressed the need for the President to be clearer in communication, to be more transparent with us. What is happening now is related to communication and that we tend to learn from the *Press Democrat* about important issues, even cutting the trees, simple issues, and she believes that there is a pattern in the President's communication style that is not helpful. Sometimes the President says beautiful messages, but the content sometimes is not there. Her question was, at the beginning of this meeting the no confidence possibility was raised, so she wanted to change that to a vote of confidence. What can you tell us right now, right here, as a leader or what are you going to do, beyond creating saying that everyone can report without fear of retaliation? That's kind of miniscule in relation to what happened. The issue that we have is much bigger and deeper in importance. Why should we have our confidence in you as a leader in the context of the meeting that happened in December and in the context of the articles that just came out?

The President said there is so much that we are doing together at Sonoma State and the confidence is that we are addressing the leadership challenges, as well as admissions, enrollment, and budget issues together, and she believed that together we will be able to move forward in a way that helps us bring in more students again. That helps us grow the kinds of programs that will help us be on the map to attract more and different students and be able to change and transform in terms of workforce development that we need and then bring in more transfer students, as well as first year students, looking at returning students, as well as diversifying our campus community. She thought back to who we were just five years ago, and our WASC review and the kinds of recommendations that were made for program review and accreditation, new accreditations. Things that are going on in terms of the

Business School, in Engineering, in things that we were not doing before. In Education, the educators are involved with the school now that weren't in the same way before and she thought these are all positive. Together, addressing also the climate for Title IX and the feelings of safety for this campus. Those are all things that need to be addressed, even within this climate that we have in terms of budgetary concerns and declining enrollment after the fires and the fact that we keep having these silly power outages. How can you run a university when we can't have reliable power? We almost had to cancel a rehearsal as well as the performance where tickets were sold for this evening because there was absolutely no power on this campus. Many people had to go home because there wasn't Wi-Fi and the ability to even do Zoom, except this morning she did a Zoom from her cell phone. We can't have a university where all of a sudden our generators don't work. We are in Sacramento trying to get additional support for those things. She has a meeting tomorrow with Congressman Thompson to talk about some new work that we are doing and proposing around a Climate Center, so there are things that we can do together. This is a serious matter. This is a matter that she is taking much to heart, and we will address it. But it doesn't minimize the good work that many of you are doing in your departments and in your schools and the good people that are here working really hard, and that is what pains her about all of this. We will make this better. We will come up with policies and practices, so we're not reacting. We will address and will work to communicate more directly, when she can, but in this particular case, she was forbidden from communicating ahead of a story. That isn't always how she would want it to be, and she hoped that there would be some understanding and sensitivity of roles that she has as a leader within a system.

The member said she always reads the comments in the chat, and it is almost like an evasive response, and that is clearly not enough as we move forward in trusting you, and hopefully have confidence that you become a more strategic leader. Relying on teams is great, but at one point we need leadership. We want to know where we are going based on your leadership, as President, as our President.

A guest said he wanted to be fair to the President and give her a chance to explain, but based on your answers all he was hearing were deflections, that you were built to do this and you were built to do that, or that you didn't know anything about what's going on. This pattern of lack of accountability and lack of transparency is demoralizing to him as a faculty member at Sonoma State and he will be straight with the President. He has lost his confidence in your leadership here at Sonoma State University.

The President said "I hear you, and I am sorry to hear that I have lost your trust. I will continue to work to address the many concerns that have been addressed here."

Provost Report - K. Moranski

K. Moranski said thanks to everybody who is here today and speaking today. It has been a tough day for everybody. She was wasn't sure that anything that she had to say will make it easier. We are where we are.

She said her report is about the recommendations of the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Working Group (AABAWG). We sent out a memo about this morning. As you know, AABAWG has been working since December in a process that started at the beginning of the academic year to think about how the campus addresses it's \$15 to \$17 million budget deficit for next year. Academic Affairs decided in the middle of the fall, as we began talking about how the cuts were going to be made, that we needed to take a different tactic than the other divisions. That is primarily because we recognized that it was important for us to have a set of conversations about the budget cuts that we are going to take into account the importance of the core mission of the institution, which is educating our students. We decided on a different strategy than had ever been used in budget reductions on our campus before. She was not sure whether even in the great recession we faced the kinds of budget issues that we are now facing as a campus. But that is where we are, so we decided to form a budget advisory working group. That group is unusual deliberately. Unusual in that it was an effort with faculty governance to develop a group that represented all of the people on whom the budget cuts could have an impact, so faculty, staff, students, and administrators and that is how we tried to form the group. There was one representative for each of the Schools appointed by Structure and Functions after they sent out calls. We tried to make it as inclusive as possible, so there were representatives of various kinds, including staff, and an Administrative Manager, Associate Dean, Dean and others. We did work with the AS to try to get a student, but we were not able to get a student. That group has deliberated, and they were nearing the final version of their report, when unfortunately, leaks began to occur. Those came at first from outside the group and then from inside the group. That pushed her to go ahead and get a statement out about some of those recommendations. We have to find five and a half million dollars by July 1 to cut. That is 12% of the Academic Affairs budget. It was easy to make some of the cuts. We took EEP this past year and were able to save a significant portion of that to account as base reductions in the budget for Academic

Affairs, so that has helped us. We have also been able to use some reorganization money that has come from, mainly from her team, that has helped us and we have been working with the Deans on some school-based reductions that will also help in our planning. Academic Affairs is different than the other divisions because anything we do needs to be talked about, needs to go through governance, needs to be worked through faculty who have provenance over curriculum. It is not that we can't make the kinds of cuts that the other divisions can make. We have to have conversations, and they take time. We put out a message this morning. The most controversial piece of that message is the recommendation by the Budget group to cut a Dean position. We have a Dean, who is leaving from the School of Arts and Humanities, and we wish Hollis Robbins the very, very best in her new position and thank her for her dedicated service. She has made a huge difference in her school, but the budget working group looked at the budget, looked at the enrollment for the foreseeable future at Sonoma State, and has suggested a consolidation and to build a new school that combines Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. Those recommendations are still in process and still need to be discussed. She has received an email from Ed Beebout with a memo from the Chairs in Arts and Humanities to slow things down to make sure that there's adequate consultation to make sure that people have a say, to think about the best way to do things, and she honors that, and we will have those conversations. In the meantime, she wanted clarify some questions that have emerged. No staff person will lose their job, not an ASC, not an Analyst, not an administrative manager, nobody is going to be laid off, nobody is going to lose their jobs. In fact, no tenure-track faculty member is going to be laid off. That is something that the President and herself decided very early on in the process as being a key component. The AABAWG was asked to make five and a half million dollars in cuts without layoffs. Now let's talk about lecturers. Lectures are hired according to the enrollment that we have, so it is the number of courses we need to teach at the student/faculty ratios that are recommended. We continue to do that and will continue to do that. Unfortunately, because of our lower enrollments, we have not been able to hire as many lecturers in the last two years as we did before that. Lecturers have not been able to always find work in the last two years and won't this next year either. We have lost 2000 students. At \$5,500 per student per year, that is a substantial loss of revenue to run the institution. Yes, lecturers have been affected. Now we want to move forward in a collaborative way. She saw a question in the chat: how is this merger going to save money aside from one Dean salary? Why merge the two bigger schools? What will happen to tenure-track faculty programs that are low enrolled?

K. Moranski said the proposal is that the merger saves the Dean's salary, that is currently the savings. There are other cuts, but that is the cut we are talking about

and why to merge the two bigger schools. The simple answer to that is because we have the opportunity to do it. It is salary and benefits. We will need to have discussions about the needs of those schools and their unique needs and unique ideas. What the budget advisory working group is suggesting is not a temporary save. We are a smaller institution. That is the reality that we have. It is important for us to recognize and for us to act on that now. We all have ideas and we want to address those ideas, and there may be ideas that the budget advisory working group hasn't come up with that the Senate wants to suggest, and we need to provide opportunities to do that. It is important that we start to have this conversation and we can do that in a collaborative and consultative way. We need to do that moving forward, so this is a first stage, not a final stage, and we need to have a number of conversations from here on out. Anytime budget cuts get made, there have to be very hard decisions. We have prioritized keeping people, which means that we need to look at structures, and that doesn't have to be a bad thing.

We will continue to work through those issues, and, if Senators read the memo, they will see that one of the things that we deliberately addressed in the memo is the need for continued conversation. We have made some of the budget cuts in the base for this next year. We did not have a choice. But we know that there are many, many conversations to be had, including the one about school consolidation. We can't make all those changes swiftly. Those are going to take a while to accomplish, so we bought ourselves a little bit of time by using some one-time funds as well as having the base cuts.

The Student Rep said this is very difficult news to hear. She was no stranger to the fact that we have this huge budget deficit going on and that there have to be changes made at the university. One thing about the budget advisory working group is, we were asked to send a student very late after everybody was already assigned. She pointed out that as far as the student perspective on what is going on in academics, the proposed merger for the School of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities doesn't make sense. If we are the only liberal arts college in the CSU, and we pride ourselves on that fact, but then we're going to take Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences and try to condense those two groups together, especially with Arts and Humanities having our ethnic studies departments, it seems like it's pushing them to the back and prioritizing STEM. She was not saying that STEM is a bad thing. If that is the identity of the school than that needs to be changed, instead of marketing ourselves as a liberal arts school to students coming here. Already in the School of Social Sciences, all the majors are pretty chaotic and crazy. She couldn't imagine including Arts and Humanities, which again has this a wide variety of majors.

It just doesn't make sense to save \$180,000 when there's a lot of other areas where there could be money saved, and there are a lot of ideas.

The Provost said she appreciated the comments about the student representative on the budget working group. She apologized for that. In terms of the issue about liberal arts and sciences, she noted she is the biggest proponent of SSU being a liberal arts and sciences institution. She will claim that status on this campus. That is a message that she carries and carries seriously. She did not think that school mergers are going to impact that. Creating a new school is not going to negatively put liberal arts majors into the background. She thought we need to talk about that, and we need to listen to the concerns that might need to be addressed.

She noted a comment in the chat which was that the School of Social Sciences is also a School of the liberal arts. STEM majors are not the majors in that school, most of them are from the liberal arts and sciences, so it is not a diminution of the liberal arts and sciences, from her perspective, but we need to listen, we need to talk, we need to have more conversations about the recommendations, and she is up for that. She is always up for talking and thinking through and figuring out better ways to do what we need to do. She appreciated the student comments because she thought it gets at concerns and questions and confusion around what we are doing and what the schools represent and how they work to build our liberal arts and sciences identity.

The Student Rep said she understood that about the School of Social Sciences. She is a history major. She thought it is an even bigger impact that the two schools with a lot of liberal arts are coming together, and they are getting less resources. It doesn't seem like a big deal, but they already say that the Deans are stretched really thin with the work that they are doing now. They already said in one of the schools that they are struggling because of everything that is going on. She didn't understand how one Dean will be able to handle it when one Dean can't handle one school right now. Thank you for listening to my comments .

The Provost said she appreciated that. Every Dean is in a very difficult position, always. It is a tough position. But we have seven schools for an institution that is 7000 students with the library, so six without, and that is an organizational structure that is worth looking at.

A guest said she knows the Provost is a champion of the liberal arts and that's wonderful and also as a fellow medievalist, the medieval idea of the liberal arts included astronomy as well. Our ideas have changed about which majors go

together, and she thanked the Student Rep for voicing the concern about how liberal arts majors and our humanities majors will be diminished and will have less of a voice. There are real concerns about that. In Faculty Governance we allot seats by School. If we have fewer Arts and Humanities seats, we have less of a voice on committees, and we can't advocate for students in the same way. We need a Dean who understands our unique concerns. We have unique needs and unique voices. We are the only COPLAC in California and it would be a good idea to lean into what makes us unique, what makes Sonoma State special instead of trying to become another mediocre generic university that offers a little bit of everything.

The Provost said she appreciated that and did take issue that different organizational structures automatically cause mediocrity. She did think that the governance structure is something that needs to be considered. We can't let that happen. We can't have less representation, so that is a real issue that needs to be addressed as we move forward.

A member said he would refer to the resolution that was passed by the chairs of A&H today. It deals with process, as opposed to ideas, about why this might be a good idea or why this might be a bad idea.

"The Council of Chairs and the Curriculum Committee of the School of Arts and Humanities unanimously reject the process that has led to the decision to merge the School of Arts and Humanities with the School of Social Sciences, and condemn its lack of transparency. While we understand there is a budget deficit and difficult decisions need to be made, we firmly believe decisions involving major structural or organizational changes to faculty units on campus should be made only after publicly and fully examining the potential impacts of those proposed changes. The administration is trying to represent this decision as "collaborative" because there were faculty members on the committee. However, those faculty members were hand-picked by the Office of the Provost. Only one faculty each from the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Social Sciences were on the committee. And the dean who has now been slated to head up both schools was also on the committee, which we view as a serious conflict of interest. No one in Arts and Humanities, including the department chairs or any of our other elected representatives were even informed that this proposal to merge schools was on the table, let alone asked for input. This process has been anything but transparent. In addition, we believe trying to move this kind of structural change forward at the same time the current administration finds itself embroiled in a public scandal is ill-advised. We therefore ask that no final decision be made on merging the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Social Sciences until the implications of such

a move have been fully and publicly examined, and ample time has been given for faculty input and debate."

He noted this was signed by all the Chairs of A&H.

He emphasized that this is not an attack on anybody who was part of this committee. We respect everybody greatly who took part in this working group. This is questioning the process and what we should be doing instead.

The Provost said she completely agreed with the statement and the resolution that nothing should be finalized until the impacts have been fully and completely discussed. The Faculty on the committee were not hand-picked. There was a Structure and Functions process. She wanted to make sure that people know that the governance process was followed for the faculty on that working group. We had to start somewhere, and nobody likes this discussion. The working group has taken on the process of having some initial discussions. These are recommendations that need to be vetted and thought through, and they will be.

The member said he was concerned that in the memo that went out today, this merger was listed as an accepted recommendation which would lead us to believe that it is a done deal.

The Provost said the recommendation document has been accepted by her. That doesn't mean that we are done with the decision-making process.

The member said he appreciated that clarification because the wording made it sound like the actual recommendation itself was accepted.

The Provost she thinks we have to talk about having smaller organizational structures and so, while we are a long way from finalizing what we're going to do with many of the suggestions of the budget advisory working group report, she did think that, as a campus, we need to reorganize. She didn't want to shy away from that topic.

A member said he wanted to change the subject. He received complaints from several faculty about an email that went out from university on Tuesday at 12:25pm informing everyone, all students and faculty, that the campus will shift to remote instruction for the remainder of the day 35 minutes before one o'clock classes and during the lunch hour when presumably many faculty were not getting this message. The University has the right to cancel classes for the day and to close the university.

He did not think it is appropriate for the university to decide on the mode of instruction for the rest of the day. The University should say - students, instructors will let you know how the rest of the day will proceed. But the default here was that it was going remote. Maybe the university meant that the university was going remote, but to use the word remote instruction is problematic.

The Provost said unfortunately that has the way we proceeded two days this week because of the power outage situation. She could only speak to what the thinking was about that, which is that students were arriving in Zoom rooms, and there were no faculty because faculty couldn't get on to the WIFI and couldn't meet their classes. Even in online situations, there was a problem. The thinking was that we needed to acknowledge that it was going to be problematic for anybody to be on campus without electricity. In Salazar, and all of the buildings, toilets didn't flush. Some of the rooms were very dark. There were health issues and safety concerns and that is what led to that decision. We do our best when the power goes off without any notice, but she heard the complaint.

The Chair noted that both the President and the Provost did try to consult with her, but she was in meetings and teaching, and her phone was off. She wasn't able to contribute, but they did reach out. She didn't think anybody's thinking that was a fabulous way to go.

A guest said each representative was, in fact, handpicked. There was no selection process. There was no election. His trust in the process is pretty shot after what happened last year in the run up to the repopulation of the campus where he was being lied to in meetings, where things were hidden, then decisions were made. Those open forums were only held basically to save face and he was super happy to have all these discussions, but he wanted to know that there really will be a reconsideration, that we are really part of this thing. Because otherwise we're going to do the process and then everything stays the same. The other thing he hasn't heard in all these discussions is that SSU has made some poor financial decisions in the past, from the apartment houses that apparently can't be ever filled, selling the townhouses that were designated for incoming faculty. He wonders where all this money goes, where it is spent, and, while we are being told that we need to save \$5 million here and we are never even being told where the money is, where the number actually comes from. That might be only the optics or bad communication, but the optics are really bad. The idea of putting the schools together, does that include getting rid of programs and shrinking the schools?

The Provost said the townhouses were sold because they were in such poor shape that that it was not going to be feasible to renovate them. Marina Crossing, the SSU apartments, are 100% occupied. We are making efforts to figure out housing for faculty and staff on campus. We are reaching out and planning to reach out to all of the new hires and to offer them an opportunity for housing. We are trying to work through those problems of housing on campus. In terms of the scope of the budget, she said the Budget Office website is where the rationale for the budget cuts, including why five and a half million, is coming from. Academic Affairs is a part of the budget forums that we have had over the last four semesters. Those are publicly available and she was happy to talk through the rationale for that, but that rationale is there, and, whether we like it or not, we do have to make those cuts, we all have to make those cuts. She appreciated that we want to minimize the damage to the academics and she wants to minimize the damage to the academic core because she is the advocate for Academic Affairs. We do need to make sure that the cuts that we might make have as little impact as possible. The budget advisory working group made no recommendations for program discontinuance and has not made recommendations about cutting programs. They have suggested that as a campus, we find ways to add alternative funding for programs where we can, so that means thinking about seeking donor funding for positions, as Arts and Humanities has done under Hollis Robbins' leadership. We have worked to find ways to fund some some faculty positions and we need to do more of that and we are going to figure out as a campus how to best use Extended Ed as well to generate funds for the campus. There are a number of possibilities that we can explore and that we have to explore.

The member said he was hoping for the Provost to give us a bit of an outline of the cuts have to be made by July. That doesn't give us a whole lot of time and some of it is already in the summer, which happened last year too, so what is the timeline to meet with the Council of Chairs, with the Schools, so that we can actually get the discussion going because everybody wants to wants to help, but the way it is being done, it feels just frustrating and disenfranchising.

Motion to extend meeting by 15 minutes. Second. No objection.

The Provost said the short answer is that why we split it into base funding and one-time funding provides an opportunity. We are not making all the cuts this year and what that does is to give us an opportunity to have those conversations, they can extend past July, and they can extend into next year and do not have to be truncated or held before the end of June because we simply can't.

She then addressed a question in the chat. There was not an official report, those were working notes that *The Star* received and the group is not recommending discontinuance of multiple majors and programs.

A member said it was very gratifying to hear that there is a real push for people to not lose their jobs, and then in the next breath the Provost mentioned except for lecturers. As a member of our lecturer faculty, she reminded the Senate that more than half of the faculty on our campus are lecturers. We provide a lot of meaningful experiences. This university is better and stronger because of our contributions. She urged that as we are looking at these budget decisions and as we are trying to figure out what to do, to have a spirit of shared sacrifice to make sure that all of the members of our campus community are able to make it through these challenging times. We are all assuming we are temporary in terms of low enrollment. How can we pull all of us through this together instead of shedding some of some people along the way? Some of the things to possibly discuss are ways for lecturers, who are not able to be hired for a semester, how can we help them to maintain their entitlement instead of having to start again from scratch? There are some creative things we could do, and she would love to be part of those conversations.

The Provost said that is great. Thank you so much. Let's talk about that and she would be happy to hear ideas along those lines.

A guest said will Dean Carlton be the Dean in a merged School? She received an email from the co-chairs of the task force about this. She was wondering why the co-chair is sending emails about this? Part of the problem is this process of communication. She was very shocked to hear about this today. It's not necessarily whether she thinks it is wrong or right. She has a degree in Communication Arts and Sciences, and she believed that as a communication specialist she is a social scientist. She can certainly understand the possibility of there being connection between these two schools. Whether she agreed or disagreed is another matter.

The Provost said we are at a stage in this discussion where people are under pressure. When it becomes like that, we move forward too fast. We were not able to employ a communication plan. The budget advisory working group has a communication plan that it did not get a chance to enact. That is a problem, and it was because of people out of fear and anxiety or whatever it was, jumping the gun. The thought would be that if there were a consolidation, if that new school was formed, her suggestion would be that it be formed under Troi Carlton who has a degree that is very interdisciplinary and that crosses the humanities and social sciences, but we again have to take a deep breath here and think about how to have

the conversations that need to occur, how that should occur over the next year. We need to go back several steps and have the conversations that need to be had. It is very unfortunate that we are in this position. Anytime severe or extreme budget cuts happen, the fear and anxiety and the impulses to protect our own turfs make it hard to have conversations. We need to take a deep breath, we need to think about it, and we need to have the conversations that we need to have in order to make this something that everybody can feel good about, or at least feel like their concerns have been addressed and answered. That needs to be our goal moving forward; to address all the concerns, to address the impacts and figure out the best way to move forward.

A member said he wanted to second what several people said or read aloud. The Nursing department did draft a very similar statement that he would save the Senate from reading right now, but it is nearly impossible to make good decisions based on bad data. Having read what was published in *The Star*, even if it wasn't the final version of the recommendations, is actually very harmful to be out in the public because a lot of those data were absolutely inaccurate. It neglected to mention that 10% of the applicants for this entire university are for pre-nursing, and it neglected to mention over a quarter of the graduates are in the Master's program. It also did not represent accurately within maybe 100 people, the number of graduates we have every year. It is extremely concerning to us in the Nursing department that these data were even discussed without even consulting with us to find out what the actual numbers are. We are coming up on our 50th year as a department and we are trying to raise funds for the department and trying to continue to maintain our high enrollment that has not suffered during the pandemic. This type of information being discussed, or even being put out into the public is extremely harming. He couldn't understand how this information could have even been written down without even consulting with the department prior to that.

The Provost said we can and should have conversations about the data and what kinds of data were used and how those data were built and we can have the chairs reach out to him to discuss those issues. It is extremely distressing that working notes were shared, and that created turmoil and drama. We have got to stop the trauma. We have got to stop hurting each other. We will have those discussions with the Nursing department and with every department. We can compare data and figure out what the best data sources are. There is no false data in the report. Those are the data acquired through the Peoplesoft system and through the Tableau system, so they are data that are accurate for the institution. We have different ways of calculating data, and there is never one way. There often are debates about data, and so it is not false data, but it may not be the whole story as the member is

pointing out, and that is totally fair. She was happy to work with *The Star* on getting as much accurate information to them as possible.

A guest said she wanted to continue to talk about the merger of the two schools. Lower division composition is taken by all the freshman year students. When Hollis Robbins came to campus she made a very clear commitment to make sure that she supported lower-division composition because she understand that the retention of student is crucial. For lower-division composition, right now, we have lost our Writing Program director. If we were to merge the two Schools, we will lose his institutional memory, and that will be very concerning. She asked the President and Provost to hear her on this. We need a hire.

The Vice Chair said as we talk about these changes, one idea might be to think about how those can help our identity, that the merged school could be Interdisciplinary Studies. The whole idea of social sciences and social ecology is breaking down. As long as we approach it from that way, we'll be better off, but the bigger question he had is about COVID, our wildfires, the economic downturn, the war in Ukraine, the stories yesterday in the PD, as a campus, how can we try to move on because we all work very hard to make SSU a great place?

The Provost said thank you for that question and she appreciated the comment about interdisciplinarity because she did think there are opportunities, as we figure out different structures, to think about what we can become. This campus has been through a hell of a lot and we keep going through a hell of a lot, and it doesn't seem like it stops, and she feels that as much as faculty do. It is rough right now, but we have to keep trying. We have to keep talking, we have to keep trying, we have to keep having reasonable debate and questions. That is all good. This conversation is so important. It is critical to the success of the campus. As we move forward, we have to keep having those conversations, and we know that nobody is ever going to get it all right, and we do the best we can under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, and we'll just keep doing that. She was open to ideas for how to do that. She didn't know any other way than to keep going, keep talking, keep planning, keep thinking, and move forward as campus with the ever-present goal of trying to be ever better at educating our students and being a force for good in the community here in Sonoma County, and that's what she thinks we need to do.

Motion to extend 5 minutes. Second. No objection.

A guest said in the document that was shared today it there was an asterisk

on a few priorities and which referred to immediate implementation. One of those is this merger. Maybe some of the panic is coming from an asterisk that says immediate implementation. We know that Dean Robbins is leaving in six weeks and it feels like a panic moment about that, because there was an interim Dean discussion happening and then no formal announcement.

The Provost said this is all happening very fast. We do have a Dean leaving in six weeks, and we have to figure out what the structure is moving forward, and we have to figure out how best to serve the School of Arts and Humanities, as well as the broader campus community over the next months and year and into the future. If a merger is going to pull together Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, then those discussions need to begin immediately. We need to talk about that and figure out whether that is going to be a move that we can make. We are trying to figure out how we are going to save that Dean salary, how we do that? Let's talk about it as we move forward. There is no easy solution. She did again appreciate the school chairs in Arts and Humanities suggesting let's slow down, let's talk more, let's think through the issues, and she wanted to have those conversations with them before we move forward, so we won't move forward until we have those conversations.

A guest asked if this is a long-term solution or a short-term solution capitalizing on the fact that one of the Deans is leaving. But she said it sounds like it is a long-term plan. She wondered in our conversations of trying to figure out Sonoma State's identity, particularly as a liberal arts college and this being a pretty big shift and change, perhaps we should look at restructuring our academic programs, in a way that we decide as a campus and what fits our identity best rather than based on a Dean leaving. We could have a little bit of both, about taking advantage of the fact that a Dean is leaving and not refilling the position right away, but acknowledging that we do need to have a large restructure in order to save money in the long term.

The Provost said that is a good suggestion and a broader discussion than even the budget advisory working group had, and she was up for that conversation. She told them on numerous occasions to think big, to think bold. We have the chance to do something very important. We are at a moment where we can do what we did in 2009. We can retrench and we can hunker down, and we can try to keep everything, what we've always had or we can use this moment to actually think big and bold and thoughtfully about where we can go and how we can go there. If the budget advisory working group is not the vehicle for that, then thanks to them for getting us started.

The Chair said because there is this anxiety about things happening. No, two schools cannot merge without faculty governance coming into it. It doesn't matter if the Provost said today we're merging. She would say, we are not okay, it can't be done, you have to take it through governance. What was leaked about different departments, if all of our working notes got leaked, you will see all kinds of crazy ideas. That is because we thought we were operating in a confidential setting to fully discuss issues. In fact, she was the one in the working group, pushing for specificity. Everyone was doing the thing we do in academics, "Oh, we should do this" and she said we need to make some really hard decisions, so if the specificity is freaking people out that's on her. She will take the hits for whatever people might want, but please don't think that consultation wasn't going to be a part of it. It is a recommendation and it's a place to start thinking. Trust that faculty governance would not allow a merger to happen without consultation. She understood that it is very alarming, but know that she speaks her mind, and consultation would happen. She appreciated the discussion. She appreciated hearing people's concerns. If anyone has questions about the working group feel free to contact her. We were not handpicked. We were elected.

She offered her thanks to the Provost and President for being willing to attend the Senate and take questions and to try to respond to things. Do we like all the answers? No, we do not. But at least, they are here, trying to address it and inform us.

Adjourned.

Relevant Chat comments appended here as this was requested by attendees:

"We already have a campus climate with a problematic history of dealing with Title IX complaints. This makes it potentially so much harder."

"So, it's about money, not justice?"

"Was Patrick never interviewed?"

"Why would the president not be informed of such a serious Title 9 charge, especially one involving her husband?"

"I have experienced retaliation as a Chair in A&H, ongoing. Very brave of you speak that out."

"To use a more generic term, if Dr. Sakaki is not aware of numerous 'abuse of power' issues on this campus, she is NOT in touch with what is going on."

"Please keep yourselves muted until called on by the Chair."

"What are the rights of a volunteer?"

"It is an official status that you have to be approved for."

"I have had volunteers approved by SSU work on a literary magazine here. I know what a volunteer is. I signed the documents for them. I don't recall that they had 'rights.'"

"There may be others who are able to speak to the separation agreement although the President cannot. And I agree with Victor that it is important."

"Title IX Coordinators at SSU

2016: Joyce Suzuki

2017: Bill Kidder

2018: Sarah Clegg

2022: Julie Vivas"

"Pres. Sakaki has reiterated that there have been no new complaints since 2019 (?) — doesn't that imply that something IS being done differently?"

"It could also mean that with no action taken on previous complaints, would be complainants are not coming forward anymore."

"It could also be that nobody was on campus because of COVID"

"What constitutes retaliation. I have been character assassinated in a report following on a Title IX complaint, and there was no push back on that by the university."

"I had a very unpleasant meeting with Academic Affairs where I felt like I was the one who had done something wrong. I too hope someone sitting in the Senate asks about that"

"Judy -do you wish it had been further investigated at the time and that you and Patrick were informed and interviewed?"

"There are 150 people 'in the room'"

"I can't get on the cue, but given the specific allegations made by several women regarding harassment (as listed in the LA Times) are you saying that these women were lying to Lisa Vollendorf? The allegations all fall under Title IX regulations."

"It has also been a tactic by some at SSU— getting press to share narratives that may or may not be true.. rather than being in communication, transparency and accountability."

"Do you anticipate cutting lecturer positions?"

"How is this merger going to save money aside from one dean's salary? Why merge the two bigger schools? What are TTF whose programs are low enrolled going to be employed?"

"I anticipate more costs to streamline two schools and avoid duplication, etc."

"According to the SacBee, that's a grand total of \$179k"

"Why not SEIE and Business n Tech?"

"The two schools have very distinct needs. A&H is the bedrock for delivering composition and first year classes."

"If we're willing to spend \$\$\$\$\$\$ for settlement, why can't we spend much less than that to keep the two schools?"

"Is this a short term solution to temporarily save on the Dean's salary, or a long-term school merger?"

"Why is the co-chair of the task force (Dr. Acosta Lewis) sending emails that Troi is the new dean."

"Why is the money being cut from teaching and learning? I feel more money could be cut from places outside of Academic Affairs."

"Why SS and not a smaller School that may fit better? And the Dean is expected to do double the work? Or new people hired to do this work?"

"I am grateful for Ed expressing the serious concerns of the A&H Chairs who are on the frontlines of this. Thank you Karen for being willing to listen to the points the A&H Chairs have indicated that Ed has communicated on our behalf. I hope there will be consultation moving forward. Very glad to hear this is not a final decision."

"Yes, having the conversation is really key, but merging the two schools imho would require MORE resources, way past saving one Dean's salary –"

"So, this decision needs to be made by the end of May then, I guess, involving all stakeholders and the whole campus"

"Sounds like lots of cuts are coming from outside academic affairs. If we need \$15-17 million and AA is cutting \$5.5 million then lots of \$ coming from elsewhere.

A&H will get overshadowed and there will be increased pressure to cross list for area F classes. The diversion of HSI money to non-HSI functions is already in play, as predicted. The diversion of area F money to Social Sciences and away from ethnic studies prefix classes, will be facilitated by this move - as has already happened in violation of state law."

"It is problematic to merge the two schools."

"Social Sciences is NOT stem and business. We are liberal arts and we also do work around gender and ethnic studies"

"What about our COPLAC mission?"

"Maybe Science and Tech and Stem can merge"

"STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics = S&T"

"I mean business and the sciences"

"Interdisciplinary opportunities could be enhanced by a merger; but I for one worry that a merger would mean fewer resources for all in both schools"

"This is very concerning."

"Thank you Cristina for voicing the concerns of Arts and Humanities students"

"Great point about our COPLAC status"

"the governance structure will need to be reconsidered"

"Yes, especially your reference to the unique situation of us being part of COPLAC!"

"We have restructured the Senate and its committees in our past, and we can do so again. We can make sure we maintain representational balance."

"School/College of Arts and Sciences is a well-used division, only saw one example of Business and Sciences together, outside of that I've seen many different placements of majors in various schools/colleges"

"I just don't see how we can maintain representational balance if we don't maintain difference. It's like being "Asian American;" that undifferentiated category elides very different outcomes and situations"

"No decisions have been made, right? Isn't this a recommendation and therefore the process is allowing for consultation?"

"But how do we square the idea that this is just a proposal with the note about "immediate implementation" for the merger proposal?"

"There was no consultation by A&H reps on the working group with anyone in A&H I am confused as a new TT hired by A&H. I thought we had shared governance. If the current dean weren't leaving SSU, this merger wouldn't be possible given the condition of "no layoffs"... right?"

"It is very common to officially receive (aka "accept") a report and recommendations produced by a committee or a working group. It is a way of signaling that the input from the committee/working group is being taken seriously."

"again so many communication problems. We learn through media reporting— learned of the prospect of two schools merging from SSU newspaper."

"What percentage of SSU faculty live in Marina Crossing?"

"I still believe more money could be cut from places other than academics."

"Marina Crossing is full with people not affiliated to SSU. Very few SSU faculty and staff live in the apartments. They are not an affordable option."

"Housing is tough for new faculty (and all faculty and staff)"

"we have to do better there"

"If the full cuts are \$15-17 million and AA is cutting \$5.5 million then cuts *are* being made from other places."

"What are the cuts for the division of student affairs?"

"But we are a public institution and we should not rely too heavily on sponsors Are there discussions about cutting or consolidating AVP positions? Sonoma state has lots of administration."

"I've noticed a lot of what has been said is contradictory to what is stated in the official report that was leaked this week. The official report recommended the complete discontinuance of multiple majors and programs and only recommended alternative funding for only the nursing program?"

"What are the cuts for the division of student affairs?"

"<https://budget.sonoma.edu/>

The Spring budget presentation lays this out"

"from conversations in December it sounded like the budget working group would come forward with a few alternative plans for cuts that the campus and senate would then talk about."

"the university literally cannot function without lecturers."

"Are we considering the impact that these cuts will have once enrollment increases? Will we be prepared to serve a later student population?"

"Retaining entitlements would be amazing"

"if English dept. loses lecturer positions, programs are in danger. A very direct link here that we should not ignore."

"Same in Art & Art History."

"That is a serious concern."

"we are supposed get the funding back in the proportion that we cut."

To be clear, The Star has not published any articles on this yet. The Star has been researching and reporting this story this week in the wake of receiving the recommendations."

"how did so much false data make it into the working notes?"

"And the STAR does not check on those?"

"Data do not 'speak for themselves'; this is a key point we teach in our social science methods courses."

"The faculty should have input on to who will be the new dean (if this happens)."

"The student reporter for the Star is checking on all of the data as part of its research."

"Indeed data do not speak for ourselves...data definition and collection and interpretation is always context specific and subject to external influences to varying degrees"

"Yes- and our student paper writers need to be aware of this so we do not have 'fake news' here, too"

"The way we weather these situations (and hopefully role model good solutions) is another way we are educating our students."

"yes, so very true and so very critical to take seriously."

"Yes, my read is that A&H felt confident about JB serving as our interim Dean. Also, the Deans Office staff is key to the operations - and to retaining the historical memory of A&H"

"The story is in the paper before the meeting is over!"

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sonoma-state-president-sakaki-addresses-academic-senate-about-alleged-sexua/>"

"Yes, thanks to the Academic Affairs Budget Working Group for their hard work."

"Yes, thank you so much to everyone on that budget working group for taking on this very difficult work"

"Chair Morimoto, thank you for pointing out the context of the meeting notes."

Deliberation involves gathering data, validating and contextualizing them, and then coming to an informed set of findings and (sometimes) recommendations.”

“For what it’s worth, the title of the leaked document is: Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Working Group Final Report.”

Minutes prepared by L. Holmstrom-Keyes with help from Zoom transcript