

THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO
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(EC-12)

December 21, 2015

Members present: Kevin Ayotte (Chair), Thomas Holyoke (Vice Chair), Joseph I. Castro (Ex-officio), Abigail Hudson (ASI), Michael Jenkins (At-large), Madhu Katti (At-large), Melanie Ram (University-wide), Rebecca Raya-Fernandez (At-large), Lynette Zelezny (Ex-officio)

Members excused: Loretta Kensinger (Statewide Senate)

Guests: Venita Baker, Frank Lamas (VP of Student Affairs), Janell Morillo (Student Affairs)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ayotte at 10:00am in HML 4115.

1.) Approval of the agenda

MSC approving the agenda

2.) Approval of the Minutes of November 30, 2015

MSC approving the Minutes of November 30, 2015

3.) Discussion regarding the University Testing Center

President Castro explained how much of a struggle it has been to run the University Testing Center (UTC) this semester. During the last week of classes the problem became especially bad, but he commended Janell Morillo from Student Affairs for trying to work with it. On the Wednesday that was the last day of class, over 2,000 students came to UTC for tests, and over 4,400 students came from Monday to Wednesday of the same week. Students were waiting 2 to 3 hours for a test, usually outside and in the rain. Many students were frustrated, and some were even traumatized.

The cabinet talked about the problem last Monday and decided to create an interim plan for UTC. In the spring they proposed limiting its use to make-up exams, as well as other special exams like the TOEFL, the GRE, and other professional qualification exams. During the spring semester Student Affairs will decide how UTC should be run in the following academic year.

President Hudson (ASI) provided additional anecdotal evidence of these problems, but also suggested that students with disabilities be allowed to take tests in UTC. She also argued that many students do not have the time to take a final exam on the last week of classes in addition to their classes, especially if they have to wait in line for several hours. It stresses them out.

Senator Ram (University-wide) added that faculty should not be requiring extra class time for students to take the tests in the testing center even if there were no wait as assessment is an integral part of learning and should be considered part of their regular course hours. Students should not be expected to reserve extra time in their schedule for tests.

Vice Chair Holyoke said that he had heard this has become a cheating problem as well, that students who take a test then find other students in line who are waiting to take the same test and tell them what the questions are.

Vice President Lamas (Student Affairs) noted that UTC also has a problem with limited space and staff, so it cannot easily accommodate so many students at one time.

Janell Morillo (Student Affairs) said space was really the biggest problem. She also noted that for most of the semester there is no real problem. 82,000 tests were given in 2015, but the number each year is growing rapidly as more faculty make use of UTC.

Senator Katti (At-large) noted that students have an advantage when they take exams at UTC because they can be allotted more time than what can be allowed in the classroom. His department (Biology) is also upset with UTC because staff there are too strict about student cellphones going off and other minor problems. For the spring he is going to try on-line testing.

Senator Raya-Fernandez (At-large) suggested that faculty be surveyed to learn what they really want in a testing center. She also was curious to know how other CSUs ran their testing centers. Janell Morillo said that no other CSU has a testing center like ours, though Brigham Young University does and it is a large building with all kinds of fancy technology.

Chair Ayotte said that UTC was designed to be a convenience for faculty, giving them some more instructional time and providing more reliable technology for giving Scantron exams. He also expressed concern that faculty are using it as a way to give final exams early, before exam week, which violates the APM. Provost Zelezny added that the deans have been given a list of faculty who have been giving tests in the last week of classes so this problem can be monitored more closely. She added that she and Vice Provost Nef are preparing a message to the faculty about UTC and reminding them of their obligations during finals week and consultation days.

Senator Ram (University-wide) suggested that UTC allow no tests at all during the last week of classes.

Senator Katti (At-large) wondered if faculty might be scheduling or allowing exams on that week because they feared UTC would be over-committed on the actual final exam week. Janell Morillo said that she and Dean Fu (Undergraduate Studies) have been working hard to carefully schedule exams during exam week to accommodate everyone.

President Hudson (ASI) noted that during much of the semester UTC was actually under-utilized and was therefore not the best use of student success money and ASI money.

Senator Jenkins (At-large) pointed out that UTC is something of a victim of its own success since it had been advertising its services very heavily to faculty.

Senator Raya-Fernandez (At-large) wondered if earlier deadlines for faculty to submit exam requests would make scheduling easier for UTC. Perhaps it should even be able to turn away faculty requests when it is full. Janell Morillo said that they were looking into an on-line registration system so faculty could see when it is available.

Consensus of the committee was that the pause for spring was the best way to go so the problem could be studied. Provost Zelezny noted that she had met with the deans and they agreed with this idea. She also would like a faculty advisory committee to be formed and give input on UTC to the cabinet.

President Hudson (ASI) expressed doubt that UTC was doing anything to help with student success; going there was too unpleasant an experience for most students. She has heard lots of complaints and even asked her own professor not to schedule a test there.

Senator Ram (University-wide) noted that there is research indicating that students test better in the same room where they are taught. She noted, however, that UTC's Scantron machines are superior to those in department offices and the machines and itemized reports help faculty save a lot of time reviewing scantron forms and entering grades. The provost noted that research also shows that students test better when they have more face-time with their professors.

Vice Chair Holyoke argued that UTC's use should be more restricted, and that faculty should be proctoring their own exams.

Senator Jenkins (At-large) asked if part-time lecturers were using UTC more than tenured / tenure-track faculty, but there is no evidence that this is the case. He also noted that some classrooms are not conducive for test-taking in engineering because the desks are too small to accommodate the equipment the students need.

The provost said a summary message would be sent to all faculty later in the day.

4.) Communications and announcements

a. Action items

- i. Memo dated November 20, 2015, from Brian Tsukimura, Chair University Personnel Committee to Kevin Ayotte, Chair Academic Senate re: APM 321 Report of the Faculty Scholar Blue Ribbon Committee. Memo has been received.

This item will be placed on the next agenda of the Senate Executive Committee.

- ii. Memo dated December 2, 2015, from James Mullooly, Chair Academic Policy & Planning Committee to Kevin Ayotte, Chair Academic Senate re: Modification to APM 233. Memo has been received.

This item will be placed on the next agenda of the Senate Executive Committee.

- iii. Memo dated December 3, 2015, from James Mullooly, Chair Academic Policy & Planning Committee to Kevin Ayotte, Chair Academic Senate re: APM 231 (Adding and Dropping Classes). Memo has been received.

This item will be placed on the next agenda of the Senate Executive Committee.

5.) Nominations

The committee entered executive session at 11:04am.

The committee returned from executive session at 11:12am.

MSC approving Dr. Gyanesh Lama (Social Work Education) to be the Faculty Liaison between the Academic Senate and Faculty Affairs for the IDEA Center faculty evaluations process.

MSC approving Dr. Michael Botwin (Psychology) and Dr. Athanasios Alexandrou (Industrial Technology) to the search committee for a new Vice President for Administration.

The Senate Executive Committee adjourned at 11:14am.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be at 3:00pm on Monday, January 25, 2015.

Submitted by:
Thomas Holyoke
Vice Chair
Academic Senate

Approved by:
Kevin Ayotte
Chair
Academic Senate