

June 11, 2020 Deans' Council Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Paul Blake, Dave Damari, Steve Durst, Steve Durst, Rich Goosen, Leonard Johnson, Dave Nicol, Steven Halko, Mandy Seiferlein, Kim Wilber, Steve Reifert
Meeting minutes: Robin Hoisington

Budget Reduction Update:

Academic Affairs is currently still working on budget reductions as the total reduction amount has not been met.

Social Media:

Council members discussed Ferris' social media platforms and listened to information regarding employee use and what could be appropriate versus non-appropriate use. The University will provide direction regarding the appropriate use of FSU social media.

Voluntary Separation Plan (VSP) for Faculty:

Guest Frederika Hayes, Associate VP of Human Resources, joined the meeting to share information on the VSP plan with Council members. VSP specifics were discussed, including planned actions, as follows: June 15th announcement date; June 22nd application deadline; Dean and Provost approval by June 29th; employee signs by August 13 and a revocation period ending August 20th. The employee's last day of work would be August 23. Financial incentives were discussed. Funding will most likely not be centrally provided and it is anticipated that any cost savings would not be immediate but would be seen in the future. There are currently no deferrals allowed to the end of the semester. HR is currently working on a voluntary separation package and process for non-teaching employees.

Course Conversion Procedure: Fredericka outlined the proposed process of listing faculty who will be engaging in remote teaching in the fall, whether it be 100% remote, or remotely teaching any portion of their teaching loads. The FFA and FNTFO will meet with their deans regarding decisions as to whether to meet from home or not. The faculty's name, when confirmed, will be submitted on a spreadsheet that is shared with Human Resources. Faculty will receive information regarding working remotely when their name has been submitted to HR. Fredericka will send policy information to the Deans. The shared spreadsheet will include a comments field for input on changes that may be made during the semester. A process map will be posted for remote working staff members.

Scheduled raises:

Union employees will receive their raises.

Thanksgiving:

Council members discussed issues concerning ending a semester with face to face teaching at the Thanksgiving break and going with remote teaching afterward and relative risk. Going remote may not be any safer from a public health standpoint. Compelling discussions with students could be done. What magnitude of positives would cause 100% remote teaching? Is there a point where we will say we will need to go online? The Health Department would consider the threshold of cases. These discussions should be happening now instead of the Fall.

Town Hall "Items for Clarity":

The Academic Affairs Re-opening sub-committee recently met. Issues centered on who has authority in the classroom regarding student PPE use, what can be put in a syllabi template regarding PPE, and who approves remote teaching need clarity, especially after the widely attended Re-entry Town Hall meeting. Can student employees be employed with a plan for safety, PPE training, COVID training?

More discussion is needed on re-opening and the perceptions about face-to-face teaching and what it will look like for the University. There were some misinterpretations taken away from what was said at the recent townhall meeting and some more issues need clarifications.

Concerns about whether or not masks will be mandatory in classes is a large issue, as well as the perception of employees on qualifications needed for working from home, as some employee perceptions are that it now appears as the emphasis is returning to work.

Is teaching an either or issue, or can it be a hybrid situation? Will a hybrid be allowed? Will we make accommodations for online teaching for those who will not come to campus? Is a remote option an alternative to wearing a mask in class?

Concerns:

Reconciling the need for staff to request through HR to work remotely. Policies and University property are a question. There may be sensitivities with names being put on a spreadsheet. What are other ways to get this information?

Updates:

FFA leadership recently met with the Provost and President regarding issues including the extra work that had to be done in the spring when the University went remote.

Mandy Seiferlein is very much welcomed as a full-time Associate Provost position in the Provost's Office.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Hoisington

