

## Senate Executive Committee Meeting (11/22/2021)

Attendees: Bets McNie (Vice Chair), Matthew Fairbanks (Secretary), Leah Wyzkowski, Dinesh Pinisetty (Chair), Christine Isakson, Wil Tsai, Margot Hanson, Frank Yip, and Provost Lori Schroeder

- Minutes Review and Approval
  - Reviewed 11/12 meeting minutes and made small adjustments for accuracy. Hanson motioned to approve, Tsai seconded. *11/12 meeting minutes approved by acclamation.*
- Commandant Lombardo's Suspension and Related Subjects
  - Tsai outlined the issue and the draft letter that we are proposing to send to the Cabinet regarding Commandant Lombardo's suspension.
  - The Provost said that the issue came up in the Cabinet meeting. She noted that any investigations into the messages [that were included in Commandant Lombardo's email to all students] and their sender were imperiled by the disclosure. She also noted that the suspension is in keeping with the union contract, so she would dispute the assertion that there was no due process.
  - McNie thinks that the laser-focus of the letter should be on the lack of communication from the President. There has been no response to the disclosure to date. There are certainly questions regarding the decision to disclose and how it affects these ongoing investigations. McNie discussed the issue with Kathleen [VP of Cadet Affairs]. McNie noted that Commandant Lombardo was making a point, and the ethics of whether she should have used the student's experience to make that point are murky. She knows that the issues are complex, but she feels that the President needs to step forward and address them.
  - Pinisetty said that Lombardo was apparently not informed about the reasons for her suspension. Pinisetty also pointed out the oddity of Lombardo's name being essentially scrubbed from the campus website immediately upon her suspension. A search of our website brings up no results for her name, which is remarkable.
  - The Provost said she can't speak to the latter point, but she's been assured by HR that what they are doing is consistent with administrative and union contract procedures.
  - Tsai would tend to concur with McNie in that there are situations that are out of our control, but since the cat is out of the bag, the President needs to speak to these issues. He noted the reason he left Ex Com last time was because of damage control, again and again, that time regarding COVID and now he's feeling that again.
  - Provost stated that she shared Tsai's frustrations and that she will share some actions that are planned and that will be taken to address these continuing issues.
  - Yip started a conversation about the nature of Lombardo's communication and whether it was appropriate. He feels like there's a double standard, noting Vineeta Dhillon's email on Teal Day, which had no repercussions associated with it.
  - The Provost said that the first step is admitting that we have a problem, and she's been making that point in various campus meetings.
  - Isakson said that the communications are slow, and that there appears to be a misunderstanding of the nature of constitutionally-protected first amendment speech in some campus messaging.

- The draft letter was screen-shared. There was some editing. Hanson and Yip advocated for reverting to the more direct language in the original draft rather than the more conciliatory language Fairbanks inserted. Fairbanks reverted the language.
- McNie thinks that we're at an inflection point on these matters. We have an opportunity to lead, but we're not leading. That's greatly frustrating to her. The actions that are being taken are because of the outrage expressed over the last 72 hours. She appreciates the subtleties of the situation, but she's "hopping mad", and she's happy to sign off on the letter once her colleagues are finished wordsmithing it.
- Pinisetty – I'm concerned that we [the campus] are reactionary. My frustration is that we put 'excellence' into our strategic plan, but that requires being ahead of issues like this. There needs to be a proper plan. The leaders need to start the conversation and the faculty need to be part of it. Incidents just happen, and happen again, and people get frustrated and only then something finally occurs. We need to get away from this pattern.
- Provost noted that she was previously a Title IX coordinator. This situation feels like déjà vu to an extent. We need mechanisms that are visible and trustworthy.
- Hanson mentioned that she feels a great responsibility that she is not sure she is living up to on these matters. Letters like this one feel so fruitless, though she supports sending it. She shared that other campuses have mechanisms that are backed by professional help with a restorative justice focus. People need a process where they feel heard, respected, and safe. (Hanson shared the following in chat: "Here's an example of Bias Incident Report Team process at another campus: <https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/student-life/your-safety-resources/bias-incident-response-team-birt>")
- Isakson wants to make sure that we get the letter out today and said that she feels that Hanson and Senate Exec *are* living up to their responsibilities. Isakson noted a seeming trend that everything is under investigation, secret, and so nothing gets discussed openly and resolved. Lombardo's message may have been a reaction to this feeling.
- McNie noted that the Provost probably didn't expect that her listening session would last through Monday. McNie expressed her appreciation and said that the check was in mail.
- Yip noted that we're still waiting for the AIC policy. He wanted to contrast the speed of things like suspensions to the apparently low priority of things like the AIC policy and the murals policy (which is finally signed after 3 years).
- Provost – I feel your pain. She noted that she herself has gotten exhausted like us. She did note that the investigation procedures are by regulation.
  
- Some updates from the Provost on steps being taken: a full-time Title IX coordinator (interim) with an as-soon-as-possible search for a permanent person. Looking at having 3 deputy coordinators for Title IX from faculty, athletics, and marine programs. These people would be trained and it would come with course release (for the faculty member). Grand River Solutions consultancy would be employed to help us sort through these issues as we're clearly having issues with solving our problems internally.
- Other proposed measures: Expansion of confidential advocate (part-time to full-time). Expand to 2.5 FTE in counseling. Space on campus for two groups – women's center and an LGBTQ space. Plus the teach-in day which she wants our help with.
- Hanson – perhaps a space for students of color as well. On the Title IX deputies – perhaps someone from housing would be a good idea.
- Provost – good suggestions, thank you.

- Dinesh brought up the email on the teach-in day. 1/19 for the day? Confirmed. At least for the time being.
- Some discussion of what to call the teach-in day.
- Open Floor
  - Wyzykowski said there's a new draft of the grooming standards document. The Provost said that the draft would be shared more widely soon (i.e. with Senate Exec, the CLC, etc.) after input from the Gender Equity Committee. Yip expressed his frustration that the policy did not go through this process for broad input from campus groups in the first place.
  - Isakson – speaking of the Gender Equity Committee, we need to consider what happens to the committee and whether it becomes a standing committee.
  - Pinisetty noted that we don't want to duplicate committee names, and the by-laws would have to be amended and approved by the President if we establish a new standing committee.
  - Hanson suggested that an ad hoc committee to guide the process would be a good idea with perhaps the goal of having something in place for next fall.
  - A recent alumni association meeting was attended by McNie, Tamara Burbach, and Isakson. McNie said that we ought to consider having a more formal relationship with the alumni association. It would help solve some problems, and we should discuss in a future meeting.
  - Fairbanks brought up the needed IRB election. McNie said it would start running next Monday.
  - Pinisetty – please remember that the ARC reviews are available. We need as many faculty as possible to complete them.
  - Yip said that the external Title IX investigator is looking to expand her hours to accommodate students and others who might want to speak with her. The Provost mentioned that she is planning to speak with her [the Title IX investigator] later today. Yip strongly urged that the investigator be given the extra time - students really need someone to talk to right now about these issues.
  - *Happy Thanksgiving!*
- Meeting Adjourned