

Senate Executive Committee Meeting (12/9/2021)

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

Guests: Rachel Neuharth (alum), Maggie Williams (alum)

- Senate Chair Updates
 - Pinisetty asked about the Day of Dialogue and whether the Provost had any updates.
 - Provost said that there will be a small group headed by Michele van Hoeck that is coordinating it. Other members include Jon Fischer and Aparna Sinha.
 - There was some discussion on the timing of the day. The date is not confirmed as yet. Tentatively, it will be postponed from 1/19 to either 2/1 or 2/2.

 - Provost has another update from VP of Cadet Affairs Kathleen McMahon – BIT/CARE teams do in fact exist and McMahon was confused by feedback that they didn't exist or weren't effective. Yip noted that his point to McMahon was that the TNG consultants and other groups hadn't noticed the BIT/CARE teams' existence and/or didn't think they were effective.
 - Provost noted that these teams generally do work that is confidential – students in general would likely not even know that the BIT/CARE teams are doing their work, and thus might not know whether or not they're doing good work.
 - Some more discussion of this. Yip mentioned his conversation with the President who cited BIT/CARE as a response to the 2018 survey data. He views this as insufficient, and the BIT/CARE teams appear to have existed in some form prior to 2018.

 - Hanson talked with Angeli Acosta about soliciting faculty collaborators on a health-related grant (education and programming on sexual assault and harassment on campus). Pinisetty said that he would send out a call later today.
 - Hanson also requested that the Senate Exec email address be placed prominently on the campus website.

- Alumni Visitors
 - Neuharth and Williams are from the Seattle area and leaders in the alumni association for Cal Maritime. They do a lot for the school – fundraising, events, etc.
 - Neuharth is the president of the alumni association in the Puget Sound area.
 - Williams described her experience post-Cal Maritime and her association with the alumni association. She has recently refused to donate to the Academy due the lack of a strong statement and policy against sexual harassment and assault.
 - Neuharth noted the faculty letter (penned by Aparna Sinha and signed by many faculty) that she thought hit the mark on these issues. She contrasted that to statements from administration, which she felt missed the mark.
 - An alumni dinner that Neuharth hosted revealed that all the women present except for one had experienced assault, discrimination, or harassment while at the University.

- She noted that students often do not know what support structures, etc. are available.
 - Describe her experience in getting the ‘safe sex’ talk at the University. A lot of ‘be careful’ kind of stuff. She did not understand why men and women were separate and why men weren’t in the room to hear and learn about these things.
 - Neuharth also cited examples from her time at Cal Maritime where students were tasked with doing things related to mental health that should clearly be handled by trained staff.
 - She is encouraged that there is now some movement on these issues, but there is much more to be done.
 - She noted that faculty have a hands-on and more direct relationship with students. We have an opportunity to confront bigotry, sexism, etc in our classrooms. She realizes that the maritime academies and industry are old-school, but that’s changing, and we need to be sure that behavior, perhaps learned on commercial cruise, does not come back to campus.
 - She commented that she thinks we [the University] have an opportunity to be world-class, but we’re not there right now.
 - She continued, noting that the Title IX process seems broken. She cited a specific example that illustrated how broken the process is.
 - Neuharth concluded by saying that this has been going on for decades. Enough is enough.
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- All present thanked Neuharth for her presentation and her candor.
 - Provost Schroeder said she agreed with much of what Neuharth had to say. She and McMahon (VP of Cadet Affairs) are new here and clearly things have been going wrong for many years. It will take a whole group effort, and we all are interested in building something better.
 - McNie noted that the communications channel between alumni and the University is very narrow. Often just President [of the University] to President [of the alumni association]. We need better communication from across the campus community. Thinks this is an important step in improving that situation.
 - Maggie Williams asked whether there was a point person on these efforts. Understands that it’s a group effort, but the most recent letter is from McMahon, Griswold, Taliaferro, but no President Cropper or Vineeta Dhillon (Title IX coordinator). Someone needs to lead this effort. Someone needs to be looking back something like 10 years to try to ascertain why these things that are clearly happening aren’t being reported. Why no reports from campus or city police? We can brainstorm all we want, but we need data to direct our efforts. There’s campus issues, ship issues, commercial cruises, and also with recent graduates. She feels we have a need to help those recent graduates with the discrimination they face.
 - Williams elaborated on her suggestion of an investigation into the past – a lot of interviews with faculty, students, alumni – and those people need to be *believed*, and that data needs to be tabulated and *used*.
 - Neuharth cited an example of a student who reported an incident to Title IX and that student was required to *not attend class* for a significant period of time. This is severely detrimental to the student’s education and detrimental to the trust in Title IX.
 - Neuharth also spoke with Vineeta Dhillon about alumni retroactively reporting their experiences. Neuharth recalled that Dhillon said that was possible, but that support in terms of investigations would be less because they aren’t current students.

- Provost in chat: “The sorts of data collection you are talking about, Maggie, should be collected by a well-functioning TIX [Title IX] officer. We are moving to expand the number of TIX-trained people on campus who will work in coordination with the main TIX Coordinator.” Also, “And a well-functioning TIX Office also is meant to look at places where there are patterns of SA [sexual assault] and SH [sexual harassment] and be proactive rather than always REACTIVE.”
 - Provost confirmed that retroactive reports are permitted. The idea of Title IX is to determine whether there is a continuing harm or possible harm to students and the campus. Noted that an incident between a faculty member and an alum would be cause for investigation, because the faculty was still a member the campus community. Student to student incidents, if the students had already graduated, would not be actionable to a Title IX office in terms of an active investigation, though the data would be important.
 - Some more discussion of the data and the reporting of it. Provost noted her support of clear reporting of the data and thinks we need to improve things on that front.
 - Yip spoke to the idea of bringing alumni to speak to students, and he noted the need to confront these issues, otherwise they will continue.
 - Provost, speaking to an issue that came up previously, said that the President is supportive of these efforts, but the administration felt that the letter was better sent from those individuals (McMahon, Griswold, etc.)
 - Yip – Rachel, who do you need to hear from to be sure that something will be done?
 - Neuharth – it needs to come from the top. She noted her experience in dealing with some people brought in by the President in administration, and that she does not understand how they are helping this institution. She feels that President Cropper has missed the mark in many communications. She understands he has a vision for campus, but that he’s not putting people in place that can help the campus navigate these changes.
 - Neuharth and Williams departed.
- Discussion of Possible No Confidence Motion
 - Chair Steffel from ASCSU gave Tsai some information on her campus’ experience with a vote of no confidence.
 - There would be a group of Senators (either Senate Exec or other Senators) put together to discuss the issue and if they agreed, they would draft a resolution to bring to the Senate.
 - The resolution would address the Board of Trustees, and so the draft would have be “air-tight” and very well explained given the Board’s unfamiliarity with Cal Maritime.
 - The resolution would go through the usual Senate process and then probably to the whole faculty for a vote.
 - Last such vote was at CSU - San Bernardino. The President is still there, but a lot of changes were made in admin and the entire Senate Exec over there resigned. Lots of repercussions.
 - Tsai noted that this is a one-time thing and made an apt analogy to building a nuclear missile.
 - Tsai recommended following the described protocol since it comes from a campus where they’ve done it before.
 - Pinisetty suggested an emergency, Senators only, meeting rather than discussing this in an open forum.

- Hanson noted that faculty have been asking her about the prospect of a vote of no confidence. Important to make sure faculty are aware of the process going forward.
 - Isakson thought inviting ASCSU folks to the meeting would be a good idea. To both a Senate only meeting and the more public one would be her suggestion.
 - Fairbanks – the topic would be on the agenda, which is public whether or not the meeting is Senators only.
 - Tsai agreed the ASCSU folks should attend.
 - Yip agreed as well (with Tsai and Fairbanks) and the agenda could detail that the discussion would consider all options.
 - Hanson brought up the Sharepoint doc that Tsai and her started on the issue.

 - Hanson also announced her departure at the end of the calendar year, which was met with both sadness and an appreciation for Hanson’s service to the University.

 - McNie noted that we need to be very strategic. We need to consider that the vote might not be approved, which would essentially ‘defang’ the Senate. We need to think hard about alternate methods of approaching and solving these problems. We need to think about the consequences if this doesn’t move forward and get approved.
- Meeting Adjourned