



## College of Engineering and Computing

### Faculty Council Meeting

December 8, 2020

**Committee members in attendance (Zoom):** Joshua Hutcheson (BME), Trina Fletcher (SUCCEED, joined at 4pm), Vladimir Pozdin (ECE), Jessica Ramella-Roman (BME), Mohamed El-Zomor (MSCIS), Ibrahim Tansel (MME), Cheng-Xian Lin (MME), Albert Gan (CEE), Xia Jin (CEE), Alexandra Strong (SUCCEED), Ning Xie (SCIS, left meeting at 4pm), Masoud Sadjadi (SCIS)

Meeting called to order at 3:40pm by Jessica Ramella-Roman

#### 1. Agenda approved by unanimous vote.

#### 2. Discussion on campus repopulation.

Jessica Ramella-Roman attended a recent meeting with the CEC administration regarding campus repopulation. Upper administration stated that repopulation is a priority with 50% of staff on campus beginning in the Spring. The specific requirements for faculty were less clear. It was also not clear how the sharp increases in new cases may change plans. Much of the conversation also centered around metrics and analyzing differences across departments to identify specific areas that we can target to improve the four-year graduate rates.

#### 3. Discussion on faculty courtesy appointment criteria.

The goal is to have a consistent College-wide guidelines and approval procedure; however, many of the details regarding expectations for courtesy appointments should be left to the individual units. The final approval may come from the Dean. The FCOG discussed the Biomedical Engineering Courtesy Appointment as an example of the process of approval, privileges, and expected contributions. Specific topics that we should discuss as we develop the CEC guideline: 1) should Graduate Faculty status be considered/conferred by the appointment? 2) how similar must the approval processes be across the department? 3) Who can nominate candidates? Can individuals self-nominate across departments (this seems like an issue that should be covered in the CEC guidelines)? 4) how similar should expected contributions be across departments? Should we have a minimum expectation at the CEC level.

It was mentioned that Courtesy Appointments have been used in the past to fulfill J1 visa requirements. We may need to include wording about this in the CEC guidelines. FCOG members proposed that the CEC guidelines remain vague on details and establish baseline procedures. Perhaps we could make a list of expected contributions and state that Courtesy Faculty must contribute to at least one, but allow individual units to raise these expectations. The guidelines could mandate that each department must develop a list of privileges, requirements/expectations, an approval process, and a requirement that the final approval comes from the Dean.

#### **4. Dean Volakis joined the Faculty Council meeting at 4:15pm.**

Dean mentioned that joint and courtesy appointments are important for rankings. Specifically, joint appointments are important to show increased funding in each department.

Dean said that the most recent COMPASS meeting centered on reputation. Previous meetings had focused on pre-eminent programs. This meeting focused more on the colleges and individual units. PhD growth is critical to rankings, and reputation helps in recruitment of these students. Postdocs do not count toward rankings. Only 8% of our research funding is currently being used to support RAs. The Dean wants this to increase. At his previous university, ~50% was used for graduate students. The College is putting up \$300k to help recruit and provide positions to PhD students. This funding should be used to support faculty who have previous records of research funding and/or plans to sustain a research program.

The graduation rates were also a major point of discussion. The president wants to tout graduate rates in comparison to other state universities to lobby for increased funding. He has come up with a challenge for CEC: 52% 4-year grad rate. We just completed a proposal to do this. Construction management has greatly improved (0% to ~20%). BME, SCIS, and ECE have done very well > 40%. Please support chairs in this effort to continue improvement.

On a per faculty basis, the Dean feels that we're very competitive. We're averaging \$280k per faculty for research funding. The dean presented slides comparing us on a per faculty basis between us and UT Dallas College of Engineering (ranked #35), which is comparable to us in size. Mark Weiss helped do the comparison. The comparison showed they had 60% more faculty than us and double the number of students in engineering. On a per faculty basis, our metrics were comparable. The only difference was the number of faculty and students. The question from leadership became: how do you grow into those numbers? We cannot do this on the college level. We need University support. Overall, they agreed with what we need. A follow-up caucus with the trustees recommended addition of new faculty (100). Request for CEC to have specific programs and a target to make top 50 in rankings.

CEC will look at faculty-to-student ratios in determining faculty lines and hiring decisions. The College wants to make strategic investments in growing research areas of strength. Also, the College will look at how programs compare across universities and target areas where we may be competitive.

Question from FCOG member: have we seen any declines in enrollment due to COVID?

Answer: There have been some declines in undergrad admissions and enrollment, but this has not been a major problem at FIU. Biggest problem for other schools is drop off in enrollment of out-of-state and international students.

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Meeting closed at 5:00 PM