

Meeting Minutes
Executive Committee of the AFSE
September 4, 2020
12:00pm via Zoom

Present: Samantha Brunhaver, Chris Buneo, Dianne Hansford (Secretary), Marcus Herrmann (chair), Rosa Krajmalnik-Brown, Doug Montgomery, Jit Muthuswamy, George Pan, Rod Roscoe, Andreas Spanias, Yalin Wang
Absent: Tony Lamanna, Sefaattin Tongay
Guest: Kyle Squires

1. **Approval of August 2020 EC Minutes.** August Minutes unanimously approved by the EC.

2. **Impact of COVID-19 on Fall 2020 and beyond update**

A news story regarding a faculty member asking his students to sit at the front of the class with no regard for social distancing was discussed. The students in that class were concerned. ASU has a community of care strategy that includes wearing masks and social distancing, but the other part of that is caring for one another, supporting one another, and being accommodating. What happened shows a total lack of empathy for students' concerns and the situations they are going through. It also violates university policy. The Dean's office and other administration levels are dealing with this faculty member. Please share with your faculty that this is the time to think broadly. As you talk with colleagues, you should guide the conversation that way – what we do in the classroom needs to be thought through more broadly than we ever have. Faculty need to be reminded that our actions and our words and what we post on social media get noticed. The recent event resulted in many negative emails from around the world.

All ASU employees will receive periodic email updates on the current state of the COVID management strategy. It will give everyone a sense of where things are. There are a lot of infections throughout the student body. The university moves through the various operation/procedure levels as determined by the impact of the COVID virus. For example, there are 5 levels when it comes to housing and the current level is 3. The levels translate to the amount of space between students. If infections continue to grow there will be additional steps. It's incredibly contagious. Beyond that we need to continue to use masks, keep our hands clean, and keep our distance.

Are there actions or levels for the classroom? No not yet. There could be reductions of staff on campus if needed.

Is there any feedback on stress among students? Is there a level of disinterest or discouragement? If the value of being in college becomes less apparent to the students, they won't come back in the spring and some may not come back ever. Students are coming to class, but it's all the things around class, like football, that makes school appealing and that is why some students are coming to ASU.

Approximately two-thirds of classes are being taught with an in-person SYNC component. Fulton has been trying to make sure lower division had some face-to-face instruction. If no students come to class, does the faculty member still have to come to class? Kyle: yes, because we think that later students might come to class.

Set-up time in classrooms and labs is becoming an issue. More steps are necessary to set things up. When things go wrong, you lose a lot of class time. The variety of problems is surprising – speakers do not work or there can be video problems; those things add up. Moving forward, for this to be a long-term viable thing, there might be some infrastructure issues that could be improved. For example, lectern computers could be more reliable. Clarifications in messaging should be made to make sure people know the rules. Classes are supposed to meet at scheduled times.

We need to clarify student discipline processes. We have Community of Care rules/policies. In the news, things get built up and misrepresented. It appears that universities are threatening suspension – obey or else. When in fact, there is a whole process where students are warned and there is dialog. Suspension should not be the first step.

K-12 issues: There hasn't been anything definitive reported to deans on K-12.

Testing protocol: In terms of the testing protocol, there continues to be required and/or random testing. An average of 7% will be selected to randomly test. No updated information has been communicated on that either, so the assumption is that will continue. Due to the asymptomatic nature of COVID, broad testing is necessary. The amount of testing might vary depending on the spread. The COVID tests should be viewed similarly to the need to wear a mask: we are doing it for our colleagues as much as for ourselves. Some of those being randomly tested might not otherwise go. Contact tracing – once a person has been diagnosed there is a protocol to follow. It would be great if testing is a strategy, it's so easy to do. We'll keep advancing that idea. Depending on circumstances it may not be a requirement.

- 3. Invited speakers in Zoom environment – testing plan.** Should we consider moving the Dean's Lecture Series to a zoom environment? What's the testing plan? Are any units doing brown bag sessions? SSEBE offers an environmental quality series by Zoom, but there is no interaction, such as lab visits or lunch, just the seminar. BME has a seminar series with individual meetings with the speakers and faculty -- not sure about students. An ECEE center held their industry advisory board meeting virtually which was the best attended meeting ever because it was virtual. Doug in CIDSE is running a MOOC that started this summer with about 4K participants, which includes a once a month "fireside chat" modelled after FDR's chats from the Depression and WWII eras. Questions come in and invited guests (real authorities) participate by Zoom.

The dean's lecture will be in the spring. How should we proceed with this? One idea would be to pilot some significant lectures this fall. Steal the idea of the fireside chat. Imagine 1-2 forums built around an audience. One could be for our grad students with an opportunity to ask questions to create engagement for students. We should run a pilot in the fall with some significant speaker. Zoom can create unique opportunities and allow for greater attendance.

There is a link for the list of potential speakers. ([Google Doc link](#)) Suggestions for significant speakers: Victoria Coleman, new head of DARPA; someone in quantum computing would be good; Big Data is something that is current and impacts everything; AI/Big Data; someone who has thought about or could speak to how in this climate of social justice what it means. Katina Michael was mentioned as someone who could provide names. Andreas has a contact who might be able to provide some names. EC members should continue thinking about names to consider for the lecture series.

ACTION ITEMS:

EC will develop a testing plan for converting the lecture series to Zoom during fall semester
EC members will continue to suggest individuals as Dean's Lecture speakers for spring semester
Doug Montgomery will share the links to the fireside chats with the EC

4. **Other items from EC Members.** This group should continue to bring any items mentioned by their faculty to the attention of the EC.

Dean's Dissertation Award nominations are coming in. Marcus will distribute assignments next week.

Next meeting:

October 2, 2020, 12:00 pm in Zoom