

Faculty Senate Minutes #528
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Monday, September 27, 2021

1:40 PM

Zoom

Present (32): Alex Alexandrou, Chevy Alford, Elton Beckett, Ned Benton, Mohamed Ben Zid, Lissette Delgado-Cruzata, Jonathan Epstein, Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Heath Grant, John Gutierrez, Maki Habermeld, Jay Hamilton, Marta-Laura Haynes, Christopher Herrmann, Veronica Johnson, Karen Kaplowitz, Catherine Kemp, Erica King-Toler, Yuk-Ting (Joyce) Lau, Vicente Lecuna, Anru Lee, Alexander Long, Samantha Majic, Mickey Melendez, Patrick Raftery, Maureen Richards, Stephen Russell, Francis Sheehan, Gregory Sheppard, Charles Stone, Adam Wandt, Violet Yu

Absent (6): Andrea Balis, David Brotherton, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Gerald Markowitz, Hyunhee Park, Fritz Umbach

Invited Guests: Associate Provost Allison Pease, Director of JJ Online Judith Cahn

Agenda

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Announcements**
- 3. Adoption of Minutes #527 of the September 14, 2021, meeting**
- 4. Committee on Racial Justice and Inclusion: Statement on the Use of Student Evaluation of POC Faculty: for discussion and proposed adoption by the Faculty Senate**
- 5. Guests: Allison Pease and Judy Cahn, concerning Online Instruction**
- 6. Senate Discussion of Online Instruction and Possible Changes to the Policy**
- 7. New business**

1. Adoption of the Agenda. Approved.

2. Announcements

Provost Li has informed chairs of the new full-time lines he has allocated to their departments. President Benton has asked chairs who have received lines to let him know so that he may report to the Senate. Thus far: CS & HS=1; ECO=1; LPS=2; MLL=1; PAD=1; POLI SCI=1; PSYCH=1.

3. Adoption of Minutes #527 of the September 14, 2021, meeting. Approved.

4. Committee on Racial Justice and Inclusion: Statement on the Use of Student Evaluation of POC Faculty: for discussion and proposed adoption by the Faculty Senate

Senator Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, chair of the Faculty Senate's Committee on Racial Justice & Inclusion, explained that the reason the use of the Student Evaluation of Faculty [SEOF] in the

personnel process and its bias against faculty of color and LGBTQ faculty is high on the agenda of her committee is because reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions will soon begin. The committee is recommending that the use of SEOF results be minimized because of the bias against FOC, especially women of color, and especially when they teach courses about race, combined with the disparate impacts of COVID, which is an additional stressor on students. The committee will be meeting with the Council of Chairs on this. They have already met with the College's Committee on Student Evaluation of the Faculty. Senator Gordon-Nembhard also explained that her committee is not necessarily seeking the Senate's endorsement of its statement; if the Senate were to endorse it, the committee would be very pleased. But the importance of the statement is that it lead to a discussion of the issue at the Senate and, it is to be hoped, elsewhere at the college.

VP Kaplowitz explained that we cannot ask that the SEOF not be used because in 1975 the CUNY Board of Trustees adopted a policy mandating each college develop a SEOF instrument and use the results in its personnel process. She said she endorses the committee's excellent statement but suggested that we consider doing the following: strengthen the first paragraph of the statement, the recommendation to minimize the use of the SEOF results, and let that be what is put up for a vote and, if that is approved, then the rest of the document be attached to the resolution as documentation.

Senator Violet Yu explained she is on the SEOF Committee and spoke of the excellent meeting between that committee and the Racial Justice & Inclusion Committee, which extended their understanding of the bias. Professor Keith Markus, the chair of the SEOF Committee, provided their reply last night. Senator Lissette Delgado-Cruzata said they did receive the response last night and are updating their document accordingly. Their only concern is that the personnel process is beginning. President Benton said there will still be time if we wait until our next Senate meeting. Even at the department level, the P process hasn't begun, but we must do something within two weeks.

Senator Francis Sheehan said we can't say the SEOF results shouldn't be used because, as Karen has explained, its use is a CUNY mandate. The research shows there is no perfect instrument. And we don't want students to not have input. No matter what we do, an instrument won't solve the problem. The only solution is to use the results in context. And he doesn't want the message that goes to the students be that the instrument is tremendously flawed; it is still a document in our file. Accordingly, he praised the language of the first paragraph, particularly the recommendation that those involved in the personnel process "give [SEOF results] the least possible use."

5. Guests: Associate Provost Allison Pease and Director of John Jay Online Judy Cahn, concerning Online Instruction

Associate Provost Allison Pease provided the context to the Excellence Online initiative: John Jay has been given lots of federal stimulus monies which we must spend within 2 years; the money must be spent on projects that provide long-term value or make up past needs,

including infrastructure. One project is the Online Excellence project. Before the pandemic, 22% of JJ's courses were offered online, including fully-online graduate programs as well as many undergraduate online courses. 75% of all our students took at least one online course and 25% took one to four courses online. The pandemic accelerated this. Many, many faculty have been trained to teach online and, she said, more students are expected than ever to take online courses. The goal is to improve quality at the undergraduate level. Online graduate courses were designed intentionally, but undergraduate courses have not been designed intentionally. They plan to look at high-enrollment courses and it is these for which faculty will create development (dev) shells, that is, a copy of an online course. Faculty can copy as much as they want; they can modify the courses in any way they want. They have selected the 120 most enrolled courses because that's what they think they will be able to develop in two years for high-enrollment courses. They've met with every chair and most were enthusiastic although one chair said their department is not ready. Departments have already selected professors to work on these courses. The expected start date is in January. The goal is to create quality online undergraduate courses. Associate Provost Pease said we will be an in-person campus but we expect students to each take one to two online courses. She has found that when students add online courses, they are more likely to graduate. She wants to ensure that online courses are easily navigable and of high quality.

Director Cahn said the impetus is to give consistency to students. It is entirely up to each department and to the faculty. These dev shells can be used for online courses, for hybrid courses, and to enhance in-person courses.

Senator Stephen Russel asked how this initiative connects with what CUNY is calling for in the spring, which is 70% courses in person and 30% online. AP Pease said what she and Judy are talking about is an entirely John Jay initiative. CUNY's request that all campuses be 70% in person and 30% online has nothing to do with this. She added that she doesn't think 70%/30% is a good or realistic match for John Jay; rather, she thinks we should have a higher online percentage but that is not up to us.

Director Cahn explained these are model courses. Whether they used for hybrid or online courses is up to each faculty member, to each department, to each department chair.

President Benton said he found the FAQ that Allison had just sent to us reassuring because it shows that this is not a takeover. But two areas of concern have been expressed to him by various faculty: the first is the question of 8-week semesters versus 16-week semesters. He asked if there is going to be a semestral structure. The second concern is that if one faculty member creates the dev shell but 15 faculty members teach the course, the course may be perfect for the developer but not for the others.

Director Cahn said undergraduate courses are 15 weeks long; but, because the structure is modular, the courses can be made shorter. President Benton asked whether they would you permit a change to a longer semester on the graduate level. Director Cahn said that is a separate project. President Benton asked initiative is for only undergraduate courses and not

for graduate courses. Director Cahn said this initiative is for only undergraduate courses because we need to raise the quality of these courses.

Director Cahn said that, in response to the second concern Ned raised, the department chair is the one who decides which faculty member develops the dev shell; we want best practices; faculty members who then use the shell can change the content as well as the assignments.

Senator Adam Wandt noted that he has had lots of experience with online education and was a faculty fellow with John Jay Online. He is confident in Judy and her team developing this and is certain there will be no boxing any instructor in. It will be a pick and choose modular format and the department and faculty will have the ultimate say. Focusing CARES monies on improving undergraduate online education, which conforms with the way students learn today, gives him confidence. He is in support of this.

Senator Sheehan noted that the FAQ states that the faculty member identified to develop the course and who receives the \$4,500 stipend has right of first refusal to edit/modify the course for an additional \$1,500. He asked whether this means the person teaching the course can't edit or modify the course. Director Cahn answered no; this refers to the original model course from which it is copied.

Senator John Gutiérrez noted our guests said they are coming at this from a student perspective. John Jay is a Hispanic-serving institution. National data for K-12 show Latino families are disadvantaged by the move to online education; there is nothing in the FAQ that addresses this issue. He asked how the program plans to deal with the needs of our Latinx students. Director Cahn said when working with a faculty member we have to be sensitive to student learning; what we understand is if students have different experiences with each modality it makes learning harder for them. The analogy for students who have to take courses using different learning management systems during the same semester is faculty who have to teach 4 courses, one each in Blackboard, Canvas, Zoom, and face-to-face during the same semester.

AP Pease said 44% of our undergraduates are Hispanic. She noted that Senator Gutierrez's department is doing a longitudinal study as to what works for our Hispanic students. We don't know what works. She said she's eager to learn. There are no studies about Hispanic students in higher education. Our Hispanic students do less well online, 4% less well. In other words, if 15% of online students fail, then it's a 19% failure rate for our Hispanic students. Senator Gutierrez said he agrees and is not sure how to define the problem but some recognition is needed that this is a unique challenge. The K-12 data show that the last 2 years have been just terrible for Latino communities in terms of online learning, he said. AP Pease said we have data from last year about which students drop out: Blacks dropped out at a high rate and Hispanic males dropped out at high rate (as is usually the case no matter the modality).

President Benton asked whether these courses must be asynchronous? Is Zoom appropriate for part of a class? He asked their opinion about hyflex?

Director Cahn said she does not support the hyflex classroom and had strongly urged Allison and Yi Li to not participate in the hyflex project because it forces the professor to the front of the classroom to lecture and, additionally, another person is needed to monitor and yet a third person is needed for the mics. As for the modality, these are asynchronous courses but hybrid can be added. Asked again about Zoom, she said Zoom can be added to meetings and that DoIT supports Zoom as well as Blackboard Collaborate.

Senator Elton Beckett asked whether after the pandemic we are going to teach fully synchronous classes? If we're talking about online instruction, asynchronous courses do not work in his field. VP Pease said we haven't discussed this in terms of policy, adding that she doesn't have a point of view.

Senator Jessica Gordon-Nembhard said John Jay students do much better with synchronous courses. VP Kaplowitz said that is her experience. Senator Beckett strongly agreed. Others concurred.

6. Senate Discussion of Online Instruction and Possible Changes to the May 2013 College Council Policy on Online Instruction

President Benton suggested that the Senate develop a commentary or set of recommendations and invited comments on this new initiative.

Senator Violet Yu said she had developed a course with JJ Online and that everyone was very helpful and she had learned a lot. They were very eager to introduce her to new technologies. The problem is that not everyone has a personal computer, not everyone has personal technical support. She recalled that if you chose to use only one software package, you were made feel as if you were being lazy. Her recommendation is that the focus should be on content and not on burdening students with technology. Three software packages should not be needed for one course.

Senator Stephen Russell said his concern is that there will come a moment when certain practices are identified as the best practices and we won't be permitted to teach anything else. He agreed with Jessica, Elton, and Karen about the better success of our students with synchronous courses.

Senator Gordon-Nembhard said she is troubled that the model courses being created are asynchronous. Her department has an informal policy that our students need synchronous courses. She asked whether there couldn't be some model synchronous courses. She urged that we press the point that synchronous courses are better for our students. We lose African and Hispanic students with asynchronous courses; we lose students from marginalized populations, she said.

Senator Adam Wandt said the research shows that hybrid is best; modules need to be built for hybrid course delivery. Also, the department curriculum committees must be consulted so a course is not a vision of one professor but of the department as a whole. Additionally, he said, he is afraid that one day our academic freedom will evaporate, that our ability to have professors deliver courses and programs we each think best for our discipline and our students will disappear.

Senator Lissette Delgado-Cruzata said the push to be asynchronous is not good. This initiative is a huge investment for John Jay. A large amount of the money will be spent on this. We are talking 120 courses at \$4,500 each course. She asked whether this is the best use of the funds and the best way to support our students, and our minority students.

Senator Francis Sheehan said this was an invaluable meeting. The Sciences Department had been asked to create these course templates but, despite multiple requests for information, couldn't get an answer as to whether they are to be asynchronous or synchronous. His department strongly supports synchronous instead of asynchronous online instruction. It is now clear to him that creating templates for asynchronous courses is what is being pushed. Regarding requiring students to download multiple "free" software programs for a course, he recalled learning from Jay Hamilton that any software offered as free is never free: the free programs capture the students' data for marketing and other purposes.

Senator Erica King-Toler questioned whether there would be adequate tech support for students from DoIT for classes that meet at 6pm or later.

President Benton said the executive committee would write a draft statement for consideration by the Senate at our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.

Provided by Karen Kaplowitz