



CU Denver Faculty Assembly -- Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2024

Zoom

Attendees: Sasha Breger Bush, Vivian Shyu, Dennis DeBay, Colleen Donnelly, Joanne Addison, Florian Pfender, Anthony Villano, Bailey Wallace, Bud Talbot, Joan Bihun, Cristina Gillanders, Manish Shirgaokar, Marta Maron, Matt Shea, Maryam Darbeheshti, Tom Beck, Sarah Fields, Wendy Bolyard, Erin Hackel, Ester de Jong, Fernando Mancilla-David, Jeffrey Schrader, Rachel Stein, Ilkyeun Ra, Rashmi Gangamma, Sarah Hagelin, Thorsten Spehn, Jamie Hodgkins, Linda Fried, Larry Erbert, Karen Sobel, Kelly See, Shuyang Peng, Jim Lopresti, Jody Beck, Jose Ibarra, Renee Wilkins Clark, Provost Constancio Nakuma, AVC Turan Kayaoglu, AVC Beth Myers, AVC Michael Kocet, AVC Cary Weatherford, AVC Elizabeth Schrock, Chris Puckett, Dan Maxey

Secretary's Update (Dennis DeBay):

- FA Awards: Encouraged FA to nominate deserving individuals for this award. Traditionally, nominations are discussed with EXCOM in March and then brought forward to the full assembly for a vote. Due to the absence of EXCOM this March, nominations will continue to be accepted, and discussions will take place at the April EXCOM meeting.
- FA Elections for Vice Chair and Secretary: Nominations are now open for both positions. An email was sent out, and a nomination form is also available on the FA website. The vote for these positions will take place at the May full assembly meeting. Requesting nominations be submitted two weeks prior to the election, along with a short CV, bio, and a 250-word candidate statement.

Chair's Update (Sasha Breger Bush; Guest: Special Assistant and Counsel Chris Puckett):

- Approve minutes (March 5th, 2024)
- Motion was made to Approve, motion was seconded; Poll posted
 - Results for March 5th, 2024, Minutes: approved by a majority
- Discussion on FCQs: FA is exploring issues related to FCQs through two avenues. First, the Provost's Office is sponsoring a summer working group for faculty to develop recommendations on the FCQ process. Dennis D. and Vivian S. are working on the charge for this working group. The charge will be reviewed by EXCOM and then presented to the larger community. The goal is to promote equity in the evaluation process. Need 6-7 additional people for this group; please let Dennis or Vivian know if you are interested. Second, concerns have been raised regarding the process of FCQ data mining and subsequent actions by the Office of Equity at Denver. Specifically, there are concerns related to Article 5 "Rights of Faculty." Discussions and compromises are ongoing with Chris Puckett to address these concerns.
- Chris P. explained how qualitative comments are gathered in Boulder and processed through an algorithm, resulting in generated "hits." These hits are then reviewed by the data review office in Boulder before being forwarded to the Office of Equity in Denver. The Office of Equity then issues a letter to the faculty members stating their concern. However, Chris noted that letters have not been distributed since Fall 2021.
- Chris P. explained that this process originally started at the request of the deans. Boulder office personnel believe that because they receive these reports, they are then obligated to review and

report them. However, there is disagreement regarding whether this data collection constitutes a legal process.

- Chris P. stated that according to APS 1009, the representative body should assess and deliberate on whether a question is suitable for FCQs. Any qualitative question must undergo an evaluation process. When FCQs are administered, students are directed to the appropriate channels for complaints. Students are told not to include them on the questionnaire. However, once complaints are received, the university is obligated to report them.
- Jeff S. also stated that according to Appendix A of CU APS 1009, “As provided in section III.A, the voting faculty of each primary unit shall determine the goals and components for evaluating teaching in the unit.” Students do not have authority to determine the components of evaluating teaching in the unit.
- Sasha B. stated that FA had notified the provost of faculty rights being violated, and asked for a temporary suspension of this process until a new process was deemed legal and appropriate. Sasha also expressed concern about the lack of policies or documentation available online regarding this issue/process. The absence of transparent information has caused faculty to question the secrecy surrounding the FCQs.
- Joanne A. provided historical context. LETTS traditionally oversaw FCQs and received feedback from the process. Therefore, there should be no need for a new process. Also, the retention of omnibus questions in the past was solely because administrators did not align with the faculty's desires to remove them. This discrepancy highlights an issue where faculty proposals are not being adhered to by the administration, which is of great concern to faculty members. Additionally, there's concern that researchers would not report biases if identified while using FCQs.
- Chris P. proposed a compromise regarding the process for handling reports. Previously, the process involved receiving reports from Boulder and internally processing those. Any issues related to discrimination, retaliation, or harassment were carefully reviewed. A preliminary inquiry was conducted to determine if the allegations fell under CU Denver's policies and warranted a response. If the matter was within CU Denver's authority, the outreach process was initiated. The person making the allegations was contacted before reaching out to the faculty member or their chair. This process involved offering to meet with the individual to address their concerns, either directly or through the Equity Office. Meetings and emails were the preferred mode of communication, rather than formal letters. Under the proposed compromise, instead of directly contacting the faculty member, outreach would now be directed to their chair to determine if they wished to pursue further action against the faculty member.
- Joanne A. expressed concerns about the process of addressing anonymous FCQ comments directly with the chair. She emphasized the importance of providing faculty members with the opportunity to defend themselves and clear their name. Joanne highlighted the perceived fundamental unfairness of the current approach. Additionally, she noted that evaluations of staff and administrators are not subject to the same data mining as FCQ comments.

Graduate School Updates (Provost Nakuma, AVC Myers, AVC Kocet):

- Provost Nakuma outlined the recent changes in graduate education support. He explained that the decision to dissolve the Graduate School was motivated by several factors, including the excessive cost of sustaining the entity and the dissatisfaction with services provided. Additionally, there was significant confusion arising from conflicting information from the Graduate School and Graduate

Program Leaders. As a result, all graduate support services were brought in-house at CU Denver. This includes responsibilities such as establishing graduate standards, ensuring quality, and providing administrative and student support.

- Provost Nakuma also clarified the roles of schools/colleges and primary units in graduate education programming. He emphasized the importance of faculty involvement and the necessity of adhering to policies and guidelines to maintain quality and consistency in graduate education.
- The Graduate Council includes graduate faculty representatives from all schools/colleges tasked with advising the provost on the development, review, and adoption of policy standards and other facets of graduate education. Provost stated that the Graduate Council also existed while the Graduate School was at CU Denver. Its primary responsibility is to ensure the quality and standards of graduate education at a university. He stated that under the leadership of AVC Michael Kocet, the Graduate Council operates as a faculty-governed body, with all members being faculty. He emphasized that this structure reinforces its faculty-led nature.
- Faculty members expressed concerns regarding AVC Kocet's status as a full-time administrator, which led to questions about his eligibility as a full-time faculty member. Additionally, there are concerns about the application and admissions process, which contributes to the decreased enrollment problem, as applications are not being routed to the appropriate departments in a timely manner. Faculty members feel overwhelmed by the increasing demands placed on them in various areas, including research and marketing for graduate programs.
- Sasha B. requested an opportunity to review the procedures, scope, and bylaws of the Graduate Council. FA members also suggested that the EEPC be involved in graduate education matters to ensure comprehensive oversight.
- Mike K. shared the following Graduate Council Agenda:
 - Approval of Graduate Programs/Tracks/Certificates
 - Partnering with Student Services related to food insecurity
 - Reviewing 8-week course model; impact to international students/visas

AHEC Update (AVC Weatherford, AVC Schrock):

- AHEC Master Plan: AVC Cary Weatherford provided an overview of the Master Plan Steering Committee's work and discussed guiding principles and urban design principles. He emphasized its reintroduction to the Auraria campus, which includes reps from all three institutions. He also stated that the ABOD master plan vote has been postponed until June. Concerns were raised regarding the level of faculty involvement in the process, and requests were made for additional documentation and transparency.
- Cary W. elaborated on the guiding principles of the master plan, emphasizing services for students, staff, and faculty, housing provisions, sustainability, and the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Discussion then shifted towards urban design principles, with Cary highlighting the concept of a "learning loop" aimed at creating a pedestrian-centric campus "core." Additionally, strategies for urban integration and "predictable vertical development" were discussed. Cary explained that there were three potential scenarios for campus development: treating the campus as a city, a park, or a hybrid of both. Feedback on these scenarios were gathered through surveys and small group meetings.

- Regarding funding, Cary discussed Capital Construction funding and a new campaign initiated by the Advancement Office. He anticipates more funding contributions towards programs rather than as direct gifts.
- Joanne A. asked whether accessibility considerations were addressed, and Cary stated that all designs are reviewed for accessibility, and efforts are made to involve the relevant stakeholders in the process.
- FA concluded the meeting with a discussion on CAP's lack of involvement in this process. Requests were also made for additional documentation, including financial and legal documents related to AHEC's proposal, and slides from previous meetings.

End Meeting