**Faculty Caucus Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

**By Zoom**

**Approved**

***Call to Order***

Academic Senate Chairperson Susan Kalter called the meeting to order.

***Discussion:***

***ASPT policy interpretations and procedural guidance discussion***

***04.03.20.01 AAUP email***

***FAQ AAUP Principles and Standards for the COVID-19 Crisis***

***Coronavirus Information for Higher Ed***

***Statement on Equity and COVID-19***

Senator Kalter: We’re here to talk about whether or not we need to have any policy changes for ASPT, because the Caucus is the one that can do that. And what I’m going to do is I’m going to go pretty much in order of the document that was sent out, that has the tentative proposed policy changes. I’m doing it that way… it’s not to try to get them into an Action Item, but to… because that’s a good way to order things, in terms of what is most immediate versus what is more long term. So, I’m going start with the discussion about the first two issues that both have to do with the student reactions to teaching. And we’ll just have a discussion about, you know, where faculty in your constituencies seem to be, with regard to that. Whether or not there needs to be any policy change.

The conversation in the Faculty Caucus Exec was basically that we have two pieces of ASPT policy that require us to, on the one hand, collect systematically student reactions to teaching, and then also to use them. There’s a piece of Appendix II that requires that they be one of at least two factors that are used in the evaluation of teaching. So, and given the discussion that we just had about what’s going to happen in the fall, and the unknowns about that, if we were to go for an entire year, there’s a possibility that we will have, sort of, two forced-online types of teaching situations. And also, that some departments, apparently, have a requirement to use them every single semester, whereas some others do not. So, I just want to open up discussion about where people are with the student reactions to teaching issue, and we can refer to either the tentative policy change items, or the other things that we have distributed.

Senator Mainieri: I talked to many of my constituents over the past week or so about this. And one of the things that several wanted me to bring to the floor was to emphasize allowing faculty or instructors to 1) opt into collecting evaluation and data, and 2) opt into to be able to include evaluation data from affected semesters in their dossier. Because many faculty members may feel that their evaluations actually reflect very positively on their support of students and care of students. And so, they wanted the opportunity to both collect the systematic data, and to use it if they chose to.

Senator Kalter: Thank you. (Long pause waiting for additional comments.)

So, I can report. My department had its first department meeting today since all of this has begun, and I wrote down a bunch of feedback from them. One of the things that they wanted to make sure was that faculty are not creating their own surveys, partly because it’s extra work, partly because it is… they’re concerned about anonymity for students given certain kind of show rates in classes. They thought in general that it would be more effective to collect student feedback, not on individual courses or faculty members, but on the enterprise as a whole. So that the university could get feedback, but that it wouldn’t be held against individual faculty members in their ASPT documents. They were concerned about the fact that they’re doing double duty. In other words, one person said, “Well, there are a number of students who are wanting synchronous instruction, a number of students who are wanting asynchronous instructions,” and this person said, “I’m trying to do both,” which essentially means that his workload is, what he feels like, is double what it would have been. There was a little bit of confusion about whether, I think this might have been in Dr. Catanzaro’s most recent letter, whether the writing of the faculty essay with regard to student reaction to teaching would be optional or if it was being required. I think the communication seemed to that other “him,” to be saying that it was going to be required that you not only collect the student feedback from this semester, but also that you require it, and require someone to reflect on it, that is. And people were pretty unanimous about giving students the option to be heard, but did not want it to be used either this year under this set of administrators, or in future administrations, because we don’t know how long this is going to have various repercussions, particularly for pre-tenure people, to not have it count against anybody in the tenure and promotion process. So, that was the basics of their... Anybody else have comments on that one?

Senator Topdar: I had a quick question. How do we get to read the student evaluations? Because we are not able to go to campus, or are the evaluations going to be collected digitally? In which case, do we get to see an electronic version of the evaluations after the semester is over, or do we have to wait until fall to be able to read the evaluations? So that’s one. The other point I wanted to make is I think it might be a good idea to collect evaluations from students. I think it is a good… I think we should think about not using the evaluation in a way that goes against faculty evaluation of any sort. I think because the situation is very, very unusual, and I think just like our students need some leeway, faculty members also do, because you are right. We are all working very, very more, you know, under these circumstances. So, if you could comment on that.

Senator Kalter: So, I’m going to ask Senator Murphy to address that first part, with regard to, if collected, how would they be accessed, and who would access them, given that there’s been also conversation about whether or not a chairperson should be able to access them. My chairperson said “I don’t want to look at them.” Which I think everybody appreciated him saying that.

Provost Murphy: You know, I would agree. I agree with something that Senator Mainieri said. I think that there could be a value to conducting student evaluations and getting some perspective on how the class went. If I was a faculty member, what am I doing well, what am I not doing well? But I truly believe these, my opinion, is that they should go directly to the faculty member. And then a faculty member can respond to what it is they could glean, you know, what parts of those student evaluations were useful to them, informative, and help impact their teaching in the future.

In terms of how they access them, I think each department is very different. So, my home college is a college that has been doing online IDEA evaluations, and now online evaluations, through IDEA, for a number of years. So, I think that it should be a fairly simple mechanism to provide the evaluation results directly to a faculty member, but you maybe ask a technical question, Senator Topdar, that I’m not prepared to answer because I’m not a technical person. But if you’re asking my opinion, I truly do believe that they should go directly to a faculty member and then could be included in annual evaluations, again, as a response from the faculty member. What did I learn from this experience? What might I do different? All those things. So, I don’t know that I have the technical answer for you, but I do think… that’s my personal opinion, is I’d like to see them not used in the evaluation unless a faculty member feels there is a value to that.

Senator Kalter: I’m wanting to understand people’s feelings. And again, let me reiterate that we… that there is time for some of these to, sort of, have the Caucus consider them as conditions might change. But the Faculty Caucus Executive Committee articulated several possible needs for policy changes given that Appendix II language exists. The first two that we drafted were to continue to require two factors for teaching evaluation, but one of them was to make it so that Spring 2020 could not be used. The other one was to make it so that none of the year could be used. That basically the 2020 evaluation year as a whole, would be, you know, not with student reactions, but teaching being evaluated in a different way. The second two were basically similar, except to go down to only one factor to evaluate teaching. And the idea there is, we all have had this double workload put on us, and do we want to be spending a lot of time at year’s end, and in the beginning of next year, when we, you know, we don’t know where we’re going to be, doing, you know, two factors of evaluation, which in ordinary circumstances we do that to protect the faculty member, but do we want to have that. And then, the last one had to do with whether we should do evaluation of teaching performance at all, which I think most of the feedback is saying “well, we want that because there are people who are doing really heroic master teaching,” there are a lot of people, for example, in my department who are doing graduate mentorship and a lot more of it. And so, if we don’t evaluate teaching at all for 2020 that gets missed. But I wonder if the faculty have comments, and what they are thinking, whether or not we need to think about a policy change as opposed to policy interpretation.

Senator Horst: Yeah. I was just going to say that I’m not sure. We always do handwritten evaluations. We don’t use IDEA, and so I’m not sure which students would have the opportunity to fill out an online evaluation, and that leads me to be very concerned about the data. Like, what percentage of a class would you get completing these online evaluations, even when it’s an online situation, you don’t get a lot of students. So, given all of that, I am of the opinion that spring should not be included.

Senator Kalter: And do you have an opinion about two factors versus one factor?

Senator Horst: You can submit an artifact as a factor? Can you submit a personal essay as a factor? Because the School of Music traditionally does peer to peer evaluations. But I don’t have an opinion about that. It would probably have to be decided by the department. My main concern is the quality of the returns of this semester’s evaluations given the unusual circumstances. And given that it’s unlikely we’re going to get a good return, and the data will be flawed. I would not… I suggest we don’t include them.

Senator Vickers: I just would want to echo something that Senator Horst just said. Of course, as colleagues in the School of Music, I just like the idea maybe of faculty being able to opt in or not. And perhaps they have the option. Because if we have colleagues who’ve gone to extraordinary lengths to do heroic teaching, and they’re really proud of it, and they actually want for that to be scrutinized, then perhaps we leave it open for that faculty member to say, hey, I opt in, please scrutinize my work. And if we want to provide for colleagues who say, yeah, I did just as much heroic trench fighting, but I’m absolutely not interested in being evaluated on this right now, it’s too much. Then, I think we afford them that opportunity. That’d be my two cents.

Senator Topdar: Okay, So, just going off what we’ve been discussing, I do agree that we should give faculty members the choice to either opt in or opt out of student evaluations, or I think for this whole calendar year. I think it is a good idea. So, that’s one. The second point I wanted to make is, you know, it goes back to what Senator Horst said, and the question I’d asked earlier. Some departments traditionally conduct the student evaluation digitally, others like my department (the History department) have written evaluations. So, how do we… I mean, I realize that this is something that the department has to decide, but I… just like we are all burdened, I don’t want to put my department secretary in a situation where she has to go and scan, you know. Like, I have 50 students in one class. Some of us have 90 students in one class. We don’t want the department secretaries to be scanning those student evaluations, and then emailing it to us. So, if we are indeed having evaluations, whether or not the faculty member uses it or not, you know, how are we going to conduct it for paper evaluations? Are students supposed to mail it to the department? How does that go? So, we have to figure that out. And I think I already, in passing I mentioned, I think that for both this semester and for the fall semester, I really don’t think we should, you know, the department shouldn’t really use the evaluations as part of the ASPT report. We can, you know, send in our syllabus, and our assignments, so on and so forth, and that could be used as a method of evaluation, but let us leave it to the discretion of the individual faculty member to decide whether or not they want to have the evaluations, and let the faculty member read the evaluations, as opposed to the department chair reading everybody’s evaluations, and then it just minimizes work for everybody.

Senator Kalter: Thank you. We’re going to go to Senator Ferrence. And just in case anybody’s wondering, Dr. Catanzaro has had his hand up, but I told him before the meeting, we’re going to get as much faculty feedback first and then go to him at the end of these.

Senator Ferrence: Sure. Thanks. So, I think it’s important that we come up… we have to weigh… we want it to be consistent what we’re doing, and it’s very difficult when we start talking about, kind of, different options that are hybrids, because I think it really comes down to a department. And one of the concerns I have, for example, is if we talk about in Chemistry where sciences, we’re kind of numbers driven, the way we do our comparison. If I were to choose as a faculty member that I wanted my evaluations to be considered, then we would have to demand that everybody else teaching courses at that level of hundred (so be it a 100, a 200, a 300, a 400) they would have to do them too, because the way we do our evaluations is compared to the department mean. And if I’m the only one that chooses to do it, say in the 300 level, then I’m guaranteed that I am the department mean, and therefore, I am going to get an average rating because I didn’t beat the mean. It doesn’t matter how good I am, how bad I am. If I’m the only numbers in it, then I’m the mean. And so, I think it gets tricky in terms of if you’re collecting the sum of evaluations from the students, particularly when you’re looking at numerical things, when you get into some faculty wanting to show then and others not, particularly depending on the faculty equally collecting them, and for example, in Chemistry, we’re allowed to start handing out our evaluations the week immediately following Spring Break. So, we’re already three weeks behind on our opportunity there… you know, we hand them out in class. And so, we’ve got some strange things there. I do think that we want to allow faculty certainly to put in as they put in their normal materials if they want to put in artifacts and the things they would do to say, this is things I want to show as my evidence of teaching. But the thing that comes from the DFSC, so where they say that we are mandating that certain things be collected, and we’re evaluating those, you kind of either (at least at the department level) have to decide at the department level everyone contributes or nobody contributes, otherwise the comparisons aren’t actually meaningful, in terms of the rankings within the department. Just my thought on the matter.

Senator Mainieri: Yes. Two things to your original questions, Senator Kalter, you were asking about two factors versus one factor. For me, as we consider all these things tonight as much as we can avoid having to change policies unless absolutely necessary, even on a temporary basis, I think that’s the best way to go. And so, I’m looking at Appendix II here, and there are 15 different types of things that are just examples of possible things that people can include to be evaluated on their teaching. And it seems to me that if we release the requirement that student reactions is one, unless faculty opt in, that there are lots of different things that faculty could put forth to demonstrate their teaching throughout the year 2020, including during this time, whether it be changes to their syllabi. And you know, I’m noting in the draft of changes that came originally from the Provost Office, you know, this item number two that that draft is talking about, and at the very end of that item 2, in bold it says, they will not be used in any ASPT evaluation processes except at the faculty member’s request as described above. So, it seems to me that the current information that we’re getting, or ideas that we originally got from the Provost’s office on how this might impact teaching performance evaluations seems to be in line with a lot of the comments made here tonight.

Senator Pancrazio: Yes. I want to say, I don’t have a single worry whatsoever about how the teaching evaluations are going to come in, because I know that the members of the DFSC are in the same boat I am. And the DFSC process has always been a type of a dialogue with the individual members, and if I believe that they have not… that they aren’t seeing something accurately, I have the ability to put that in my evaluation. I know everybody is pulling double duty right now. I think, you know, some of the faculty that I work with, to help them understand how ReggieNet works, I think it was a huge shift for them, okay. At the same time, I think most, 99.9% of the time (there’s always that .1%) but 99% of the time people in the DFSC do a pretty good job and are open to some type of dialogue. And all of our other processes have landed themselves to people coming back to the DFSC and saying, “wait a second, I think y’all missed this, or you got this right,” or something like that. I don’t have a single concern. I think that… I think this is just… and I say this as a person who’s been teaching online for a while, I’m pretty comfortable with it. At the same time, I think they all know that this is a struggle, and it’s a challenge that we’ve been thrown into. And if we have that one person who’s going to be difficult on there and saying, “gosh, you’re not walking on water anymore,” then I think those other three people or four people on those DFSCs tend to balance those out. So, I don’t have a single concern.

Senator Blum: Yeah. One of the things I’m a little worried about in the opt in approach, is that I’m a little concerned that it might be inadvertently or, you know, whether consciously or subconsciously penalizing people who don’t opt in, right. So, while I think it, you know, not knowing what an individual faculty member evaluations are, why they did or chose not to opt in, I mean, it sort of builds in a lot of assumptions about… I don’t know. So, I’m a little bit worried about the juxtaposition, all right. And meanwhile, I agree with the Senator that generally speaking that DFSC members understand and well-intentioned, but there’s also implicit biases that prevents DFSCs that they may or may not be aware of. So, I’m not sure where I land on this, but I’ll leave that at that.

Dr. Catanzaro: Hi, everybody. Well, thanks for all those comments. I think among the points that I wanted to make is technically, so the technical pieces that interestingly the ASPT policies require the use of the student reactions, it doesn’t specify how they be used, and they don’t specify the procedures, right. So, as several folks have noted that those are departmental and/or college decisions. My memory is that in my home college the College Council approves the survey instruments and procedures of each department, which vary wildly. The spirit of the original recommendation that we made was that if we are not including this semester student reactions as required, then it wouldn’t make much sense for a department to use the mean of those submitted, for example. And the importance of… so, Senator Topdar asked about (I think it was Senator Topdar) asked about their reflective statement, and the purpose of that is that that would be the artifact that would make the most sense, and what the DFSC can evaluate is, oh, this person learned a lot from these comments. Not using the comments to evaluate the teaching, but to use the reflection to evaluate the person’s development as a teacher, which is one of the 15 factors that Senator Mainieri noted in Appendix II. So, that would be the idea there, where it could only be to a faculty member’s benefit at their own initiative to include them. I think whenever student reactions are collected online, I know in departments that do that, routinely there are concerns already about response rates. I think under the current circumstances, it is a reasonable hypothesis that students will be more interested in providing feedback than they might be under ordinary circumstances when they’re doing an online reaction to a face to face class. So, I think that that’s an open empirical question, and again, if the response rates are really low, then the information’s not that valuable, it’s not included in the ASPT materials, and faculty member is held harmless. And I would also say I think there’s an opportunity here because as we’re gearing—and I’m getting a little ahead of myself—as we’re gearing up for the next five year revision cycle, I think with the growing research, the value or lack thereof of student reactions, the well documented biases that seem to come along with those, decentering them in the faculty evaluating of each other’s teachings, students react to teaching, and I think the conversation about how DFCSs use the student reaction information and how centered it is, is I think an important one. And in this moment, maybe we don’t have the luxury of spending a lot of time in those broader issues, but I think we ought to keep them in mind when we think about what we do now.

Senator Kalter: All right. And before we move… go ahead, Sam.

Dr. Catanzaro: Yeah. I just want to make… there are a lot of comments and questions there. So, I don’t know. Are there any others that might still need some addressing or any follow-up?

Senator Kalter: That was what I was going to say before we move off of that topic to the next one. Do we have other comments about it, or things that didn’t get addressed? (Pause) Okay. Because one of the things that we’re also probably going to be looking at, if things change for fall whether we might need to revisit this conversation. And whether or not, at that point, a policy change might be needed. So, right now this is a discussion, not necessarily moving anything to Action or what have you, but sort of getting out what you’re hearing and what each of you are feeling about all of it.

So, the second set of topics had to do with tenure and promotion. Questions about external letters and the calendar for tenure and promotion. And if you look at the tentative proposals, a couple of them, alternative wordings were about external letters, extending deadlines for the letter writers, and that the number could be either reduced, or reduced and eliminated at the discretion of a DFSC, but would have to be reduced by the same number for all candidates, etc. So, that was the first set of possible need for policy change. The second one, and there’s a question attached to that because I did not have time to go through, and the Executive Committee did not have time to go through the whole 70 some page ASPT policy in great detail, but whether or not there are also departments that would need to vote on reducing that number, or if it’s up to the DFSC in a department, because in some cases DFSCs can make decisions on their own and in some cases the full department has to vote for that. So, that was one set.

The second set had to do with the calendar. Several of the people that we heard from when we gathered feedback, particularly the pre-tenure faculty, were quite concerned about various parts of the calendar, about various parts of the stop the clock, as it was in the memos. The way that the proposal was worded is allowing for the calendar to be shifted on a kind of rolling basis, and Dr. Catanzaro had something in his latest memo about the issues around that. But then, there were also a lot of faculty who feel as though opting into a stop the clock is going to be a detriment and particularly that it might follow along with sort of the classic lines of bias, with respect to gender or faculty of color. So, there were a number of people who thought rather than opting into a stop the clock that there should be a blanket stop the clock and then you opt into going up “early.” So, there’s a whole set of stuff there to talk about with regard to what’s going to be happening for our pre-tenure faculty and particularly keeping in mind (Dr. Catanzaro and I talked on Zoom on Tuesday) we’re going to have ripple effects that are about people who haven’t even been hired yet, or haven’t even started their appointment yet, even if they have been hired, because their research agendas are being impacted by all of the COVID stuff, just like all of the faculty are. So, I’m just going to open it up to general discussion about issues surrounding tenure and promotion, whether it’s the stop the clock, the external letters, or the actual calendar for going up for tenure and promotion.

Senator Mainieri: I want to put this out there because I think it’s important to state. However, I don’t think that in this current situation, I’m not sure that there is a clear solution other than what has been proposed in the original recommendations from the Provost’s office. You know, the stop the clock opportunity, in talking to some of the pre-tenured faculty is appreciated, but as Senator Kalter just alluded to, there could be certain populations that will feel the need or obligation to take that more than others. For example, pre-tenure faculty with small children at home right now, their productivity is being impacted directly by these circumstances, or a whole host of factors that mean that some faculty may… or the type of research that they do is being unequally impacted by the situations, whereas there are other faculty members whose research or situation means that they are not really seeing a ton of impact on their scholarly productivity toward promotion or tenure. And so, I just think it’s important to note that, that there will be different groups impacted differently, and will have to take stop the clock more often, and that’s the case across the board, or in normal circumstances, and it’s accentuated now. So, I think it’s important to note, but finding a solution, other than the recommendation that the Provost’s office has put forth, in terms of offering the stop the clock, other than changing the requirements for going up in promotion to tenure, so that people can go up on their same calendar. I think it’s difficult to find a solution in this short of time that solves that issue, because it’s a more systemic issue, as opposed to a temporary one.

Senator Topdar: I agree. And I just wanted to quickly kind of remind, there are some of us who work… our research needs to be travel abroad, right. So, for instance, I was supposed to go to India during the summer for my research, and go to England for my research, but I don’t think I can go now, right. So, that is going to impact my productivity. And I’m sure there are, you know, tenure track faculty members who also work on countries outside the United States. And we don’t have resources that are digitally available for us to give us resources in the United States and access. So, I think that should be factored in. That’s one point. The other point I wanted to make is even some faculty members might have received some grants from the university that they’re supposed to use by a certain day, by a certain fiscal year. But because of the travel restrictions that we have, we are not able to use it. Right. And I’m sure there are tenure track faculty members who might be facing this same situation. So, what are we doing to address that? You know, are we going to get the funding still, even if we are not able to use them? Or can we delay the funding to next fall, or maybe the next fiscal year? I think this is something we should think about.

Senator Kalter: So, if I understood the Q&A at the March 25 non-Senate meeting, the administration announced that they would be SBCing (Strategic Budget Carryover) the travel funding but leaving it to the department to determine how that was going to be expended. And I’ll look to Senator Murphy or Senator Dietz to confirm that.

Provost Murphy: That is correct, in terms of General Revenue Travel Funds. And so, Senator Topdar, is this something like a University Research Grant, for example? Okay. So, that is a good question. That also… that’s kind of an odd combination of funds that go into pool together to make up that funding. That will be a good question for me to check in with Dr. Baur. I don’t think he stayed for the Caucus, but it certainly is a reasonable request, I think, for someone who’s received a URG who can’t use it because of this coronavirus, or just if it was some unforeseen circumstance. What if someone got ill? I think it’s a very reasonable request to see if that particular fund could be carried over to the next fiscal year. So, I will make a note and make sure that we ask Dr. Baur that. But that seems like a very reasonable request.

Senator Kalter: Thank you. And I wanted to ask a couple of specifics, and it may be that people don’t have any ideas about this. But a couple of pre-tenure faculty were fairly concerned… one of the comments, or a couple of comments had to do with, this is going to punish me for the rest of my career because if I have to stop the clock, that means that my promotional increase will be delayed, and therefore that’s going to have ripple effects through the rest of the career. So, some of them were saying, and some tenured faculty were supporting these comments, that either we should find ways to instead of stopping the clock, supporting faculty so that they can go up on time. That was obviously unspecific because different disciplines are involved. And then there were, as I have on the summary for the faculty feedback, I think asking to change or lower the requirements for productivity for this year because it would, you know, eventually, like, we may be thinking about 2020, but in 2025, there may be somebody going up for tenure who still has the ripple effects of what happened this year, and I just wondered if anybody had any thoughts about that particular set of comments?

Senator Horst: I support liberally giving stop the clocks, but I don’t support changing the requirements for tenure.

Senator Topdar: I just want to remind everybody to think of those of us whose primary research lies outside the United States. I know for my research I can sit here and I’m crying right now because, you know, I was planning to get some research work done over Spring Break, I couldn’t do that. I have lost the money that I spent on hotel bookings and flight bookings. My summer is gone. So, the earliest that I can actually travel outside the United States for a long stretch of time and do work, if I’m lucky, this is only December now. Right. So, I know that is affecting my research, and I’m sure there are other faculty members or so on campus who work, you know, on issues outside of the United States who really are being impacted. So, I would like individual departments and the DFSCs to keep that in mind when they’re evaluating people coming up for tenure, or just general speaking. It is impacting in a very bad way. I mean, I don’t have enough words to explain that. Thank you.

Senator Kalter: I’ll add one thing to what you just said, Senator Topdar, and that is I think this is a learning experience across disciplines. I think there were some people in disciplines that perceive some of us as working from our computer and therefore having no impact. But I think that we saw from many of the comments that came in, the faculty member who is in Italy who has had her research completely cut short because she wanted to go to libraries and archives. Many of the faculty who are perceived as, it’s easier for them, for us, to do research because we do it from our desktop, that imagination is not really the case. And I think on the other hand people in the Humanities, Social Sciences, are sort of learning all of the work that it takes to set up various labs, to set up interviews, and that kind of thing. So, it’s kind of a learning experience.

Let me ask also before we go to a new topic about the external letters, and whether anybody had any comments about how external letters might… how the procedures and/or policies for that might need to be adjusted, whether, you know, this semester or depending on what we face in the fall.

Provost Murphy: I just want to say, I have gotten an answer from Dr. Baur, and the URGs can be SBCed. You can carry those over and use those the following fiscal year or whenever you’re able to travel or do that research again. So, I did get an answer on that.

Senator Mainieri: In looking at the ASPT policy document where it talks about peer evaluators, external reviews, it says that “department/school may require” and it puts all of the guidelines at the department/school level. So, it seems to me that that’s where those decisions should probably be made, as opposed to a blanket kind of statement about changes across the university.

Senator Kalter: So, there was a concern, expressed by one of the faculty members on Exec about whether or not… if departments changed those requirements if the CFSCs would be required to honor those changes, especially, for example if there was a single faculty member in a department going up in any particular year that the CFSC might perceive that as well you’re bending your rules to get that person through, rather than planning by the rules and whether that would be honored. Does anybody have any comments about that before we move to Dr. Catanzaro?

Senator Vickers: Forgive me, I just…. Senator Kalter, could you repeat the last part? I’m not certain that I see the concern. Forgive me.

Senator Kalter: So, what the Faculty Caucus Executive Committee did over the past week or so was to, sort of… you know, I scanned through the ASPT booklet, trying to think is there anywhere in here that a policy that’s already in place might be interfering with the flexibility that we might need to provide. And so that’s how those things were identified. And then, we all workshopped the potential policy, again, you know, thinking as we stay on top of that, we could come back to this in November or December, after sort of seeing, what the year look likes, rather than right now. But what that concern was, this came up about, okay, so there are some places that have…. In other words, everybody is finding that their reviews for, you know, articles are delayed. That their acceptances are delayed. That there are going to be publication delays. There are going to be conferences that are either canceled and you don’t get your money back, canceled and you do get your money back, or you never even got to apply to that conference that you knew happens every year in October but they’ve already canceled the conference and so it’s not happening, right. And so, as we were thinking through these kinds of things, external letters came up, because of course an external letter means you need to have an external letter writer. This was put in, I think it was put in since I got to ISU, that we even have external letter writers, and then some departments do it, some departments don’t. But if you’re doing it, like for example, in my department you have to get three external letters, you have to go through a process where you negotiate with your DFSC about you give them a list of the people that you would like to review you, the DFSC can also come up with people on the list that they think should review you, ultimately the DFSC decides, the person going up for tenure does not decide. So, within that, if COVID is interrupting everybody’s schedules, you could have, for example, people either not being able to write letters at all, and therefore having to be down further on the list of who you would prefer to have, you know, write that letter, or not have the letter show up at all, or have delays where the person says, I can do this but where I needed six weeks before, I now need twelve weeks or what have you. And are our deadlines going to be able to accommodate those kinds of things. Is that helpful?

Senator Vickers: Thank you.

Senator Kalter: Okay. Terrific. Other thoughts or comments about those? (Pause) And so, let’s go to Dr. Catanzaro.

Dr. Catanzaro: Okay. I’ll make one brief comment, going back to the funding issue, I could also confirm, I had a conversation via email today with Dr. Elkins, a question came up about matching startup funds through the Educational Diversity Enhancement Program, and again those are funds that we are happy to roll over into next year for people to use wisely to resume their start up, just like URGs. And those are for probationary faculty. So, in the interest of transparency, let everyone know that we’re providing that kind of flexibility.

The external letters, I think, Senator Mainieri hit the nail on the head, those are departmentally determined. In Arts and Sciences, all the department agree to do it college wide, but each department has its own procedure for doing it. And I think that’s important to think about. If someone is ready to apply for tenure on November 1, 2020, probably trying to figure out those invitations sooner rather than later—and I know that that’s just another thing in the middle of all these other things that we’re all in the middle of—that would make sense. Yeah. My sense is that usually people invited to write letters are willing and interested in doing that. They see it as a service to the discipline. But of course, it’s a unique context now. But I guess the question is, if a department wants to revise their policies around how they handle the external letters in their department, that wouldn’t necessarily need to be approved by the CFSC. The department policies get reviewed and are approved by the CFSC and once they’re approved then… so I would recommend if any department is contemplating that, not doing it on a case by case basis, and saying, you know, we could get letters for Ferrence, but we couldn’t get them for Mainieri, but we want to support them both, and so we’re going… I think that’s a recipe for confusion at best. But if a department really wants to say, “well, in light of what’s going on here, maybe we’ll reduce the number of letters, maybe we’ll…” and then, that will be reviewed by the CFSC and approved, or not, depending if it was consistent with the college policies. If the college needed to revise their policy, then that would go to the URC. So, there’s always another layer of policy revision approval that then would document it, and would kind of say this is the way it is so that future CFSCs would be obliged to operate under the approved policies enforced, and not say, oh, well, you know, without any speculation about whether those policy changes were some kind of charitable effort to smooth the path for someone inappropriately.

Senator Kalter: That, what you just said, was part of the essence of the way that we drafted both of the alternatives, if needed. That if you reduce or eliminate letters, you have to do it across the board for all of the people going up for tenure that year. I think I forgot to address one part of Senator Vickers’ question, which was how does the CFSC come in, right. And you, kind of, articulated that a bit, Dr. Catanzaro, that the Faculty Caucus Exec was concerned that a CFSC, particularly in a large college, might see maybe one department that decides to change their process and look askance at that. Now, I think that we’re all, as Senator Pancrazio said, we’re trying to operate under sort of a level of trust, right, that we all know that really hard things have happened. But that’s, you know, somebody told me a long time ago, when you put rules in place it helps prevent conflict. It also creates conflict obviously, but it helps people to know what’s expected. And so, did we need to say that last part, CFSCs must honor the discretionary reductions made by department and school. So, that’s what that question’s about.

Senator Mainieri: Yeah, I was going to suggest something similar, you know, in the final document that whatever, if there are any changes made after tonight to their recommendations memo, I wonder if one could be that, you know, a recommendation to departments and schools that when they are submitting materials and recommendations to CFSC, to have like a blanket statement about, “As a reminder, here are the most recent changes based on the circumstances that have impacted based on COVID-19,” just to make sure that there is clear communication up down and down up about those changes, to avoid anyone judging based on what they thought it was and those type of things. Just to make sure that there is clear communication all the way through.

Senator Kalter: All right. Anybody else want to make any comments about tenure and promotion, and what may or may not need to change beyond policy interpretation?

Senator Blum: I kind of thought of this later, but I was thinking about the people who might be impacted financially, and the financial impact. We were talking about that a little bit earlier, and I was wondering if we had someone stop the clock because of the COVID crisis, or whatever, and they stopped it for a year, they stop the clock, they go through the tenure process the next year, all right. If we could retroactively give them what they would have probably gotten under normal conditions the previous year, and that would alleviate the financial consideration of it. So, we allow for all the myriad of circumstances that I think people are bringing up. Allow the stop the clock process to occur, all right, but because of this international crisis, we understand this is kind of a different stop the clock. And so, because of that we don’t want to penalize people because of that. Let them stop the clock, build their dossier to what it needs to be, all right, and then “oh, yes, now I’ve got that. I’ve met that criteria for my department,” go through the process, and rather than just get one year, you would get the one year and the year before.

Senator Kalter: That’s an interesting concept, and is probably why we have Dr. Dietz sitting in on this conversation, because it’s obviously a fiscal decision, but in many ways, it’s a fairly small drop in the bucket type of fiscal decision for a university, but a fairly large contribution to, you know, that faculty member’s satisfaction. And you know, as they were saying, the concern about their long-term income, especially if they’re in something like the Self-Managed Plan, which is a defined contribution, instead of a defined benefit, pension plan, it can make a difference there. All right. I don’t see any other comments about that.

The other thing that I think this session we should discuss are the people who are writing in about what has happened to their ever cherished, and now completely destroyed sabbatical leaves. So, there was a very minor piece of wording in the ASPT policy booklet. It’s sort of an innocent wording in normal times. It says basically that time spent on unpaid leaves of absence will not count as progress towards promotion, but time spent on sabbatical leaves will. But what we were getting feedback about from a couple of faculty members was basically, I waited seven years for my sabbatical, or maybe I didn’t wait at all, maybe it’s my first sabbatical, but it’s the first one I’ve ever had, and all of a sudden, it’s destroyed. And I won’t necessarily be able to get it again, you know, for another long period of time. So, one thing that the Faculty Caucus Exec was contemplating was, should we say that sabbatical leaves for spring 2020 would not be counted, just like unpaid leaves of absence would not be counted? Because, you know, in many cases, people have had their scholarship or creative activities derailed. So, that was one.

And then, is there a way to give those people their sabbatical back, because it was, you know, like we all are, I think, feeling our time has been robbed. But when you only have a semester to do what you had planned to do, that was going to impact your career for potentially the next decade, you know, how do we help with that? So, I’m wondering if we have any comments about those… about that feedback? (Pause) They didn’t expect you to have sympathy for them. (Laughter)

Senator Ferrence: So, I was having a discussion on Monday with some of my colleagues and this kind of topic came up because one of them was on sabbatical. And I don’t know that… this is more just kind of a point, you know, for thinking because it’s this challenge right, of… to the person who got the sabbatical, it’s all precious and we get that, but at the same time, if you say to a faculty member, “well, since your sabbatical was messed up in spring 2020, you can go on sabbatical again in fall 2020 or spring 2021,” then the other people are going to be like, “well, how come I don’t get to have two sabbaticals in the period.” Because they may be getting some things accomplished, right. The point is, it’s really hard to make that judgement call, right. You can maybe not hold the person accountable for whether they met the deliverables proposed in the sabbatical, but it’s a pretty complicated thing if you get into saying, “well, since you weren’t able to deliver on this sabbatical because COVID interfered, you should be allowed to have another one in less than the seven year period,” because that’s going to be somebody else saying, “well, I had exceptional circumstances and why don’t I get a second one as well?” So, it’s kind of a nightmarish thing, you know, I’m not sure. Full disclosure, I’m on sabbatical in the fall, and I’m supposed to be traveling in May to England to get things worked out, and be mostly traveling all around the world between May and December. Don’t think that’s going to happen. Not really expecting much to happen in terms of any shift in my sabbatical, just thinking I’m going to have to rethink how I’m going to be productive, and I’ll figure it out.

Senator Kalter: I guess my initial reaction to the first part of what you said is that it’s sort of like students who resent other students for getting a pass/fail. You know, I think that DFSCs or whoever in the department does the decision making about sabbaticals, have the capability of figuring out whether you got anything done, or didn’t. And I mean, I know that in the sabbatical that I had in 2010, I had basically two to three books that came out of that. That’s fairly significant, and if it had been cut short, I might not have had any of them. That might mean, again, that my second promotion wouldn’t have happened for many, many years later. Right. So, I’m not sure that I want to go with the faculty who nay say those who lost their time, so much as listen to the ones who did actually lose their time, and say, you know, we have to take this seriously because we take research at this university seriously. We take creative activities seriously, and we think it’s important for our faculty to have just even a semester, but sometimes a yearlong break to become more excellent in their field, so that they can share that with the world, and share that with their students. So, that’s my first reaction. And it’s partly in sympathy with you, Senator Ferrence, because you did email me about how you were going on sabbatical in the fall and may not be able to do many of the thing that you were doing. We had people writing in from Geology/Geography who have, you know, travel plans that might be completely derailed, you know, people writing in about biology labs and that kind of thing. People writing in from Italy being in quarantine for several weeks and probably watching, you know, bodies going by their apartments, and to sort of begrudge them, you know, a little bit of extra time for their research. I hope that we wouldn’t do that.

Okay. Anybody else have comments about the progress towards promotion and sabbatical issues?

Dr. Catanzaro: I wanted to clarify that the ASPT provision about unpaid leaves not counting toward promotion and sabbatical leaves counting, is about the minimum time in rank to be eligible for promotion. So, to not count the sabbatical would actually be to the detriment of the faculty member in that context. It’s not about counting the productivity that comes out of it. Productivity always can get counted when it’s time for it to be counted. So, I did want to clarify how that works.

Senator Kalter: Thank you for that.

Dr. Catanzaro: Yeah.

Senator Kalter: It was confusing to me because, of course, most of our faculty don’t go on sabbatical until they have tenure.

Dr. Catanzaro: Yeah.

Senator Kalter: And your time between first promotion and second promotion is unlimited. So, that was a little bit confusing. So, thank you. Other comments about that one? (Pause) All right. It’s 9:21 p.m. we’re not going through all of these, but I think that it’s important that we have these discussions, and we may need to periodically keep having the discussions. So, Faculty Caucus Exec will keep talking about it. Keep talking about it into the fall, and, you know, come back if we need to, also because we didn’t talk about a number of them. One of the bigger ones was a number of people saying, “this is a great opportunity for us to adjust our annual performance evaluation clock so that…” because it looks (from the AAUP advisory) as though many, if not most, other universities do not do a calendar year evaluation, they do an academic year evaluation. So, you know, is this a time where we could get some time back both for our DFSC/SFSCs in sort of reducing their load in January of this coming year. And also get some time back for our faculty members in saying, “do you have to be doing your faculty productivity reports in December, or should you be waiting until, you know, summer of 2021, and therefore you can get just a little bit of your time back.” So, that was an important thing. And by the way, before we go, I think we might want to have a little bit of a discussion about the two Sense of the Caucus issues, if anybody wants to say anything about that tonight.

Senator Mainieri: Thanks. I just want to say quickly, I know we’re talking about ASPT so we’re focusing on obviously tenured/tenure track folks, but I did take some time to talk to my NTT colleagues and want to just pass on a couple thoughts, because I think it’s appropriate to talk about here, and to put on the radar, and be advocating for our NTT colleagues as well, and that is also reflected in those resolutions. One of the things in particular that they wanted me to pass along was, as we’re talking about suspension or postponement of annual evaluations that can have some real impacts on NTT faculty, in terms of benefits or salary bumps that they might get if they’re getting status as well as their status calendars, and so that could delay folks going up for status. And so, that was something that was very important. And then, as we’re considering, you know, how folks are handling collecting of student reactions to teaching, as we know with our NTT faculty members, their evaluations are focused on teaching. And so, making sure that there are some things in place to protect and help that evaluation process so that NTT faculty members have the support that they need as they navigate this process along with our tenured/tenure track folks.

Senator Kalter: I wasn’t quite sure I understood the first part of that, but we can follow up in Faculty Caucus Exec about why the ASPT stuff would influence the status evaluations. But we probably have time to talk about that further on, since we’re at 9:25 p.m.

Dr. Catanzaro: One, this has been a really good conversation. I really appreciate the thoughtful questions, comments and suggestions. I will note that I feel like we have a responsibility, especially to our probationary colleagues, to communicate some additional sort of reassurance and guidance about where we’re headed with this. I’ve been getting, you know, a few questions a week from around the university about, “well, what exactly is a stop the clock. How does that work?” and I think those are among the tenured line ranks, the most vulnerable if you will, the most… and those that I wish to reassure most quickly with a cogent set of guidance about here’s what we’re looking at, here’s what you can start to plan around, here’s what… we’re going to work with your chairs and directors, and elected colleagues on DFSCs on how to work through these complicated questions, because we can’t legislate every situation. So, I wanted to say that. So, let’s keep talking about it, but also let’s figure out what we can push out, and when we can push it out.

And I want to thank, Senator Mainieri, one more time, for noting the importance of… especially the evaluation of teaching with our NTT colleagues. A lot of that is governed by the collective bargaining agreement the university has with that union, even though not every NTT is governed by that union. Most of them are, and the evaluation of the performance of NTTs is handled in that context. So, certainly your concern and suggestions in that area are welcome, but ought to be sent to the director of labor relations (that’s not his full title) in HR, Mike Kruger, or to me, because I’m on that negotiating team as well, and we anticipate shortly beginning conversations with the union about what we want to do that we ensure that evaluation of NTTs is fair and equitable. And you know, their status, which is something they earn after a certain period of time of reappointments or renewals isn’t adversely affected analogously to the kinds of concerns we’ve been talking about with tenured line faculty. So, thanks for that. And please, you know, direct those questions and comments in that direction. Thanks.

Senator Kalter: And so, I’m thinking, it’s 9:29 p.m., and so, I was going to go to the Sense of the Caucus Resolutions just to read them. I think what we should do instead, because we’re almost at our usual hard stop time, is send these out, and get your feedback on them about whether we want to, you know, endorse them or not. Basically, they’re sort of along the lines, and by the way I just got before this meeting something about the grad student workers having an open letter to Dr. Dietz. It does not, I think, mention teaching evaluations, but I think that teaching evaluations also happen for our graduate assistants and can impact their future careers. So, one of the Caucus resolutions, if we want to do a Sense of the Caucus has to do with extra compensation for what has happened in the last, you know, couple of weeks. And then the other one was essentially modeled on the AAUP recommendations about what to do with student teaching evaluations, teaching observations, annual evaluations, multi-year contracts—which we don’t really have, but we have status instead—, renewal decisions, and resisting the opportunity to hire additional contingent workers as a result of all of this. So, we’ll send those out and get your comments on them, and then we’ll move on from there. Anybody have any final comments or questions that they want to ask?

President Dietz: Just a comment about that last Sense of the Senate Resolution, since we’re in negotiations right now, any involvement with any entity could be viewed as interference in that process. So, I have reservations about that.

Senator Kalter: Thank you. Others? (Pause) All right. looks like we have a Caucus for the night.

***Adjournment***

The meeting was adjourned.