

**Executive Committee Minutes  
November 29, 2021  
via Zoom, 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.**

Present: Alison McKee (Chair), Mary Papazian (President-1:10 p.m.), Anoop Kaur, Brandon White (12:38 p.m.), Julia Curry, Karthika Sasikumar, Kimb Massey, Laura Sullivan-Green, Ravisha Mathur, Vincent Del Casino (12:15 p.m.), Patrick Day, Tabitha Hart, Kathleen Wong(Lau) (12:20 p.m.)

Absent: Charlie Faas, Winifred Schultz-Krohn

Guests: Theresa Davis, Beth Colbert

1. There was no dissent to approval of the consent agenda (Executive Committee Agenda of November 29, 2021, Consent Calendar of November 29, 2021) (14-0-0).

2. Chair McKee announced that the President could not be here today to do the President's Update and this is the last scheduled Executive Committee meeting of the semester. Chair McKee thanked the President for her service to the Executive Committee, the Academic Senate and the University. [Note: President Papazian was able to make the last 20 minutes of the meeting.]

**3. Policy Committee Updates:**

**a. From the Organization and Government Committee (O&G):**

O&G will be bringing two policies to the Senate at the December 6, 2021 meeting. Both policies are changes to student seats on the Faculty Diversity and the Budget Advisory Committees. These amendments are a carry-over from last semester and will be brought as final readings.

**b. From the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee (I&SA):**

Hopefully, we will be finishing up work today on a policy on University Absences. We have been going back and forth with several offices on some information, but hope to have it concluded today. It may be cause for debate on the Senate floor due to faculty workload and responsibilities. It will come as a first reading.

**Questions:**

**Q:** Can you expand on what led to this policy?

**A:** There were two referrals. There was information at one time in the final exam policy about excused absences due to things like medical emergencies. That was taken out in the last revision. We are noticing that there is a lot of inconsistency across campus as to what faculty do and do not allow for excused absences. Some faculty allow none and others are very flexible. This policy will provide standards to provide some equity for students in the event they need a short-term absence due to limited extenuating circumstances.

**Q:** Has there been consultation with faculty and students about this?

**A:** There has been a lot of back and forth with different offices and students about this policy, which is why we have been working on this all semester. The latest consultation had to do with “Personal Instability.” This is what we are calling it and includes things such as when students are having a housing issue, or something SJSU Cares could accommodate. This is the first time there would be a policy on excused absences across the board.

**Q:** Would you say the results of those conversations has been divergent with multiple points of view?

**A:** No it’s just about making sure we have the information correct in the policy. We don’t want to open up the door so wide that everything can be considered an excused absence, but on the other hand we want the policy to be functional. We have been working with a lot of offices to make sure the language is appropriate for the circumstances but is also limited. We don’t want students to be able to go to a professor and say, “I’m not going to be in class on such and such date and you need to accommodate me.”

**Q:** Is there any faculty support for accommodation? For example, about six to seven students have had an emergency in every single class I’ve taught this semester. They have had issues like emergency moving and family illnesses.

**A:** I’m not sure what you mean by faculty supports? Do you mean instructions for faculty on how to work with this?

**Q:** Every time there is an accommodation, I have to adjust my teaching schedule for those students in every class.

**A:** Right now we don’t have anything in the policy about that because it is highly specific to the student and the course. The only thing we are putting in there is faculty guidance on documentation of the request and keeping it confined and specific to the information listed in there. I’m not sure what we could put in there to structure that specifically for faculty. If you have any suggestions, please send them to I&SA. The only thing that might be in tandem with that would be tied to the final exam policy. Again, I’m not sure we could definitely connect that here or that it would be something that would be consistent for all faculty.

**Q:** I’m very curious about accommodations for graduate students. It is very common for graduate students that work full time to be told that their jobs and private lives matter more than classes and students believe this is the case. I’ve encountered problems with students many times and I’ve had to resort to asking for advice from the Associate Dean, who basically told me that if students could do the work without coming to class there was nothing I could do. That made it okay for students to be excused. My graduate classes are on Saturdays and meet only nine times out of the semester, so missing two classes is like missing four weeks of class. This situation resulted in my being tried by the Student Fairness Committee and it was very distressing. Is there any way that you might consider putting something in the policy that takes into account emergency issues, but also protects faculty from retaliation?

**A:** No, but I will say we know we are walking a fine line including anything related to work. We realize sometimes students have to choose work over their academics, but that is their choice. At some point it is one or the other. This policy is limited to unexpected events and not regular work and it has to be limited to two weeks. The only thing I can think of wouldn't be put in the policy but in faculty guidelines and would advise faculty to make clear to their students what an excused absence is, versus an unexcused absence and what the consequence of an unexcused absence would be. Maybe this could be negotiated in the syllabus or maybe we could provide separate guidelines for faculty. I'm not sure this could go in the policy, but I'll take it back to the committee and we will talk about it.

**Q:** Thank you Chair Sullivan-Green for your work on this. This is a tough one and you are not going to be able to make everyone happy. If that happens, you've done it wrong. Just one question. Have you looked at other institutions and what they do that have similar populations to ours?

**A:** I'm pretty sure the subcommittee has done that work. The people on the subcommittee are very diligent and thorough; however, the work was started in Spring 2020 before COVID hit, so things got delayed. I will ask them for a summary of all the work they did so that if need be we can share that information.

**c. From the Professional Standards Committee (PS):**

[Chair McKee] Chair Schultz-Krohn could not be here today, but there may be a policy coming to the Academic Senate on December 6, 2021 from PS.

**d. From the Curriculum and Research Committee (C&R):**

C&R will be bringing three policies to the Senate meeting on December 6, 2021. These three policies are the General Education (GE) Guidelines, Accessibility in Curriculum, and Organized Research and Teaching Units (ORTU) policies. All three will be brought as first readings. C&R will present them in the following order: GE Guidelines first, then the ORTUs, and finally the Accessibility in Curriculum policy. We are also doing some curricular review today on the MA to MS conversion in Kinesiology.

**4. Updates from the University:**

**a. Updates from the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO):**

The Campus Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI) has now looked at the report accepted by President Papazian for recommendations. A rubric has been set up for each of the recommendation items and I will be meeting with cabinet members to look at the areas they are responsible for. The work will be cross-divisional. Some of the work has already begun or been done such as in University Personnel, the Provost, and Student Affairs areas. Many of the recommendations are underway, or have been taken on by different committees, so it is just a matter of coordination for accountability. This is something that is in process this year. Just as a reminder, Monica Allen is the incoming Co-Chair and will be returning from sabbatical this spring. We eagerly

await her return to Co-Chair along with Angee Ortega-McGee. We are pretty excited about this.

The CDO Office is working with Kathryn Blackmer-Reyes to help recruit members to participate in programming and advising in the multicultural collections center in the MLK Library. Kathryn is looking to bring additional people and ideas in. It is a wonderful and safe place. We will be working with our employee resource groups to help recruit folks. We are happy to be working with Kathryn on this.

The employee affinity groups are going well. We have various organizations that have requested funding, because they are due annual funding to hold events. We are happy with some of the events held for faculty and staff by different affinity groups. Some of the groups, such as the LGBTQ faculty and staff group, have been very excited because they have been able to do some programming and tabling with the funds.

The CDO and her staff have been very focused on working with Santa Clara County and their Hate Prevention and Inclusion Taskforce, formerly the Hate Crimes Taskforce. We have a contract through the Research Foundation working with our faculty and faculty from UC Irvine who are acting as research consultants to put together recommendations and hold focus and participatory working groups for the county to address root causes of hate as well as address hate crimes and mass shootings. It is a pretty robust report that we are putting forward. This is bringing a lot of experience to our campus faculty.

**Questions:**

**Q:** How will the campus be updated on progress from the CCDEI Report?

**A:** We certainly plan on using our newsletter, but we also have a webpage for the CCDEI and the report is there. We will post the template that the cabinet and CCDEI will be using. We are going to have a dashboard.

**C:** A short blast to the campus would be useful as well.

**A:** Maybe we will do a blast when we get the dashboard up and running.

**b. From the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA):**

We have an offer out for our APIDA Center Director finalist. I will let you know if the offer is accepted. We are very excited about this.

There is paperwork moving with regard to our Indigenous and Native American Center. As soon as it is signed and sealed we will begin advertising for a director.

In terms of COVID compliance there are no changes. There is one little COVID spot we are looking at in our Greek system. Right now it is a small cluster, but certainly we are keeping an eye on it. However, we have a vaccinated campus and this has mitigated COVID as much as possible. We are looking at variants

and we are encouraging people to get the booster. Getting the booster shot will not be a compliance issue, but we are encouraging everyone.

We will be having an external review of the Registrar's Office by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (ACRO) on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. The Instruction and Student Affairs (I&SA) will be involved.

We are doing some important work with regard to financial aid optimization. We are taking a good look at financial aid and how we administer it and where we have some room and discretion. There are strategies associated with financial aid and we want to effectively manage it. I must say I'm seeing some surprising things coming out right now in terms of our resources that we have at the university. We do a really good job, but we are looking at how can we do the best job to continue to retain our students. This is very important work and I will continue to keep you informed.

The Taskforce on Community Safety and Policing Report was done last week. We are just working with some folks on the design part. They are working hard. Hopefully, they will wrap that up this week so we can post it. We will send something out to the campus as soon as it is posted. We will be following up with the Executive Committee as well as Associated Students, Justice Studies faculty, and a number of different groups we collaborated with.

**Questions:**

**Q:** I believe you received an email from Sarika Pruthi, Chair of the International Programs and Students Committee, about their survey of graduate students and how they are experiencing the pandemic. Can you elaborate on this?

**A:** [VP Day] The committee asked me to go through it, but I haven't had a chance to go through it all yet. They asked me to distribute the survey. I've invited Dr. Pruthi to come and present the findings to the Student Affairs team in a couple of weeks. I'd be happy to share those findings with this group and then we can talk about it as necessary.

**Q:** My question is about the email we received this weekend about the threat that was made over social media to the campus. What can you tell us about it?

**A:** [VP Day] I can't tell you that much since I'm not the one that has been working on the follow-up. I will yield to VP Faas. We are coming out with some additional information. What I am aware of is that the individual has popped up in some other spaces but has not been deemed to be a credible threat.

**A:** [Provost] I spoke with VP Faas last night. He wanted me to let everyone know that the police are following all the leads and it remains not a credible threat. Additional messaging will go out today. VP Day is correct there was additional information this morning that we didn't have before. There is going to be an increased police presence on campus. That will be part of the message that goes out today. Right now there is no anticipation of any action, if there is

the campus will take swift action such as closing the campus. Right now we are asking everyone to maintain normal operations. The University Police Department (UPD) is coordinating with a number of law enforcement agencies on this.

5. The Executive Committee moved into a Confidential Executive Session to discuss a naming opportunity presented by Vice President of University Advancement, Theresa Davis, and AVP of Advancement and Campaign Operations, Beth Colbert.
6. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

These minutes were taken by the Senate Administrator, Eva Joice, on November 29, 2021. The minutes were edited by Chair McKee on January 10, 2022. The minutes were approved by the Executive Committee on January 12, 2022.