

## **University Senate Chair Report**

### **September 14, 2021**

Welcome to the second University Senate meeting of the 21-22 Academic year. Thank you to Dr. Elavie Ndura for our Cross Cultural Communication workshop last meeting. I hope all of you came away from that training with a deeper respect for our colleagues and feel ready to apply these skills at the Senate (and beyond!).

The last 18 months of life have been unprecedented in many ways. One challenge many of us have had is finding the time/space/energy to do our jobs. Whether we were trying to teach our classes while also teaching our kids, trying to take care of an at-risk parent or loved one, or simply trying not to get sick going to class or the grocery store, our lives got much harder. Our bandwidth decreased. One way this impacts the Senate is through the huge number of Senate/committee vacancies that the Appointments and Elections Committee (AEC) is trying to fill. In fact, until recently the chair of the AEC was vacant. To fill this seat, SenEx voted unanimously to make an exception to the recently amended bylaws of the AEC. The amendment was to allow an extra member to join the AEC from the College of Professional Studies, Dr. Jayne McGuire, for one year. The members of the AEC then voted unanimously to confirm Dr. McGuire as chair of the AEC for this academic year. With a new chair in place, the AEC is vigorously trying to fill all the vacancies within our shared governance structures. Thank you Dr. McGuire and members of the AEC! Be sure to keep a lookout for a second call for nominations and a ballot in your inbox. If you know someone who would like to serve on a committee, please forward their name to me or Dr. McGuire.

Thank you to Stephanie Vick, Simone Aloisio, Marshelle Thobaben and Ken Fulgum for working so hard to get the Emeritus Staff and Faculty Process figured out. There is now a process in place, which will be communicated to retiring faculty and staff through Human Resources. There will also be a link on the APS, HR, and HSU-ERFSA websites for interested retirees. The Senate can look forward to a slight revision to the Emeritus policy in the near future.

Lastly, after our meeting two weeks ago, I was emailed by a fellow Senator requesting that the Senate and its committees consider returning to face to face meetings. This request highlighted the importance of interpersonal communication and relationship building that occurs when we sit next to one another. It also spoke to power dynamics and how Zoom can reinforce the marginalization of the “dissenter/outsider/newcomer disproportionately.” The Senate Executive Committee discussed this request and it was left to the committees to decide the modality of their meetings. Several of our standing committees and SenEx have either already begun or will begin meeting in a hyflex modality (F2F with some members Zooming in). For the full Senate, I was reminded that all face to face meetings assume some risk, and the decision to limit groups (that aren’t classes) to 20 or less people was an attempt to ensure that classes may continue to be taught in person. To this end, the Senate will continue to meet virtually until the 20 person limit has been lifted. I too am disappointed by this as I really want to see you all again (or for the first time) in person. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for all that you do!  
Monty