

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY SENATE
University Environment Committee
Meeting of June 10th 2020, 3:00 - 4:30 pm
Online meeting (Zoom)

Attendance: Thomas Wilson, Frederick Walters, Jeanne Charoy, Shirley Lim, Hiya Panja, Sean Deery, Mona Ramonetti, Clifford Knee, Michelino Puopolo, Christopher Sellers, Joanna Kaczorowska. Malcolm Bowman could not be present because he was attending a meeting with the Dean.

Meeting called to order at 3:10. There were no objections to recording the meeting.

Consideration of the May minutes: Thomas Wilson entertained a motion to accept the minutes. Sean Deery moved and Shirley Lim seconded. The minutes were approved without any opposition.

Fred is rotating off the committee at the end of the summer as he is also rotating out of the senate.

Chair report. Wilson informed the committee about the state of the Fall semester's reopening plans. The effort to get senate representation on the working groups has borne fruit - it was authorized nine days ago (6/1/2020) and announced six days ago (6/3/2020). There are now 7 people who are Senate representatives on the working groups:

Senior Executive Leadership - Richard Larson
Finance - Axel Drees
Academic Planning - Brenda Anderson and Hanna Nekvasil
DOIT Support Task Force - Keri Hollander
Student Affairs Task Force - Christine Pitocco
Facilities Planning Task Force - Tom Wilson

There is a lot of work but it's an opportunity to make a difference. The group has met with Larson to plan a strategy and they have completed one round of meetings. Although the plans were largely set at the time senate representatives could participate in meetings, Wilson said that this active participation will be helpful in order to see how the plans need to be adjusted. There is recognition that things may have to pivot without notice based on the input from the community. SBU does appear to be ahead of other SUNYs in terms of planning.

There is an upcoming senate coordinating committee and Wilson is scheduled to participate in about 5 meetings a week working on his particular group. The general meetings are on Monday at 2:00PM where all the working groups report on what they've done the previous week. The facilities planning working group meets on Tuesdays. Working groups try to put together policy bullet points. The results of these working group meetings are presented on Friday meetings to

senior leadership where action items are formulated for the following week. Richard Larson set up Thursday afternoon meetings where senate representatives can talk among themselves so that he can have some feedback about what to expect on Fridays. Wilson has been given access to a Google Drive folder of notes, background information etc. (in addition to the public documents). He informed the committee that the plans released publicly are only a quarter of the background information used to put those plans together. Wilson asked Clifford Knee whether he had any comments and he opened the floor to questions and remarks (also noting that people can email him).

Clifford Knee is currently serving on two groups: the facility/services group and the health group. These groups are looking at things like signage, class items, who is going online and who isn't, how are students going to transfer from one class to another, etc...Some groups are looking at FSA and how to get students through food services without interactions - they are putting the plans together. These plans sometimes need to be changed as lots of people add input about different aspects of them. There is signage made for the buildings and installing it is mandatory. Each department is required to put in place their own practices. The groups also talk about PPE (which is hard to find), and things for clinical practices. The health and safety committee discussed ways to walk through the South P lot and what units are available and how they can be moved. Things are prepared in the event of a second wave when the students do come back.

Frederick Walters said that he had heard the South P lot would be available again for communal parking. Knee answered that although there had been talks about that, he did not have an answer. He believes that the DEC will make that decision when it's time for them to leave.

Shirley Lim asked about how students would leave their classrooms, whether classrooms will be wiped down in between classes, and how bathrooms would be managed. Knee answered that in big buildings like East Side Dining this is indeed an issue, but that people are working on this and trying to come up with the simplest solutions to implement. Mona Ramonetti added that regarding the Recreation center and South P lot structures, there are no plans to dismantle that in case of a second wave. Wilson mentioned that, looking at the data, NYS is getting better and is starting to reopen. However, only about 20% of the population appears to have antibodies to the virus. In Suffolk, only about 2% of people have been tested positive. So the reason that NYS is doing better is because the state has taken the right actions. It is important to reopen the right way. Knee seconded this point, saying that truth lies in statistics and that there are still many things we don't know about this unusual situation. Joanna Kaczorowska mentioned that she has heard from colleagues in Israel that schools (from kindergarten to high school) there closed again two weeks after reopening because of a spike in cases.

Kaczorowska asked whether there is a plan for a scenario where a significant second wave occurs and whether campus would shut down again, especially given President Trump's comment about not shutting down the country a second time. Wilson answered that his

understanding is that the president's ability to shut down or prevent things from shutting down is severely limited and that this power is in state Governors' hands.

Walters said that he is concerned by the fact that SBU is a commuting school and commuters are potential virus transmitters. If the University goes hybrid and there is less parking on campus, more people may need to use public transportation (while public transit is usually a good thing, cars may be safer with regards to COVID-19). There are still a lot of latent cases in NYS and NYC in particular and commuting students and faculty/staff could be a problem. Wilson answered that if things can be taught effectively online, there may be no reason for some people to come to campus and that in his opinion, any class that can be taught remotely should be. Knee agreed and added that students will need to be monitored. There are people working on that plan, so that if someone gets sick they will be able to catch it.

Lim asked Knee about dorms and how that would be handled for domestic and international students. Wilson said he had read about a high level decision that there will be no triple dorm rooms in the Fall and that some rooms will be reserved for sick people to quarantine in.

Jeanne Charoy asked whether there were any concerns about TA lines for online classes. Wilson answered that online courses will still need TAs, especially given the rampant cheating going on with online exams. Walters said that he would be concerned about everything and it's not impossible that some TA lines may go. Wilson added that this is a budgetary argument and we'll have to advocate for SUNY to spend the money properly. Kaczorowska said that an alert had just popped up on her screen that a second wave is emerging even though the first wave is not finished. She added that we should not underestimate this virus.

Christopher Sellers said that a petition would go around in a couple of days to request that the administration have the Fall semester be online. Walters said that unions are also working on this and have sent a letter to the University president. He added that the important thing is to work on things together: unions should focus on health and safety, the senate should focus on academic issues, this committee should focus on its usual topics. Sellers said he doesn't see petitions as an organ but just a representation of whoever signs it - it's a general voice. Walters agreed but added that unions and the senate are working in vacuums and they need to coordinate. Wilson mentioned that Richard Larson said he wants better coordination between unions and the senate. In addition, Wilson said that covid can do damage to young and healthy people - it's not a case of die or come back in perfect health. There is a continuum of damage the disease can cause.

Ramonetti asked whether the university or the unions would be providing PPE. Wilson answered that there are sanitizer units set up in a lot of buildings and that the university may supply masks to faculty and staff but not researchers. Knee added that there are plans in place to provide face covering.

Sellers asked about any plans to wipe down classrooms between classes. Knee answered that he will find out specifically, but there have been conversations about it. He will have to reach out to Terrence to learn more about the plan. Registrar is still working on scheduling. Wilson added that they want to increase the time between classes to 25 minutes to give students time to move around and to have time to clean. Walters said that with time on their hands, students may want to congregate and not social distance properly.

Kaczorowska asked whether there is a team checking air quality or bacterial content in ventilation systems on campus. Knee answered that part of the plan is to make sure to have appropriate ventilation. Some areas are going to require more work than other. He suggested that departments put a fixit request in. Wilson seconded that better ventilation and circulation of fresh air is explicitly on the facilities working group's plate.

Walters asked Knee who is in charge of the ventilation system. Knee said it is Patrick McCrane or any of his colleagues. Kaczorowska asked if Knee would share the people's names and Knee agreed to do it. Walters said that we might want to talk to one of them about the trade off between energy and cost and he asked whether the CDC has guidelines about ventilation. Knee said that this is a reason why face covering is important. Wilson suggested that one of the people in charge of the ventilation system could be invited to the next meeting and he thanked Knee for his answers. Knee added that if someone is symptomatic they are supposed to call the Student Health services and workers' compensation will come into play (it is handled by HR). The original plan was that only health care personnel would report but now anyone that could have been exposed should report. Sellers asked if this policy was in NYS only and Knee said yes.

Working groups. There were no significant updates from the working groups.

Old and new business. There was no additional old business or new business. The next meeting will be held on 7/8/2020 beginning at 3:00pm, online.

Wilson requested a motion to adjourn. Sellers moved.
The meeting was adjourned at 4:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Charoy