

**Senate Advisory Committee on Academic Policy (SACAP)
Update for Academic Senate Executive Committee
Monday March 15, 2021**

Policy Issues – 2021-22 Academic Year

1. Thesis Office Process and Deadlines

This effort is moving into its third year learning the most efficient way to process graduate theses building on previous SACAP Committee work. A four-person sub-committee (Julie Barkmeier-Kraemer, Joy Pierce, Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson and Claudia Geist) continues the work.

Last spring SACAP conducted a survey to learn more about both faculty and student experiences with the Thesis Office processes. Survey results were presented to the Academic Senate. The Senate encouraged the group to continue efforts to inform changes in Thesis Office processes. After finalizing the report and incorporating feedback from the committee, Julie presented the final report to the Academic Senate in the December meeting.

In January, the subcommittee met with Dean Kieda and Kelly Harward of the Thesis Office to work together on next steps. Dean Kieda and Kelly provided feedback on the follow-up survey that we will send to all faculty who had served on a dissertation or thesis committee from 2019 through 2021 and topics for faculty and student focus groups that will take place in early fall 2022.

Securing the list of survey participants was difficult but finally achieved and the survey will be distributed by the end of March 2022. Joy Pierce has offered to take the lead on the focus groups.

2. University Retirement Plans Committee (RPC) Activities

Dr. Gabriel Lozada contacted Mary Beth in the summer and asked to present his concerns regarding changes in the University Retirement Plan to the committee. After the presentation, committee members agreed there had been a lack of transparency and the SACAP asked to have Gabriel admitted to the Retirement Plans Committee as an additional faculty voice. Gabriel presented updates to the committee throughout the year. The committee received a report from Allyson Mower and Allyson Hicks on the current University policies (or lack of policies) around the need for public (university wide) notice regarding relevant meetings. Following this report, the Retirement Plans Committee was sent a letter from the SACAP requesting:

- 1) meetings be announced publically in advance online;
- 2) meetings are open to the University community;
- 3) a period of public comment is available at some point during each meeting; and,
- 4) meeting minutes be posted on the web.

The RPC agreed to these requests. Representatives from the RPC also met with Senate Chair Christy Porucznik, Gabriel and Mary Beth to discuss some faculty/staff concerns regarding the RPC and the fiduciary responsibility to be impartial in decision making and how the agreed upon transparency steps would be implemented. In addition, the SACAP requested that the Academic Senate explore the issue of more transparency in university committees directly concerning faculty and staff. After Mary Beth made the request to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate it was determined that Allyson Mower would follow-up with the relevant bodies and determine what could be done to increase transparency.

On March 14th the RPC announced its next meeting for March 31st at 3 pm. That same day Gabriel presented his continued concerns in the new business portion of the Academic Senate meeting. As a recognized member of the RPC, he will bring these concerns with him to the March 31st meeting.

3. Prevalence and challenges facing jointly appointed faculty

Claudia Geist raised the question of whether there is a need for more University wide policy to provide guidelines for faculty with joint appointments (and possibly shared appointments). The committee discussed how various units treat such appointments differently. During several committee discussions it was recognized that setting policy could have both positive and potentially negative impacts on individual faculty members. The Office of Faculty has created a job code to identify new joint appointments but there is nothing tracked historically to identify those in shared or joint positions.

There are many questions regarding both the upsides and challenges of being connected to two departments. The goal is to get clarification of policy so people do not have too much required of them when working in two systems. The committee encouraged Claudia to continue exploring the issue and raised numerous examples of questions and concerns:

- 1) Teaching is often clearly defined in offer letter, however, service and other duties are typically not
- 2) There can be a problem when there is a new chair not understanding the arrangement; sometimes the descriptors “shared” and “joint” are used interchangeably.
- 3) There can be issues with cross listing courses and chairs asking how to count what someone is teaching;
- 4) Co-teaching is an issue and the fiscal impact can be a mess
- 5) What if the arrangement works out in one college but not in another
- 6) Exceptions can be granted but there is often a difference between policy and practice
- 7) There are programing issues in that sometimes the system won't let a person code in a joint appointment
- 8) Problems are exacerbated when a joint or shared appointment is between the Health Science and Main campus.

Other issues include office space – where to be when only one office is allowed, salary negotiations, sabbatical, service requirements, lack of transparency of what happens in each unit; what is being put on FAR who is doing evaluation, etc.

Claudia continues to work with the Office of Faculty and will be reaching out to academic units (department heads and their administrative support person) asking if they have anyone on faculty with a joint or shared appointment. After gathering this data she will reach out to those with such an appointment asking more in depth questions about their experiences, issues and concerns.

4. Reviewing all U of U policy and eliminating he/she; his/her language

The SACAP was asked by Claudia Geist to explore the possibility of reviewing all U of U policy and eliminating he/she and his/her language to be more inclusive. The committee unanimously agreed with this suggestion. Allyson Hicks noted that University policy already applies this principle but noted there were still places non-inclusive language exists.

Kent Udell worked with Allyson to review what could be done to achieve inclusion in all policy while ASUU representative Tavin Forsythe-Barker looked at ASUU policy.

Kent and Allyson created a resolution to reinforce the University's commitment to this policy. The resolution was presented by Kent and was passed easily by the Academic Senate. Allyson reported that Trina Rich is currently working on updating the language in all the academic policies. Allyson has been working closely with administrative officers of various university policies to get these documents updated. Policy owners have been very cooperative and welcome the changes. The goal is to have everything updated by the end of the semester.

5. Assistance with timing/recording of special presentations, lectures, speaker events, etc.

ASUU student representatives Hannah Wilkinson and Tavin Forsythe-Barker raised the issue that many special presentations, lectures, forums etc. occur during the lunch hour. They asked if there is a way to have such offerings spread out to different times. Committee faculty members agreed this was an issue. A subcommittee including Hannah Wilkinson, Tavin Forsythe-Barker, and Pamela Phares explored the question and discovered how decentralized scheduling of events is on campus.

While the issue of timing of special presentations has become less relevant due to COVID, there were concerns from students regarding: 1) the lack of advertisement on presentations; 2) sessions recorded for later viewing are hard to find; and, 3) numerous technical issues around hybrid classes that make participation impossible. Several in the group wondered if there could not be a site where all recorded presentations available to the public could be accessed from one site..

Dr. Phoebe McNeally, Chair of Senate Advisory Committee on IT, was contacted and will take the issue to the next meeting April 1. Hannah will provide additional detail on concerns to assist the IT committee in exploring the issue.

SACAP Members for 2021 - 2022

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hannah Wilkinson | ASUU |
| Camille Breiholz | ASUU |
| Ricky Scoggan | ASUU |
| Christina Porucznik (ex-officio) | Medicine |
| Kent Udell | Engineering |
| Joy Pierce | Humanities |
| Mary Beth Vogel-Ferguson | Social Work |
| Pamela Phares | Nursing |
| Pedro Romero | Engineering |
| Youjeong Kang | Nursing |
| Claudia Geist | Social and Behavioral Science |
| Julie Barkmeier-Kraemer | Medicine |
| Allyson Mower (ex-officio) | Libraries |
| Allyson Hicks (ex-officio) | Administration |

Former 2021-2022 members

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|-----------------------|-----------|
| Tavin Forsythe-Barker | ASUU |
| Melissa Bernstein | Libraries |

Purpose of SACAP: The Senate Advisory Committee on Academic Policy (SACAP) considers any matter relating to academic policy broadly defined, including matters relating to academic activities to teaching and research, the University libraries (formerly a function of the Senate Advisory Committee on Libraries), and salaries and benefits of faculty and other academic personnel (formerly a function of the Senate Advisory Committee on Salaries and Benefits). It may consider any relevant matter which may be suggested by members of the Committee, members of the faculty, administrative officers, or students. The Senate Executive Committee, or the Senate, may refer to this committee any question or consideration of any proposal regarding academic policy which is not otherwise assigned to another committee of the Senate, or which may benefit from study by this committee as well as another committee. Upon its selection of a subject for study, the Committee shall notify all interested agencies within the University, including standing committees, and invite their cooperation. For matters related to the University Libraries, consultation shall include library administrators, and for matters related to academic personnel, salaries and benefits consultation shall include human resources administrators. At least once each academic year the Committee shall submit a written report of its studies and recommendations, if any, to the Senate.

- Governing Document: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-002.php>