



Academic Assembly Meeting No. 10
Monday, January 24, 2022
2:05 p.m. – 3:35 p.m., Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Presenters: Tara Hicks, Natasha Martin, Shane P. Martin and Katie Oliveras.

Members Present: Carol Adams, Mimi Cheng, Mark Cohan, Marc Cohen, Yancy Dominick, Bob Dullea (*Ex-Officio*, Provost) Doug Eriksen, Nalini Iyer, Angie Jenkins (*Ex-Officio*, SUSC), JaHun Kim, Shane P. Martin (*Ex-Officio*, Provost), Kelly McBroom, Richard McGaha, Margit McGuire, Carrie Miller, Katie Oliveras, Adeline Ong (*Ex-Officio*, SUSG), Russ Powell, Bryan Ruppert, Patrick Schoettmer, Frank Shih, Heath Spencer, Kirsten Thompson, Phil Thompson and Valentina Zamora.

Guests: Sven Arvidson, Sonia Barrios Tinoco, Hidy Basta, Katherine Bollich-Ziegler, Mary Kay Brennan, Heather Brown, Maria Bullon-Fernandez, Shelley Carr, Kathleen Cook, Michelle DuBois, David Green, Ben Howe, Joanne Hughes, Jaisy Joseph, Kate Koppelman, Kevin Krycka, Agnieszka Miguel, Katherine Raichle, Jeanette Rodriguez, Teodora Rutar Shuman, Donna Teevan and Glenn Yasuda.

I. Opening Remarks

2:07 p.m. – 2:12 p.m.

- a. Meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m. by Academic Assembly (AcA) President, Frank Shih.
- b. **MOTION** Moved by Frank Shih: “Move to approve the agenda for the January 24, 2022, meeting of the AcA.” Seconded. **Approved.**
- c. **MOTION** Moved by Frank Shih: “Move to approve the meeting minutes from January 10, 2022, as revised, out of session, by AcA members.” Seconded. **Approved.**

II. Provost Updates, Natasha Martin and Shane P. Martin

2:12 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Natasha Martin, and Provost Martin provided the following background and updates on hiring an Ombudsperson—

- a. *The role has been updated to include staff as well as faculty.* This position will align with the university’s *Reignited Strategic Directions*. Thus, the role will help to create a stronger campus community and to foster inclusive excellence.
- b. *Shared governance.* Members of AcA and staff and Staff Council served on a task force to develop the position overview and gave important input on the role of the Ombudsperson. These faculty and staff expressed listening, trust and partnership as key characteristics for the Ombudsperson. They also underscored the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Their input influenced the development of the job overview.
- c. *Search firm.* Vice President Martin is leading the effort to retain a third-party search firm to assist in the search. It is important that the search firm is experienced in recruiting for this

role. The search firm will provide opportunities for further faculty and staff input as they finalize the position prospectus.

III. COVID-19 Winter Quarter Updates, Tara Hicks and Shane P. Martin **2:30 p.m. – 2:56 p.m.**

After closely monitoring international and national trends with the university's infectious disease expert, Seattle University has reason to believe that the peak of the Omicron variant has passed.

- a. Our peak occurred toward the beginning of January. Cases are dropping significantly in King County and Western Washington.
- b. We will be returning to the structure implemented in Fall Quarter 2021 before Thanksgiving. This includes our preventative measures.
- c. The university will continue the COVID-19 testing program, which will be monitored on a weekly basis to determine the program's course of action. Students are required to get tested to return to campus for WQ22. All residential students are required to do weekly testing.
- d. The university has ordered masks that comply with the CDC's updated mask guidelines. Masks will be distributed at central locations on campus. Given that there will likely be a limited supply of these masks, priority will be given to members of the campus community with a higher risk of exposure.
- e. Some AcA members mentioned that it was difficult to enforce masking in the classroom without disrupting the learning environment. Faculty request that students be notified by campus leadership about the mask policy and where to find it in the Student Handbook.
- f. Data suggests that full vaccination with the booster gives 60-70% protection against the Omicron variant while full vaccination with no booster gives 30-40% protection. The university asks students, faculty and staff to update their vaccination status with the university if they have been boosted.
- g. Due to several challenges the Omicron variant poses, Provost Martin is asking the deans of each school/college to allow additional flexibility to the FlexWork program designed to support their faculty and staff. The university recognizes that each individual and their households may be in unique situations that require this additional flexibility.
- h. The COVID-19 Containment and Prevention (C-CAP) team is currently working on a flow chart of which procedure to take when exposed, ill and/or test positive. They are working with the Marketing and Communications Department on distributing this information.

IV. Committee on Committees Updates **2:56 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.**

Shane P. Martin and Katie Oliveras

The Chair of Committee on Committees has been working closely with the Office of the Provost regarding the roles that committees will play in integrating the new *Reignited Strategic Directions*. The following updates were given by ConC's Chair, Katie Oliveras, and Provost Martin—

- a. The *Reigniting Our Strategic Directions* public launch event originally scheduled for January 25, 2022, has been canceled and President Peñalver will instead prepare a video announcement. Further, the Provost Convocation will be held on February 22, 2022 with a virtual option. Provost Martin will give remarks about the plan to implement the academic affairs related initiatives in the *Reignited Strategic Directions*.
- b. The Office of the Provost is working with faculty on revising the deans' evaluations and has created a task force, which met last week. There was a consensus that transparency, coherence and consistency for deans' evaluations, reappointments and faculty involvement are a priority. The university plans to have these changes implemented in the contracts of

- the new deans in the School of Law and College of Science and Engineering. There is work being done to implement these changes into existing dean contracts.
- c. Faculty will have an opportunity to engage in goals and initiatives within the *Reignited Strategic Directions* through a new fellowship program. Fellows will have a significant leadership role and bring their scholarly, curricular, and pedagogical expertise to the work of implementing the *Reignited Strategic Directions*. Fellows will engage in: research on best practices; public presentations and publication; direct engagement with shared governance bodies and university leadership; and collaboration with other fellows. Faculty participating in said fellowships will receive a stipend or a course release. The Office of Special Projects will coordinate the application process and help organize the fellowships. The Chair of ConC and Provost Martin will be thoughtful about how to populate these working groups and how each group will contribute to the larger effort set forth in the Strategic Directions.

V. Other Business & Discussion, Shane P. Martin

3:25 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Provost Martin plans to meet with Phillip Thompson to discuss the Early Start Resolution approved last meeting on January 10, 2022. Since an academic calendar change is not exclusively an academic topic, several other stakeholders will have to be included in this general discussion.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

*Minutes taken and submitted by the AcA Administrative Assistant,
Caroline Pedro, Senior Administrative Assistant, Office of the Provost*