



## **Academic Specialist Advisory Committee Meeting**

February 3, 2022

### Minutes

- I. **Call to Order:** 11:31am, DFL
- II. **Roll Call:** Danielle Flores Lopez (chair), Debra Thornton Fitzpatrick (Vice Chair), Karen Kangas-Preston (Secretary), Aaron Reifler (Sergeant at Arms), Suzanne Lang (AHR), Kathy Lewless (AHR), Ashley Maloff (UC), Grace Pregent (FS), Debjani Sarkar, Sarah Whitaker, Devon Akmon, Danielle Whittaker, Jenn Petzko, Bryan Beverly; Beth Judge, Jason Almerigi,
- III. **Acceptance of Minutes for December 2nd, 2021;**
  - A. emailed to all in advance
  - B. MOTION: B. Beverly, 2<sup>nd</sup>; J. Almerigi to approve as submitted. Approved.
- IV. **Associate Provost & Associate Vice President for Academic Human Resources Report** (Suzanne Lang)
  - A. Dean searches: Lyman Briggs—announcement that Kendra Spence Cheruveli will be named dean; Cheruveli has requested that the five year evaluation be done in year four since she has served one year as interim dean; College of Ed—have had two finalists interview virtually, two more to come; public presentations will be posted on College of Ed website; College of Ag and Nat Resources—the CAC has worked w/ the Provost to establish search parameters and seat committee; have requested a search firm which will be announced soon;
  - B. Associate Provost and Dean of Grad school search—three candidates were finalists; public presentations have been posted on Grad school website; committee meets to review on 2/4/22;
    1. Will the title change to Dean of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies? Not certain although the Post-Doc portion was required of candidates; will check w/ Provost
  - C. Assoc Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Development (formerly AAN) is in mid-search, have large candidate pool to review; both internal and external candidates
  - D. Assoc Provost for Outreach and Engagement position posted; will close soon; both internal and external candidates
  - E. Thriving Session for Academic Specialists is next week; please share details with other specialists and plan to attend

## V. Report of Officers

- A. **Chair Report (Danielle Flores Lopez)**— attended new fac and academic staff orientation on January 6; will present at Thriving Session next week about ASAC; Town Hall w/ Provost Woodruff on March 17, 10-11am; any ASAC members who would like to be on panel to ask questions please let Danielle know
- B. **Vice Chair Report (Debra Thornton Fitzpatrick)**—Table talks Feb. 15 noon-1—Jamie Hutchinson from Work-Life Office; Daniel Mackey from Human Resources (topic: retirement resources and planning) March 22, 12:30-1:15
- C. **Faculty Senate Representatives Report (Grace Pregent)**—FS met 1/18/22; update on COVID response from Pres. Stanley; update on MSU finances from Pres. Stanley (including report of no tuition increase, loss of international students, COVID costs, 2018 lawsuit); retirement match of 10% returned; bonus of \$1500 given to most employees; 2% salary increase; possible additional salary increase this year; Academic Congress called into session to address cuts to benefits and salary reductions from 2020; responded to questions of course modality change requests; Faculty Promotion, recruitment, retention information—report can be seen here: <https://acadgov.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/Faculty-Senate/2021-2022/2022-01-18/Presentation%20from%20Provost%20On%20Hiring%20and%20RPT-%20FacultySenate%202022-01-18.pdf>.
- D. **University Council Representative Report (Ashley Maloff)**—UC met 1/25/22; full report attached below; President Stanley addressed recovery of Brandon Santo and loss of MSU student Monica Ibarra; COVID cases have decreased; several MSU programs ranked highly in US News & World Report; first anniversary of partnership w/ Henry Ford; concerns about return to in person instruction addressed; Vennie Gore presented about divisions of student life and engagement; several retirements, furloughs; concern about facilities and aging of facilities; Code of Academic Advising resolution passed w/ 98% approval;

## VI. Reports of Committees

- A. **Elections (Ashley Maloff/Danielle Flores Lopez)**—creating timeline for elections; nomination form is ready and will be sent out Feb 14, due on March 14; thanks to Sarah Whitaker for updating ASAC website regarding elections; functional areas open for nomination: three outreach, one advising, one research, plus appointed positions;
- B. **Outreach (Sarah Whitaker)**—continuing on website updates; keeping events updated; considering a social event or activity in spring (April or May)—ideas welcome, organizing help welcome; need login info for social media accounts (Debra has the info and will share);

- C. **Promotion & Compensation (Jenn Petzko/Karen Kangas-Preston)**—requests have been made for examples of promotion documents in all areas (especially advising and outreach), committee will work to source examples; we noted discrepancy of language used on different websites (example: narrative, reflective essay, personal statement are all used to describe the same thing), will work to correct; also noted several places where “Form C” needs to be changed to “Form for Progress and Excellence”; continuing alignment work with Working Group led by Kathy Lewless; Debjani has recent promotion docs and is willing to share as examples;
- D. **Bylaws (Karen Kangas-Preston and Aaron Reifler)**—Will meet over email and see where changes need to happen
- E. **Specialists Forum** (every other year) no report
- F. **DEI (Grace Pregent)**—Thrive session upcoming, committee will do a session on DEI; upcoming spring Town hall w/ Dr. Bennet on 2/28/22; still gathering questions for that session (through 2/18);

## VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Solidarity Letter for Dr. Poitra—thanks to Bryan Beverly for revising the letter based on feedback from last meeting; would like to move forward ASAP;
  - 1. **MOTION: K. Kangas-Preston, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aaron Reifler to approve the updated letter and move forward with sending to Provost and President;**
  - 2. Discussion: since the request a lawsuit has been filed and our letter may become part of the lawsuit; some concern about the lawsuit and how MSU may be positioned within it—would be seen as evidence against the University; may want to consider consulting w/ general counsel to see if sending a letter w/ Dr Poitra's name and ASAC name included is in best interests due to lawsuit; concern that ASAC submitting a letter that could be used as evidence against MSU could be damaging and jeopardize our voice w/in the University; other requests for letters of support have not been seen publicly;
  - 3. Roll call vote: Debra Thornton Fitzpatrick—support; Karen Kangas-Preston—support; Aaron Reifler—support; Grace Pregent—support; Ashley Maloff—No; Bryan Beverly—support; Beth Judge—abstain; Debjani Sarkar—support; Sarah Whitaker—no; Devon Akmon—support; Jason Almerigi—no; Jenn Petzko—abstain; Danielle Whittaker—abstain; Danielle Flores Lopez—support; **Motion Carried;**
  - 4. Still several legal questions regarding our protocol as employees of university; it is likely that we will not get a response based on the lawsuit;

B. UCAG Proposal-Nicolas Gisholt, Ashley Maloff, Danielle Flores Lopez

1. Regarding the proposal to add one specialist to each university committee; proposal was well received but change is slow; some question of whether every other appointment type would make a similar request; it was suggested that the cycle of bylaws changes from colleges take place first and see if specialist representation changes from those; recommended to contact University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA) to request addition of specialist to that committee as first step; ASAC should determine who should contact UCFA and who attends to ensure that the change happens; may require bylaws change or amendment; suggest also working w/ AHR to help get stronger representation of specialists on UCFA; Ashley and Danielle will continue to explore w/ Nicholas

C. Petition: Regarding Restoration of the Cuts to MSU Faculty and Academic Staff Pay and Benefits-Pete Johnston—Pete is not here today; discussion tabled

**VIII. New Business**

- A. Danielle Whittaker has taken a new position at Oregon State University so will no longer be serving on ASAC

**IX. Announcements**

- A. none

**X. Comments from the Public**

- A. none

**XI. Adjournment:** 12:30pm; Motion: B. Judge, 2<sup>nd</sup>: B. Beverly to adjourn at 12:30pm.

## Attachments:

### University Council Meeting Notes 1/25/22

#### President Stanley:

- Brendan Santo has been found. No evidence of foul play or self-harm, No threat to campus at this time. Thankful for those who searched.
- Loss of MSU student Monica Ibarra. Please reach out to resources (CAPS, EAP) if in need.
- Covid cases have decreased over the past three weeks. Vaccines and boosters are key. Stadium testing is still available.
- Several degree programs were ranked in the US News and World Report.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year anniversary of partnership with Henry Ford.

#### Provost Woodruff:

- Expressed sorrow for recent student losses
- 1/31 will revert to in person learning in course catalogs (professional schools may have different needs and timelines – defer to messaging from colleges).
- Show grace to individuals in need during this time.
- Congrats to the programs that achieved the US News rankings
- AP/Dean of Grad School presentations will begin soon – involvement is encouraged.

#### Norman Beauchamp:

- Systemic racism on access to quality healthcare.

#### Karen Kelly Blake:

- Thanks to the administration on compensation meeting and working to meet needs – Academic Congress showed support.
- Diverse Black African Program will foster new collaborations and strengthen ties between Black African Diaspora, MSU faculty, academic staff, administrators, and Black colleagues at African universities.

#### Vennie Gore:

- RHS+SAS = SLE (Student Life and Engagement). Many retirements, staff leaving, and furloughs across the division.
- Holden is the youngest hall (1967) – concerns about structures.
- Talent war for new hires
- Worried about student safety

#### Resolution:

- Code of Academic Advising Resolution (ASMSU, Advisors, Teaching Faculty) passed by 98%

#### Comments from the floor:

- Many comments on the return to campus

Ashley Maloff

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Draft letter update:

The Academic Specialist Advisory Committee (ASAC) stands with Dr. Christie Poitra. Her formal complaints against her superiors at Michigan State University are not dissimilar from others across campus.

Further, we stand in solidarity with our Spartan colleagues who are experiencing inequitable compensation, workplace harassment, discrimination, and retaliation while employed with the university

ASAC calls for the university to do several things. First, ASAC calls MSU to respond to complaints of harassment in a timely and appropriate manner. Second, we call upon the university to examine compensation structures for Academic Specialists, with a specific lens focused on inequitable practices towards underrepresented and marginalized groups. More specifically, in addition to salary minimums for all Academic Specialists, appropriate similar pay for specialists who do the same work, if not the same exact position, as faculty, could be an effective mechanism to help mitigate current salary inequities at MSU.

The Academic Specialist Advisory Committee takes this matter very seriously and believes that increasing transparency around these issues could improve timeliness and outcomes for all parties involved. To that end, ASAC would appreciate an update on the situation with Dr. Poitra for our February 3rd, 2022, meeting and look forward to an equitable resolution to this matter.