MINUTES
Executive Committee
Tuesday, April 30, 2024
3:00pm – Microsoft Teams/Administration 106

Present: Melinda Smith, Chair; Joseph DiVerdi, Vice Chair; Andrew Norton, BOG Representative; Marion Underwood, Provost/Executive Vice President; Sue Doe, Immediate Past Chair; Amy Barkley, Executive Assistant; Jennifer Martin, Agricultural Sciences; Rob Mitchell, Business; Sybil Sharvelle, Engineering; Sharon Anderson, Health and Human Sciences; Antonio Pedros-Gascon, Liberal Arts Christine Pawliuk, Libraries; William Sanford, Natural Resources

Guests: Brad Goetz, Chair University Curriculum Committee; Susan James, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Peter Jan van Leeuwen, Chair Committee on University Programs; Rachel Doser, CSU PASS; Bharat Iyer, CSU PASS

Absent: Michael Antolin, Natural Sciences (excused); Zaid Abdo, Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (excused)

Chair Melinda Smith called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

April 30, 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS:

I. Minutes to be Approved

A. Executive Committee Minutes – April 23, 2024

Chair Smith: Asked if there were any corrections to be made to the Executive Committee minutes from April 23rd.

Hearing none, minutes approved as submitted.

II. Items Pending/Discussion Items

A. Announcements

1. The Next Executive Committee meeting will be held on August 20, 2024 – Location TBD – 3:00 p.m.
2. The Next Faculty Council meeting will be held on May 7, 2024 – Microsoft Teams/Location TBD – 4:00 p.m.

Chair Smith: We are finalizing the in-person location for the Faculty Council meeting and will have that information soon. It will be a hybrid meeting.

B. Provost/Executive Vice President Report – Provost Marion Underwood
Provost Marion Underwood: Would like to focus report on the demonstration that happened yesterday, Monday, April 29th. As hard as the issues are and as grave as the concerns that were raised by that group, think it went as well as it could have yesterday in terms of being an expression of democracy and a peaceful protest.

Provost Underwood: There was a post on social media on Sunday from the group who was organizing the demonstration for yesterday. This led to a conversation with several individuals, including Vice President Brendan Hanlon, Vice Provost Blanche Hughes, Marc Barker, and the police. The effort in that discussion was to get the policy into their hands and emphasize that we understood they were planning this and were welcome to assemble, and this is how you do it. We wanted to be clear about our guidelines and expectations, which are content-neutral and laid out in a policy that was developed in 2022. We had good communication about that through the evening on Sunday and through the day on Monday. There was no interference and not a big police presence, just people around to make sure that the demonstration was happening within the University’s policies. The point of these policies is to allow that kind of activity and freedom of expression without interfering with classes or the rights of others. It was a good crowd and everything done yesterday was within our policies, and do not believe our people interfered at all with their gathering and expression. Think this is evidence of a caring community where we want to preserve freedom of expression and democracy.

Provost Underwood: This is probably the first chapters of this experience that we are going to have but am heartened by how the team of people here communicated with the organizers and supported the event yesterday in a way that it could happen without kicking up any dust. The hard part for the University is that we want to allow freedom of expression and be careful about taking any strong positions. If we do, the people on the other side of the issue feel they cannot. It is a hard line to walk when people are presenting you with demands and you wish could answer every one of their questions. That is a challenge we face. We want to take seriously the important ideas expressed by the group that gathered yesterday, while knowing there are other groups that have conflicting ideas just as deeply held, and we want to be the place where all those ideas can be expressed.

Vice Provost Susan James: Asked what kind of response we are expecting.

Provost Underwood: Clarified whether Vice Provost James was asking about the response from the group or from the University.

Vice Provost James: From the University.

Provost Underwood: The next step is a meeting with some of the students in that group and President Amy Parsons. That will take place tomorrow morning, where we will listen and have dialogue led by the President. We have the Board of Governors this week and commencement next week. The hope is that we can find a way through all this so that we can keep our classes going, students can study for finals, and we can have these special celebrations and allow the Board of Governors to do their business. Expressed hope that we can find a way to allow groups to express themselves strongly and listen carefully to everything they say, while still protecting
our academic missions. This is what our policy is set up to do, and it is important that we be consistent in following it.

Provost Underwood: We need to operate with deep respect for people who we might not agree with or who might be challenging us or pushing us to have uncomfortable conversations. Think all of us, the entire community, need to be respectful of the people who assemble, even if they are not our students and are from the community. These are human beings and they have the right to their expression on campus as long as it is within our policy, which again, is content-neutral, and as long as they stay within our guidelines. The hope is that, with deep respect in every way, that we can manage and help and communicate with them to help them stay within our guidelines, so we do not need to be taking other steps.

Antonio Pedros-Gascon: Believe that democracy is messy. The process is very important, and it is important to make sure that there is room for people to express their opinions, even later on. Recommendation would be to indicate to the CSU Principles of Community that are supposed to be in place for any discussion like this. That would be a way of framing and ensuring you are providing positive steps for how to advance the discussion.

Andrew Norton: Think the Year of Democracy has helped people frame around ideas. These are complicated problems and issues, and it is complicated around how to best navigate it.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further comments or discussion, thanked Provost Underwood for report.

C. Old Business

D. Action Items

1. Election – Faculty Representatives to Faculty Council Standing Committees – Committee on Faculty Governance – Steve Reising, Chair

Chair Smith: Our first action item is a ballot of faculty representatives to Faculty Council standing committees from the Committee on Faculty Governance. Requested a motion to place this ballot on the Faculty Council agenda.

Pedros-Gascon: Moved.

Chair Smith: Requested a vote with a show of hands or indications in the chat.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for May 7th.

2. Election – Faculty Representatives to the Student Conduct Appeal and Academic Misconduct Review Committee – Committee on Faculty Governance – Steve Reising, Chair
Chair Smith: We have a ballot for faculty representatives to the Student Conduct Appeal and Academic Misconduct Review Committee, again from the Committee on Faculty Governance. Requested a motion to place this ballot on the Faculty Council agenda.

Norton: Moved.

Chair Smith: Requested a vote with a show of hands or indications in the chat.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for May 7th.

3. CIOSU Biennial Reviews 2024 – Committee on University Programs – Peter Jan van Leeuwen, Co-Chair

Peter Jan van Leeuwen: This is a memo of the work done by the Committee on University Programs. We suggested to continue all these centers, and there are three (3) recommended for termination.

Chair Smith: Thanked van Leeuwen. Asked if there were any questions or comments about the biennial reviews.

Pedros-Gascon: For clarification on the ones recommended for termination, wondered how that process worked and if there was information around why these centers are being recommended for termination.

van Leeuwen: Some of them were requested for termination by their director. Sometimes we see that the administrator wants to terminate the program, and in this case, the committee simply agreed with the decision.

Chair Smith: Explained that one of the programs, the Cell and Molecular Biology Graduate Program, is a Special Academic Unit, thus the termination.

Chair Smith: Asked if there was any further discussion about this memo. Hearing none, requested a vote to place this on the Faculty Council agenda by a show of hands or indication in the chat.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for May 7th as a report.

4. New CIOSU Applications – Committee on University Programs – Peter Jan van Leeuwen, Co-Chair

Chair Smith: Indicated that this would appear as an action item, since these are new centers being approved.

van Leeuwen: Have a question about this. The Manual does not explicitly state that Faculty Council needs to vote on this. It indicates that if the Committee on University Programs approves
the new proposals, the Faculty Council Chair will send these materials to the Office of the Provost. Not sure that Faculty Council needs to vote on this.

Chair Smith: If you look at Section B.2.6.5, in the last section, it says that the Committee on University Programs shall report its recommendations to Faculty Council, and after action by Faculty Council, the final recommendation will be reported to the responsible administrator. Expressed agreement that it is not entirely clear, but it does suggest that there is some action by Faculty Council on these recommendations. Interpretation is that this should appear as an action item on the Faculty Council agenda. Think we should revisit this.

Amy Barkley: We have voted on new centers in Faculty Council, and there was explanation about the new centers and directors were invited in case of any questions. Expressed agreement that it is not clear, but current understanding is that these have been voted on in Faculty Council.

Chair Smith: Asked if van Leeuwen wanted to provide additional context about the new centers.

van Leeuwen: Explained the three (3) new centers. The Brain Research Center is different from another on campus that works with the brain. There is a small overlap and there is an individual who is an affiliate member of both programs. In our view, that ensures there is no duplication of work. The Center for Participatory Science had an issue with the signature, but they are all good now. With the Animal-Human Policy Center, there was discussion in the Committee on University Programs because only the director was mentioned, and we did not know of any others involved. The director provided a list of those involved, and that problem was corrected. There was unanimous vote on the committee that these should be approved as centers.

Chair Smith: In a memo, it indicates that these centers were approved by a majority vote. Wondering if that should appear as “unanimous” instead.

van Leeuwen: Indicated that there were a few members who agreed to move forward if all the other members agreed, so more careful wording was used there. Asked if this should be changed.

Chair Smith: No, was just curious. Asked if there were any other questions.

Pedros-Gascon: Recommended that the director for the first center attend the Faculty Council meeting, given that it was indicated that there were some issues around some possible overlap. Would like to have them there to explain if there is discussion.

van Leeuwen: Will try to arrange this with Barkley.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further questions or comments, thanked van Leeuwen for all the work of the Committee on University Programs. Requested a motion to place this on the agenda for the Faculty Council meeting.

Sharon Anderson: Moved.

Chair Smith: Requested a vote by a show of hands or indication in the chat.
Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for May 7th.

5. Faculty Council Annual Report to the Board of Governors

Chair Smith: Indicated that this was sent separately to members yesterday. Walked members through the report. The plan is to also produce a report over the summer that we can disseminate that also includes key accomplishments of the standing committees, as well as progress from the task forces. It will also have information on the key changes to the Manual. The target for that is at the first Executive Committee meeting in the fall. Asked if there were any questions.

Norton: Asked when the annual report for the University Curriculum Committee will be completed.

Brad Goetz: Believe it will be mostly complete by next week.

Norton: Wondering whether it makes sense to include this in report to the Board of Governors, because it counters the narrative that we are stagnant and not changing with the times. Asked William Sanford when the report for the Committee on Scholarship, Research and Graduate Education would be complete.

William Sanford: We are going to meet on Thursday, and then hopefully the report will be completed within a week or two (2) of that.

Chair Smith: These could be included as appendices at the June Board of Governors meeting. Think that is a great idea. Jennifer Martin, as the new Board of Governors representative, will be leading the charge and presenting that report. Asked if there were other comments.

Pedros-Gascon: Recommended expanding on all the acronyms in the document and give the full names, since some people may not know what they are.

Chair Smith: We will clean that up. Think this is a testament to all the hard work that Faculty Council puts in. Thanked everyone for showing up, being involved, and being engaged and all the work put in on this committee.

Norton: Move that this report be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for September 3rd.

Chair Smith: Requested a vote by show of hands or indication in the chat.

Motion approved. Will be placed with annual reports on the Faculty Council agenda for September.

E. Reports

1. Faculty Council Chair Report – Melinda Smith
Chair Smith: Will have some updates for next week’s report at Faculty Council on the task forces. Will also be providing an overview of the meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, as well as recent meetings with the President and the Provost. We met recently with them along with Gamze Cavdar to discuss the salary compensation equity report. Have sent a follow-up to them to see if they would like to respond formally to the recommendations in the report and engage with that. We need to keep that conversation going. We had a standing committee meeting with all the chairs, and we discussed that a possible next step is that we could ask the Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning to do a more data-driven analysis of where the major inequities across campus are. Right after the meeting with Cavdar, the Faculty Council officers met with the President and the Provost and continued that conversation around salary inequities and expressing that it is a huge concern of faculty. Pushing for more formal engagement about this issue, as well as seeing the vision that both the President and the Provost have for the long-term plan for dealing with these issues will be important.

Pedros-Gascon: Wondering if the specific task of the committee is whether the data will be triangulated with the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) data. Comparing ourselves to outside CSU is a good thing, and the CUPA data is very good, but some disciplines are better treated than other disciplines. If you triangulate the average standard for a discipline in the whole United States rather than just the CUPA data, that is when sometimes figures start indicating clear deviances. Expressed hope that we are willing to find additional things to triangulate the data with.

Norton: This was brought up in a recent meeting that there are some disciplines that have a much larger percentage of women faculty and minorities, and those are the disciplines that historically do not receive the same salaries. That is something that this committee should be willing to engage in as well.

Chair Smith: Think this is going to come up with the hybrid RCM. They will look across campus and there are inequities on which colleges and departments get which funds. We may need to take a step back and look at all this. It often reflects the salaries in those departments.

Chair Smith: With the budget, we have heard the next step is looking at how we can get into the conversation about what those priorities will be in the future. At the budget forum, Vice President Hanlon mentioned that the first version of the budget will be in October, so we as a committee, and Faculty Council more broadly, have another opportunity to weight in early. There will probably continue to be cuts in the future. A question that was asked today at the forum was whether the 3% increase was going to be included from the beginning for faculty, and Vice President Hanlon indicated that they would, similar to this year.

Sue Doe: Asked if it was possible to get a copy of the pie chart that was presented at the budget forum, so that we can see the numbers that are associated with the various wedges so we can interpret. Would also like an explanation about how these millions that we have are causing us not to have money that we think we have for compensation, for instance. We have the $5 million for the veterinary hospital, for utilities and deferred maintenance, and for commitments from the past. Think these are things that Faculty Council should be paying close attention to. These are all things that are going to linger and will therefore have an impact on the overall ability to
compensate people and do other things. Think it is worthy of further inquiry about what the plan is going forward.

Chair Smith: Thanked Doe. Shared the pie chart with Executive Committee. What is shown here is what units get the proportion of the budget, and the other is the portion that was contributed to reallocation.

Doe: Was struck that it is rather ambiguous because it is not a number or percentage shown. Gave example of the Libraries. It looks like their contribution to budget cuts is greater than their overall budgetary portion, but it is hard to interpret without actual percentages of the whole.

Rob Mitchell: Being mindful of the cost side of the equation, we really have two (2) big levers. With state money, not sure we will be seeing a lot of new state money in the future, so we need to figure out other ways to be smart about where we are cutting costs and trying to gain efficiency. It would be great to get a sense of what the strategic aspect is because they did not say that everyone would get cuts across the board. It would be nice to hear more on that. We need to be mindful of our opportunities so that we are going out to grow revenue and look for new opportunities to drive revenue and drive new students here. Would invite us as Executive Committee, and Faculty Council more broadly, to think hard about how we can be creative and nimble, while still being deliberate in the process.

Pedros-Gascon: Think it is important to transmit to the Board of Governors that we may be appreciative of some of their initiatives but having them seed the money and then having us be committed to continue paying is unfair. This merits some serious consideration. We have also been hiring more people who are supposed to be the ones interpreting and understanding the world outside, and we are continuing to pay those people while asking faculty to start being those same people. Was hired to be a professor, not to recruit people.

Doe: Asked if there was any mention in the budget presentation about CSU Spur.

Chair Smith: Believe CSU Spur is still on the CSU System books.

Norton: Think a portion of CSU Spur personnel is on our budget and some of the programming stuff, but not the capital or maintenance items.

Mitchell: Would like to respond to Pedros-Gascon’s statement. Am not saying that we need to be the ones doing the recruiting. It is in the work of teaching that we need to be thinking about this. Indicated that he is making some tweaks to courses over the summer, because things are changing in the world. Would not want to be out there recruiting students necessarily but want to be building and creating content that makes them want to come here.

Jennifer Martin: It is no longer realistic for CSU or any other institute of higher education to be stuck in the past. Expressed worry that we are ignoring the change that is happening alongside us as we are moving forward. We need to acknowledge where higher education is going from a budget perspective and make changes institutionally to address that reality.
Chair Smith: Expressed appreciation for Martin’s comments. However, the only data that has been compelling is the graph where the inflection point, around 2008-2009, had an equal amount coming from tuition and the state. Since then, the state provides 30%, and tuition is 60%, verifying that the tuition is bearing the load of how we run our university. It is probably a similar trend in other places, although ours is bad, given that Colorado is 49th in the nation as far as how much we put into higher education in the state. Have not seen data put together to suggest what would drive increased enrollment, whether it is us innovating in the classroom or a winning football team. Not saying that we should not be innovating, but wondering what way we should be innovating that would be most effective.

Martin: Think there are examples of institutions that are innovating and are seeing increased enrollment. Think this is a question for our campus, what we do as faculty and what our future looks like. If we do not provide a return-on-investment to students as to why they should pay to come here, they will not come. We have to assess for ourselves what it is that we can offer in a competitive marketplace. Think faculty need to be willing to say that we need to do things differently than we may have been. Do not want us to shy away from asking the question because it is uncomfortable.

Chair Smith: Expressed agreement that this is a question we should be asking, but it is a hard question to ask people who are unpaid and not being compensated for the work they do already and ask them to innovate and come up with new ideas. As Faculty Council, we should think hard about how we can have a voice in that conversation and a place to stake our claim, whether it is innovating or otherwise. Think we would rather be in that position than having administration give the order.

Martin: Advocating for us to not wait until the edict comes down and that we engage in the conversation actively and be willing to do a self-assessment.

Mitchell: When we talk about uncertainty, it is about action or innovation in the face of uncertainty, and by the time we have the data that tells us what to do, it will be too late to do any of those things. The way to manage this is by trying lots of things and taking a portfolio approach. We do not have to try to predict the future, but we can manage the future by trying things and experimenting.

Chair Smith: Expressed agreement. It would be great to have commitment from administration that the dollars will follow the innovation and the work that goes into it. If we are asking faculty to step up, then we should have a commitment that says they will get compensated.

Mitchell: We are working on that.

Sybil Sharvelle: The value of universities is under question in this country right now, and there is a harsh reality that the return-on-investment is not there for a lot of people and we have to figure out how to manage this. Think there are a lot of things that we can do that are exciting and innovative. Think Chair Smith’s point is well taken. If faculty are charged with keeping universities innovative, useful, and valuable for students, then we should have pay for that.
Chair Smith: Thanked everyone for the conversation. Like the idea of thinking about how we can think strategically as a group.

2. Board of Governors Report – Andrew Norton

Norton: This will be last Board of Governors meeting as the Board of Governors faculty representative. Items that are coming up on the agenda will be the final incremental budget presentation by Vice President Hanlon. Encouraged members to watch the most recent budget presentation.

Norton: A big change that was discussed by Vice President Hanlon was that the Board of Governors changed the path that dollars flow from the state to the institutions. Previously, money was appropriated by the state and the Board of Governors gave it to campuses and they taxed the campuses. Now, the money flows to the System and the System allocates it, but they skim off the top rather than taxing it back. Vice President Hanlon indicated that this does not affect the bottom line. What it does do, though, is formalizing the control the Chancellor has over the budgets to the three (3) campuses, so that may cause some consternation, although in a practical sense, that has always been the case. A nice benefit of this for the future though is that it will make the System budget more transparent to us.

Norton: Other items on the Board of Governors agenda include changes to their emeritus policy for administrators, and that will allow administrators, even senior administrators, to receive the title of emeritus after ten (10) or more years of experience and have done extraordinary work. There will also be a presentation on the annual deferred maintenance budget for the System and the campuses. We did receive a larger appropriation of state funds for deferred maintenance projects this year, but we are still far behind.

Norton: Will be spending a significant amount of report on the salary equity report and will bring forward the recommendations from that committee to the attention of the Board of Governors.

Norton: There will also be the groundbreaking for the Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Doe: Thanked Norton for service as the Board of Governors faculty representative. Want to acknowledge the amount of work Norton has done in this position.


No report at this time.

F. Discussion Items

1. CSU PASS – Rachel Doser, Postdoctoral Researcher, Dr. Tom LaRocca’s Healthspan Biology Lab, Department of Health and Exercise Science & Bharat Iyer, Postdoctoral Fellow, Marcus Lab, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Rachel Doser: Many on campus are not aware that we have a postdoctoral association here on campus. We call ourselves CSU PASS, and we wanted to provide a brief introduction of ourselves and what we do. We could use assistance with advocating and integrating postdocs on campus.

Doser: CSU PASS technically started in 2016, and then in 2021, some of the current CSU PASS officers started spearheading this organization and getting it active on campus. Their mission was to be a liaison between postdocs and university leadership to advocate for any type of topics that relate to postdocs. We are also focused on trying to create an integrated and campus-wide postdoc community. We also host an annual postdoc appreciation week, which we do to recognize the significant contributions of postdocs on campus. In addition, we do our best to sponsor as many travel and professional development awards for postdocs, which is actually one of the few financial sources that postdocs have access to for these types of opportunities on campus. There are some specific needs for postdocs, so we are developing a professional development series. We wrapped up our spring seminar series last week, and some of those topics included discussions on job applications, strategically planning postdoctoral tenure for alternative career paths to academia. We are also hoping to help postdocs hone or learn grant writing skills, mentoring, and things that will help them with next steps. Our biggest event of the year is the annual postdoc research symposium, which we did in March and had over one hundred (100) postdocs and researchers.

Doser: We currently have 317 postdocs, but it is surprisingly hard to track down how many postdocs we actually have. They are distributed over thirty (30) departments, and we are attempting to get a number of how much funding postdocs are bringing to campus. The way the postdocs are distributed is that there are one or very few postdocs in departments across campus, which makes CSU PASS motivated to try to cultivate an inclusive community across the campus, as there are many postdocs that may feel alone.

Doser: We have both international and national scholars. Wanted to mention this because this means they have diverse needs and challenges. CSU PASS is devoted to being a voice for our international scholars and making sure their needs are advocated for. These postdocs don’t just support research programs and write grants here on campus, but they also mentor undergraduate students, graduate students, other research fellows, and the majority of us do teach, usually on a volunteer basis.

Doser: We are an organization on campus and not a representative body. We do need help advocating for postdocs and integrating on campus. We are hoping that Faculty Council will consider a couple ideas. The first would be integrating postdoctoral mentoring guidelines into the faculty handbook. We could also incorporate postdoctoral representatives on standing committees as ex officio members. Recommended also creating campus-wide guidelines to promote salary equity across departments for postdocs. Encouraged members to check out their website and to attend their monthly meetings, which occur on the first Friday of every month from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Norton: Thanked Doser for all the work being done by CSU PASS. We know this is an enormous amount of work. Wondering if the new Human Resources system will help track postdocs better in the future.

Doser: The new system is what allowed us to have access to who is considered a postdoctoral fellow. It was nearly impossible with the old system.

Norton: Want to also acknowledge the difficulty of working with this group, because many of them are only here a short amount of time.

Doser: Think you would be surprised, we do have a lot of postdocs that stay here for five (5) to seven (7) years.

Bharat Iyer: Think that scenario is changing. To the question about Human Resources and how they are handling that, it has also changed because of how the designation changes. Postdocs, if they stay past a certain amount of time, are classified as research scientists, but what they are doing and contributing does not change. They are still postdocs, but designation-wise, the University looks at them differently.

William Sanford: It is nice to see this work being done around postdocs. Was on a task force in 2009 that similarly could not figure out how many postdocs were on campus. Could see that the Committee on Scholarship, Research and Graduate Education could deal more with the postdocs. The Vice President for Research’s office is supposed to be part of the committee, so this could be something to consider as representation on Faculty Council on a standing committee.

Pedros-Gascon: Think it is important to have clear guidelines for the postdocs. They are facing a set of issues that other people don’t have to face and it is necessary to also make sure that specific standards of mentoring are implemented.

Chair Smith: Clarified that the intention of this presentation is to raise awareness of CSU PASS with Faculty Council and Executive Committee can consider this further. We will be in touch about meeting to continue this discussion.

G. Executive Session – Presidential Survey Memo [see document emailed separately]

Chair Smith: Requested a motion to enter Executive Session.

Pedros-Gascon: Moved.

Sharon Anderson: Seconded.

Executive Committee adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Executive Session concluded at 5:38 p.m.
Melinda Smith, Chair
Joseph DiVerdi, Vice Chair
Andrew Norton, BOG Representative
Amy Barkley, Executive Assistant