



FACULTY SENATE

**Student Affairs Committee**

Minutes

November 5, 2020

8:30-10:00

Microsoft Teams

- Present** Kenneth Allen (CNHS), Charlie Borah (SGA), Sin Yee Chan (CAS), Thomas Chittenden (Faculty Senate President), Terry Delaney (CALs), Jonathan Flyer (LCOM), Steve Gove (GSB), Patricia Mardeusz (LIB), Jennifer Prue (CESS), Kris Stepenuck (RSENr), Berke Tinaz (GSA), Sarah Twitchell (LCOM), Scott Van Keuren (CAS)
- Absent** William Louisos (CEMS)
- Guests** J. Dickinson, Ryan Hargraves

Co-Chair Jennifer Prue called the meeting to order at 8:30 am via Microsoft Teams.

- 1. Minutes.** The minutes of October 2020 were approved with no changes.
- 2. Proposal to extend or remove standardized tests (SAT/ACT) in UG admissions, Ryan Hargraves.** Covid-19 has forced the university to evaluate and change policies around enrollment management and admissions. The pandemic has created challenges for students to take standardized tests, especially in populated areas. The University of Vermont has implemented a one-year pilot that makes standardized tests optional for UG admissions. Even before the pandemic, the university was looking at standardized tests and how they impact the applicant pool. The university is at about a 70% acceptance rate. UG Admissions look at three categories when looking at candidates.
  1. Can they do the work?
  2. Will they do the work?
  3. What else will they bring to campus?

Recognizing the shortfall of relying only on objective criteria such as test scores, Admissions has included essay responses to evaluate other desirable traits, including intellectual curiosity, grit, and cultural fluency.

This first-year pilot looks at the critical issues going forward.

- What would be the long-term impact if the university went to test optional?
- What measures would be put in place to account for the loss of standardized tests?
- Will the institution of this policy help increase student diversity?

Additional discussion focused on whether standardized tests were fair measures to determine admission to educational institutions including UVM. Several voices pointed out the potential for systematic bias in such tests (e.g. SAT, ACT), and a resultant inequity on admission that disfavors persons based on socioeconomic factors.

A resolution below addresses both COVID-related challenges and potential flaws in standardized tests, and asks for a 2-year extension on the test-optional option for UG admission.

### **SAC Motion on Standardized testing.**

In part due to the challenges and risks associated with COVID-19, as well as inequity and bias that may be ingrained into standardized tests, the SAC moves to extend the test-optional option for UG admission, for TWO admission cycles, with later consideration of making this change permanent. This would apply to students entering for the fall of 2021 through 2023.

Terrence motioned to approve the proposal; Berke seconded the motion.

Approve: 13                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0

The test-optional motion approved by the SAC.

### **3. Student stress; proposal to temporarily “soften” requirements for late withdrawal in the Fall 2020 semester, J. Dickinson.**

For the Fall 2020 semester, the Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate supports the Student Services Collaborative in their work with UVM students by granting additional flexibility in the reasons and specific documentation required to grant a late withdrawal request for a student. Students would need to follow regular late withdrawal procedures by requesting a late withdrawal from their Dean’s office. The Dean’s office will gather more information about the student’s situation and will determine whether extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19 played a significant role in the student’s ability to progress in the courses or courses for which a withdraw is requested. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis and all emails and other documentation related to the process will be kept to support records of all approved W requests. This flexibility is for Fall 2020 semester only.

Scott motioned to approve the proposal; Berke seconded the motion.

Approve: 14                      Oppose: 0                      Abstain: 0

The motion was distributed electronically by the Faculty Senate Office and approved by the SAC.

### **4. Black Lives Matter Resolution.**

#### **Resolution In Support Of Black Lives Matter**

**WHEREAS**, Black Lives Matter, the truth of which all citizens hold to be self-evident.

**WHEREAS**, the faculty have shown a willingness to grow by acknowledging our responsibility to clearly and publicly support the worldwide movement for racial justice.

**WHEREAS**, although the majority of our campus community is white, there is diversity in our community.

**WHEREAS**, the faculty supports the rights of all people and recognizes the need to show Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in our community that we support them, that we acknowledge the struggles they have faced, and that we seek to set a standard for all people to respect these members of our community.

**WHEREAS**, the administration has acknowledged a commitment to the value of Justice in its Our Common Ground statement which calls on the UVM community to “unite against all forms of injustice”.

**WHEREAS**, we wish to show support to the Black Lives Matter movement by acknowledging the long history of racism in our country and the continued need for change, recognizing that change will not come solely from awareness of racism but from both discussion and action not just from within our government but also from our institutions of higher education which have the power to be transformative.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Faculty Senate of the University of Vermont support the Black Lives Matter movement and call on the University administration to display a ‘Black Lives Matter’ flag and a ‘Black Lives Matter’ sign in front of the Davis Center on the University of Vermont campus indefinitely or until such time as the faculty, through the Faculty Senate, approve of the removal of the sign and the flag.

Kenneth motioned to approve the proposal; Scott seconded the motion.

Approve: 4

Oppose: 5

Abstain: 3

The Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter was not approved. The SAC will put this on the agenda for the December meeting.

**5. New Business.** There was no new business at this meeting.

The SAC was adjourned at 10:00am. The next meeting of the SAC will be on December 3rd at 8:30am on Microsoft Teams.