

## CLA Senate April 2020 Minutes

### 1. *Approval of Agenda*

- Approved at 2:32pm

### 2. *Approval of Minutes*

- Approved: 2.33pm

### 3. *Dean's report*

The Dean informs us that decisions are in the process of being made about whether they'll be in person classes in the summer semester. With regards to classes this semester, he notes that there'll be more flexibility concerning the incomplete policy. While the university wants to be flexible, the administration is cautious about being so flexible that we set students up for failure. He also informs us that the Faculty Council are voting on a number of issues, including extensions for graduate students completing degree programs. We should hear about that soon. He closes this segment of the discussion by reminding us that next Monday is a holiday—faculty ought to ensure that they observe this even though we're teaching remotely.

Turning to financial issues, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* is reporting that UMB will receive \$12 million, half of which is designated for students. However, the Dean warns that no-one should be counting on that money yet. State subsidies will likely be reduced in light of us receiving these funds, and so we may not see any additional money in reality. The Dean is especially worried about 91C cuts, which allows the state to ask for money back.

The Dean then turns our attention to virtual open days, commencement, and convocation. Starting with the good news, attendance was high on the last virtual open day. Things are looking good for Fall registration. While approximately three-quarters of surveyed students would like to postpone commencement, that decision is still under discussion. However, the PhD hooding ceremony will take place virtually. Since approximately 85% of students will still be in the area, we could postpone. A committee is looking into the options. The Honors College plans to do convocation virtually, but they're still working out the details.

He closes his report by telling us that the administration has surveyed students to see how they're doing in general and how they're finding remote learning. As expected, the response rate has been poor. He asks us to look out for a faculty survey which will be coming soon.

### *Questions for the Dean*

1. The Moderator asks about the possibility of a virtual Fall semester and its impact on enrollment. The Dean tells us that the Chancellor has a planning group looking at remote learning in the Fall. He's skeptical that this will adversely affect enrollment. If we're online, our peer institutions will be too. Moreover, if the economy is as bad as projected, then our enrollments might be up in the Fall.
2. The Moderator also asks for clarification on the new pass/fail policy, in particular what will happen to students who've already taken 8 pass/fails. The Dean tells us that it's highly unlikely that many, if any, students will fall into this category, but those that do should contact Joan Becker. Exceptions will likely be made.
3. The Moderator asks whether counting pass/fail towards major requirements is a CLA policy or whether it is up to departments. The Dean tells us that it's up to departments, and all but two CLA departments accepted it.
4. Another Senator asks about hiring. The Dean informs us that all searches in progress have been cancelled, including staff searches that were almost finalized. We learned about this on Friday morning. (MLLC and the writing center have had active searches cancelled as a result.) UMB have already made cuts that Lowell and Amherst have not, and the Dean would like this recognized.
5. A Senator asks about the pass/fail policy for graduate students, expressing special concern about international students and how this policy might affect their immigration status. The Dean tells us the policy was developed in consultation with every CLA department with graduate programs.
6. A Senator asks whether student's who've paid their commencement fee will be refunded. The Dean tells us that this is still being discussed, but that the fee is not just about the day; it covers a lot of administrative work behind the scenes.
7. Another Senator asks about research grants that were supposed to be used by the end of semester. Can that money be carried over? The Dean informs us that GOF funds cannot be carried forward, but there's more flexibility concerning internal grants.
8. Finally, a Senator asks for an update on reimbursement for travel money for cancelled conferences. The Dean informs us that his understanding is that if you did not get reimbursed—and a credit from the airline or hotel *does* count as reimbursement—you're allowed to use union funds for cancelled travel and accommodation.

The Dean's report ends at 3:04pm

### ***4. Moderator's report***

The Moderator starts by informing us that the timeline for sharing senate materials would be the same as it was with April (a two-day delay to give AAC and MHSP more time). She then directs our attention to a shared excel file that lists our appointment terms. Any Senator whose term is up, should either contact the Moderator if he/she/they intend to serve another two-year term or suggest another departmental member. The same applies to NTT Senators. To ensure fair representation, At Large Senators are expected to stand down after their terms.

### **5. Proposals from MHSP**

- i. *Applied Linguistics accelerated BA/BS-MA program*  
Unanimously approved 3:29pm
- ii. *Communications Minor change in electives*  
Unanimously approved 3:29pm
- iii. *Communications Major and Minor removal of AMST349L elective*  
Unanimously approved 3:30pm

### **6. Proposals from AAC**

- New courses
  - i. *ART 313L: The Art of Early Modern Venice*
  - ii. *Art 368: History of Photography*
  - iii. *ENGL 121: Connecting Poetry and Patients*
  - iv. *POLISCI 390: Inequality and Redistribution*
- A Senator points out resolvable issues with the ART 368 one form.
- Unanimously approved as a block 3:32pm

#### Changes to Existing Courses

- i. *AFRSTY 489: Senior Capstone*
  - ii. *LATAM 305: Caribbean Culture and Society*
  - iii. *SOCIO 102: Sociology in Boston*
- A Senator points out resolvable issues with the LATAM 305 one form.
  - Unanimously approved as a block 3:34pm

### **7. New Business**

*Discussion of whether to revise the double counting policy at the behest of the Registrar's Office*

The current policy is as follows: "Students who elect a Double Major, where the Majors are from different Colleges, must complete all requirements of each Major with the following exception: no more than two courses at the 300 level or above may be "double counted", i.e. counted toward the fulfillment of both Majors. Students who elect a

Minor that is not in the same College as their Major may not count more than one course in the 300 level or above towards the fulfillment of both the Major and the Minor. Rule for double counting courses for 2 or more majors/minors within the same college (CLA): Students who elect a Double Major complete all the requirements of each major with the following exception: up to 2 courses may be “double counted,” towards the fulfillment of both majors. Students who take a minor in a field of study closely related to their Major may not count more than one course toward the fulfillment of the major and minor.” The Registrar’s Office would like to revise this policy so that students can double count more courses.

The Moderator starts by putting this request into context. When the CLA Senate originally considered the Registrar’s request to revise this policy, it was wary. A decision was made to check in with departments. The Moderator also informs us that Faculty Council has been tracking an alarming pattern of administrative offices—particularly the Registrar’s Office—requesting pedagogical changes that really ought to be initiated and made by faculty. The Moderator urges us to bear this pattern in mind when making our decision—we should not feel obliged to make the requested changes. The Moderator opens up the issue for discussion.

A Senator reports that her department had a lively discussion about this issue in which they agreed that this should not be the Registrar’s call, that this should not go to CLA, but Faculty Senate. However, that department were substantively and evenly split about whether to revise the policy. The Moderator follows up, pointing out that as a CLA policy, it does fall under the Senate’s remit. Another Senator asks for further clarification: how can this be a CLA policy when many students are double majoring in a major outside CLA? The Moderator explains that double majors should have a home college. However, the Senate agreed that the Faculty Council might be the best first port of call because many students, who would be affected by any policy change, take programs of study within and outside our college.

Following up on this discussion, another Senator asks why members of the original Senator’s department were against revising the policy in line with the Registrar’s proposal. The worry seems to be that, especially for double majors in similar areas of study, students would be able to claim competency in two areas while completing substantially fewer courses than judged necessary by the faculty. Of course, the original Senator points out, if the policy were revised, departments could change their major/minors in response to it.

Another Senator asks for clarification on the Registrar’s motivation for requesting this policy change. The Moderator explains that they’re motivated by complaints from

students who are delayed in graduating. However, this seems like an advising problem—too many students realized that they cannot double count certain courses late in their academic career. Moreover, many of these issues are dealt with in-house, with departments waiving certain requirements or counting certain courses on an ad hoc basis.

A Senator asks if we know which students are making complaints to the Registrar. Another Senator, who advises students in the Honors College, notes that many of her students are overwhelmed by various requirements as a result of, in effect, triple majoring.

As the discussion comes to a close, a Senator advises that we consider what our peer institutions do and cautions us against becoming an outlier. Another—garnering wide support from the Senate—expresses frustration with the Registrar’s overreach. We should ask that they stop making such requests from faculty. Finally, a Senator suggest that we let Faculty Council take a position, and then revisit the proposal. Since this is a cross college issue, it makes most sense for this discussion to start in the Faculty Council.

The Moderator proposes the following: we report back to the Registrar, via Jane Adams, that we are not willing to make any changes at this time. We wait for the Faculty Council to discuss this issue since it is a university wide matter. Since the Senate was not obligated to debate this issue there was not vote, but broad agreement to keep the policy as it currently stands and see what happens at FC.

#### *8. COVID-19 Check in*

Moderator makes the suggestion that departments add language to course evaluations to institutionalize the memory of CV-19 for future review situations. The concern is that while committees for upcoming reviews and promotions will likely be very cognizant of these extenuating circumstances, this context will be soon be forgotten and it won’t be considered in reviews that happen ten years from now as current faculty seek promotion to full professor, for example. Including language on course evaluations will help to ensure the appropriate contextualization of these evaluations in future reviews.

A senator also suggested that faculty note these conditions when filling out their AFRs for this year and that DPCs reference it in their reviews to further document this event.

The moderator agreed to send out some language from her department that Senators could adapt for their own evaluations if they should choose.

**9. Adjourn**

Meeting ends at 4:06pm