

NOTES  
from the September 27, 2021  
Meeting between President Newsom  
and  
The Faculty Senate Executive Committee

<https://se-edu.zoom.us/j/94752241928>

Attendees - 2021-22 Executive Committee

Chair, Kay Daigle  
Past-Chair, Randy Clark  
Chair-Elect, Kate Shannon  
Archivist, William Fridley (zoom attendance)  
Parliamentarian, Rolando Diaz  
Treasurer, Stan Alluisi  
Recorder, Matthew Sparacio

Other Attendees

University President, Thomas Newsom  
Vice President for Academic Affairs, Teresa Golden

- 1) Introductions and opening remarks
  - a) Chair Daigle notes that there is one change to the agenda, clarifying that the ad hoc committees were created in Fall 2020, not 2021 (agenda point is updated below).
  - b) Opening Remarks by President Newsom for topics not included on the agenda
    - i) The University has had good luck with covid vaccine clinics; approximately 50 individuals vaccinated each time the trailer has been on campus.
      - (1) Some updates on the COVID-19 vaccine Incentive program
        - (a) 309 faculty and staff members reported as fully vaccinated (out of 599)
        - (b) 1534 students reported as being fully vaccinated (out of 5244 ~ 29%)
          - (i) Clarification on the vaccine numbers: we have not yet separated out the vaccine numbers according to class or mode of delivery (online vs. in-person enrollees). This is because the vaccine repository we created on Blackboard enrolled everyone. Senator Alluisi asked if we can run reports for a specific campus, but the President says that is information that needs to be pulled by hand.

- (ii) Our campus community vaccine rates are reflective of Bryan County overall
  - (iii) Because the incentive program technically expires at end of month, we will have to create a new assignment on Blackboard to ensure that those who recently got their first shot can be eligible through October.
- (c) President Newsom notes that campus offers flu vaccines at the clinic that are available at any time.
- ii) The President's office is looking into selecting scheduling software that would allow for all facilities to be scheduled in one place. They are looking at a couple of different vendors for this centralized scheduling program.
- iii) Similar news for the Early Alert software. President Newsom confirms that Ellucian software will be giving a presentation in the next couple weeks. He says that he wants to vet all the vendors before bringing it forward to faculty.
- iv) Some updates on upcoming deadlines
  - (1) Reminder that the AP panel is on October 1 (Dean Blackwood)
  - (2) Einstein's Bagels is expected to open on October 21
  - (3) The administration-run Shared Gov. Forum will be on Oct. 11
- v) Lastly, congrats to Dr. Diaz, Southeastern's media star!

2) What is the status of the agreement regarding faculty compensation?

- a) President Newsom stated that it is his "plan is to get back to the step increases going forward and to have that be a budget priority." Expects that we will be doing that each year. One caveat: in our step increases we would have the imposed ceiling.
- i) President Newsom said that regarding the salary card he is looking to put together a working group to discuss it "philosophically" (meaning, "is it the best tool or instrument to use?") He wants this group to look at what other universities are using and how they determine compensation. He then wants the working group to put forth some recommendations.
  - (1) Clarifies that it is very important for us to have HR and Dennis Westman's office involved early and often.
  - (2) States that there will still be increase in base pay in the interim while we look at the salary card, likely starting with 3%. This number may change – he wants everyone to look at the impact on current salaries in terms of the budget as well as any unintended consequences with new hires before a decision is made.

- b) To summarize, wants tackling faculty compensation to be a three-step process:
  - i) Re-engage the step increases
    - (1) These steps would be formulated and built in for current faculty following the current guidelines.
  - ii) Look at built-in base increases to the current salary card.
  - iii) Put together a working group to reexamine the appropriateness of the salary card.
- c) President Newsom was asked to clarify if these changes will include insurance costs.
  - i) Responds that “It is important that the institution cover those costs. I say that with the understanding that as long as the institution can cover the costs, it will. Our increase [in insurance costs] was significant this last year, but we were able to do that. This is a priority – insurance and retirement. We will cover it as long as we can in our capacity.”
  - ii) When asked if this will also apply to adjunct faculty, provided the following answer: “It’s not as easy because of negative tax implications for employees. We are working on it.”
  - iii) Senators Shannon and Fridley voiced their appreciation for the university’s commitment to health care and retirement.
- d) Senator Fridley asked President Newsom for clarification on the step increases: “Are you thinking about a fixed amount, or continue the \$546?”
  - i) Newsom’s response: “We will look at an amount that is adequate for that specific time.” Reiterated that he is committed to step increases and figuring out what a sufficient amount is.
  - ii) Senator Fridley: “The Faculty Senate framed it as a “cost of living” adjustment (typically a %) as opposed to an amount. Because the FS has a budget committee - which is charged with advising the Vice President – do we need another working group?”
  - iii) Newsom’s Response: “It’s likely we need to have HR and Dennis as well as the Budget committee. We do need to have other folks to answer questions about process and legality. That gives us better shot of avoiding negative unintended consequences.” Cites the covid incentive for faculty – to make sure that faculty received \$125 instead of \$100 was a suggestion by HR, so it’s good to have these folks in the room.

- (1) Senator Fridley states that “We need to include adjuncts in the raise discussions as well.” President Newsom agrees.
  - iv) Chair Daigle asks if we are talking about adjuncts or the adjunct rate – that makes a difference because full-time faculty receive adjunct rates for working overload. Notes that summer teaching and compensation is perhaps a later conversation worth having.
- 3) What is the status of the ad-hoc committees established in the Fall of 2020 and plans for communicating the results?
- a) President Newsom says most have fulfilled their mission and have been disbanded. Gives the following update on reports and recommendations by these committees:
    - i) Ad-Hoc Committee on Enrollment
      - (1) ATHLETICS
        - (a) Concluded that we could increase enrollment through female participation specifically. This could take the form of infusing dollars to increase participation in current teams, trainers, spirit, and everyone associated with athletics - OR - starting a new team (soccer and women’s golf). Golf may be easier because we already have a men’s team. Soccer is a team that brings students to campus. Increasing the number of students on rodeo is also worth looking into.
        - (b) Newsom says that we didn’t act on any of that, mostly because the NCAA is in flux. Stated that plans on putting together a working group in late fall /early spring focusing on budget impact and what the needs are. Need to approach this from all angles – it is hard to have a soccer team without a soccer field. These discussions have delayed implementation.
      - (2) FINE ARTS
        - (a) Committee recommended more scholarships and recruitment in addition to facility improvements. There was a specific focus on marching band. Newsom says SOSU took \$25k out of the university’s BP Oil Money Cash and used it to recruit additional band members. We were able to increase the band size for this fall. Some of that money will carry over to next year. Most of these students live on campus, so a high priority in terms of housing and

meal plans. We will eventually be able to determine if this infusion was beneficial. Fine Arts is a big part of the facility master plan as well.

(3) HONORS/PLC

- (a) Committee recommended increasing their numbers through scholarships AND go from one-year residency requirement to a two-year residency requirement. SOSU relaxed this a couple of years ago because the residence halls were full. We are not full anymore, so let's return to this. We have also equalized financial incentives for PLC and HONORS and saw some good results (some students only applied to one, instead of both). We infused \$25k for scholarships and have an ongoing plan to increase the number by 4 over 5 years for each program. This will help drive our PLC growth. Once the growth plan is complete, we should have 75 PLC 225 HONORS. Additional faculty hires are also part of this plan – there is one line that should be filled next year. Reiterates that faculty size needs to grow, and admin needs to grow to help support this program's projected growth.

(4) DIVERSITY

- (a) Recommended that we build a dedicated student center for students (with staffing). This is part of our facility master plan. We are working with our current students to form affinity groups to support those populations. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee finished their charge of crafting a shared values statement - this will be sent out to campus in the next week or so. That committee will continue to work, and eventually will be a permanent committee to help develop affinity groups on campus to support retention and recruitment.

(5) POLICY ON POLICIES (PoP)

- (a) President Newsom says it did great work and that we have a great policy on policies now. We are running the telework policy through that process.
- (b) Regarding TELEWORK: per the PoP it has been given to VPAA Golden and VPBA Westman to go through the faculty and staff senates. Once they are returned, the recommendations will be vetted and then passed on to President Newsom for final adoption. Newsom says this process was designed more with staff in mind, and that there has already been good feedback from the faculty side. Is using this as a litmus test to see if we made

need to have separate forms for staff and faculty and notes this is “the beauty of this process.”

(i) Chair Daigle passed on the faculty’s appreciation for Newsom’s support with faculty who desire/need to work remotely. Senator Fridley confirmed, noting how in state-wide AAUP meetings we were able to tout our policy for teleworking, with reps from other schools saying, “It must be a good time to work at Southeastern.” President Newsom said we all need to take credit for this because it “was a collective path.”

b) The conversation shifted to how these reports and recommendations will be communicated to the to the Southeastern population at large, especially regarding recruitment?

i) President Newsom says he has been a little hesitant to share because we still need some time to measure these programs’ effects.

ii) Senator Alluisi asked if will we continue having on-campus recruitment events? President Newsom says yes, these leave impressions with students.

(1) Newsom continued: Shelly Key is working on this, making sure there are on campus events. For example, we give group tours on football weekends – we have 20 RSVPs for next weekend (October 2 game). These may seem like small numbers, but already this fall we’ve had 74 applications and 22 admits because of group tours. Stresses that we couldn’t do this last year because of COVID. Said “We know where the gaps are for the Fall 2021 class and doing everything to solve this for next year.” Cited drops in enrollment because of COVID, especially in Aviation where he had to limit acceptances to ensure students had enough airtime. On top of that, ECU pulled the Nursing program, which cost us about 80-90 pre-nursing students overall and at least 60 freshmen. VPAA Golden and President Newsom are working on an announcement for a solution to the nursing departure.

iii) Senator Shannon asked what can we do to connect with the students that are no longer in HS to attract them to campus?

(1) Newsom’s Response: “We have discovered that we don’t have the capacity to reach those students. Our Admissions office is not large or modern. We have an organization in mind that is designed for this purpose. We are in the process of determining that relationship. It’s a marketing and ad buy. We will still need to determine volume and what the return will be. We also discovered that hard

(“snail”) mail made a difference last year. We are talking with another company to do a limited mail campaign to attract freshman. The company has ability to scale it. This is a challenge we are trying to face. Shelly Key has some proposals to fill these gaps.

- iv) Senator Diaz asks about the recruitment of Spanish-speaking students. Newsom says that he will have Shelly Key contact Dr. Diaz directly to follow up on this. Senator Diaz notes that the Spanish-speaking community is a way to keep numbers of enrollment stable, but we need to reach out to these folks. Can we do radio spots?
- v) President Newsom notes that, regarding recruitment, we need to attract more male students as well. The number of males seeking higher education has dramatically declined (as recently profiled in the news). Confirms that in discussion with other presidents all the RUSO schools are seeing it (for perspective, SOSU has a rough 55/45 female/male breakdown). RUSO is trying to increase male student population.
  - (1) Senator Clark asked if these recruitment plans would include media ads, and President Newsom says likely not TV because of cost. We can afford to advertise locally, though. Says that we (as faculty members) don't see Facebook ads because we don't need to market to ourselves. Marketing is considering billboards in Dallas, radio spots, etc. \*but\* we can't do this in house.
  - (2) Senator Clark asked why there was not more sustained responses from RUSO about these issues, especially if they have already identified them? President Newsom explained that the Presidents and Regents had this discussion at the last board meeting a couple weeks ago. Simply put, RUSO doesn't have money, so any potential conversations among the regionals evolves into “If I spend x dollars, I want to spend it on SOSU.” Says SOSU is in “a competitive environment.” RUSO has no marketing dollars per say. Our enrollment is down about .2% (11 fewer total students). Reiterates that enrollment rates staying flat is a good thing, all things considered, especially because we know the reasons why we are flat.
- c) Senator Alluisi asked for updates on the new OSHRE chancellor. President Newsom says the new chancellor is the current president of Emporia State and therefore understands small regional universities, and, more specifically, regional Division II institutions. Voices confidence in her selection – “She should be good.”

- 4) What is the status of the Master Plan?
- a) President Newsom began by discussing the campus survey – says we’ve already received over 400 responses (128 faculty/staff, 132 students, and 136 community/alumni). The survey will close at the end of the month. The architect chosen for the Master Plan is out of Tulsa: Dewberry. Dewberry has already given detailed thoughts and plans to the President, a couple of items which he has already rejected. In the spring they will set up on campus. And host a forum, after which the plans will be finalized. By next fall the Master Plan should be complete. President Newsom was asked what he is looking for from them? Responded by saying: “A Plan that I can sit down with in front of donors. These plans will not have detailed renderings – but instead include details like “Future site of “x”.” There are a number of high priority items: completely re-do Morrison; demo the band center; build an extension on the Student Union; make another Student Success Center in Hallie McKinney; create an Alumni fountain; upgrade The Loop. Want a plan that can integrate the rest of campus with The Loop. Newsom is confident that Dewberry is on the right path that reflects what we’ve put in the surveys. Confirms that there is a tiered time horizon for these projects: 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year.
    - i) Reiterated important upcoming opening on campus:
      - (1) Einstein’s Bagels: October 21
      - (2) Temple Family Museum of Native American Art: October 15
  - b) Newsom confirmed that we are “still working on winter expenses” (amounting to \$750,000). Confirms SOSU needs to bid for a construction manager at risk, and says these bids came in last week. Says it will take a while to complete all the winter maintenance because of the different (meaning, “outdated”) parts we need to acquire in addition to backordered materials.
  - c) We have also hired an onboard maintenance manager. Now if we have a project and it costs less than \$100,000, we will not need to bid it out (meaning it will be completed quicker).

- d) Confirms that SOSU is seeking an on-call architect for smaller projects on campus as well. Says those presentations are planned for next week after which a decision will be made.
- e) Newsom gave an update on the Rodeo Center. Southeastern got \$750,000 from the sale of the current center to cover construction costs. The City of Durant said we could build it where we initially planned \*BUT\* we also need to include a hard surface road and 47-car parking lot. That increased the overall cost of the project by \$700,000. Says we have the money, but the entire exchange triggered the need for a stamped architectural firm to be involved in the Rodeo Center – that bid will be award to Equestrian Architects later in the fall. Reiterated his desire that the impact by the rodeo center on the nature trail remains minimal.
- f) Newsom gave additional insights into the plans for Morrison: We plan to keep the façade and demo everything inside. Plans to include a black box theatre, relocate the band hall there, as well as an auditorium. Ideally, everything will be in Morrison. Notes that overall, it's likely a \$40 million project. In the interim, we will continue to update/repair lighting and roofing in Morrison and across campus.

## 5) Concluding Questions and Remarks

- a) Chair Daigle asked President Newsom a question from a faculty member: What is the President's position on mandatory vaccinations on campus?
  - i) Newsom's Response: "The current state law and executive order says I cannot mandate COVID vaccinations on canvas." Reiterates that he is vaccinated and wears a mask.
- b) A final question was directed towards VPAA Golden: Will there be a recorder provided for Chairs' Meetings to ensure that all information shared during those meetings are uniformly delivered to faculty members across campus?
  - i) Response: The VPAA office is staffed better now, so this should be more manageable. Reiterates there is no intention for highly detailed notes, but more insight would be good. We are looking to hire a dean of undergraduate studies and this responsibility would likely transition to them.
- c) VPAA Golden offered some comments on the APPM.
  - i) There is no official update to the APPM yet.

- ii) On the requests for emeritus faculty access, says that emeritus can be entered into Colleague. We still need to discuss with security if we can get them updated IDs. Admits that email accounts are trickier because it allows access to several other program subscriptions. We don't want to violate agreements. Confirms meeting with Austin Harman (CIO) and VPBA Westman, who remain confident we can provide this, but it needs to be requested by specific emeritus faculty, not automatically granted. If the email account is not used for 90 days, it will be destroyed. These points will be summarized, and details added to the APPM for this (especially limitations).
  - (1) Senator Alluisi asks if this would be retroactive? VPAA Golden responds that there is no reason why it won't be but needs to be requested. We are looking into adding this into the official retirement paperwork.
  - (2) President Newsom says that other universities are just "doing it" and we have been advised we shouldn't because it could void our Microsoft contract. Some sister institutions have stopped the policy altogether. Does say that "We will try to make it work."

Meeting Ends: 3:10 PM