

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**  
**AGENDA**  
**Monday, March 29, 2021**  
**3:30 to 5:00 PM: Zoom**

1. Presidential courtesy
2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty
3. Report from the Executive Secretary
  - a. Approval of minutes
    - i. Meeting on March 1, 2021 (attachment)
    - ii. Meeting on March 8, 2021 (attachment)
    - iii. Meeting on March 15, 2021 (attachment)
  - b. Correspondence
  - c. Oral Reports
4. Council Subcommittee Reports
  - a. Standing Calendar Review Subcommittee
  - b. Working Group on the Academic Commons (AC 5/31/19)
  - c. Subcommittee on Reconciling Sexual Misconduct Policies (AC 4/1/19)
  - d. Subcommittee on Guidelines for Non-Tenure Track Faculty Practices (AC 5/11/20)
5. Petitions for immediate hearing
6. Old Business
  - a. Proposal for Credit/No Credit Policy (attachment)
7. New business
  - a. Update from Public Health Advisory Team (attachments)
  - b. Proposal for modifications to Journal of Record language regarding Rank & Tenure (attachment)
  - c. Proposal for continuation of electronic submissions for applications for Rank & Tenure (attachment)
  - d. Report from Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees regarding March Board meeting

**Lists of Attachments, Pending Items, and Ongoing Items are on page 2.**

**List of Attachments and other materials:**

- For item 3.a.i.: Minutes of the meeting on March 1, 2021 (pages 3-8)
- For item 3.a.ii.: Minutes of the meeting on March 8, 2021 (pages 9-16)
- For item 3.a.iii.: Minutes of the meeting on March 15, 2021 (pages 17-28)
- For item 6.a.: Proposal for Credit/No Credit Policy (page 29)
- For item 7.a.: Notes from Public Health Advisory Team meetings of February 26, 2021; March 3, 2021; March 10, 2021, and March 17, 2021 (pages 30-50)
- For item 7.b.: Proposal for modifications to Journal of Record language regarding Rank & Tenure (pages 51-52)
- For item 7.c.: Proposal for continuation of electronic submissions for applications for Rank & Tenure (page 53)

**Pending Items:**

- A. Faculty Data Committee (AC 12/3/07).
- B. AC revisits the accessibility of teaching evaluation data, Due spring 2012. (AC 4/19/10)
- C. AC review of Merit Appeals Policy, once one or more have been adjudicated. (AC 11/1/10 & 5/13/14)
- D. AC three-year review of Intellectual Properties Policy, spring 2014. (AC 3/7/11)
- E. MPA, five-year review in 2017-2018 (AC 9/10/12)
- F. Revisit report from ACSC on Mission Statement re non-tenure track faculty in fall 2014 (AC 9/8/14)
- G. Review and evaluate the Pass/Fail option in fall 2020 (AC 12/1/2014)
- H. Five-Year Review of MA and SYC in Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts in 2022 (AC 2/6/17)
- I. Every five-year review of AC and UCC seat allocation (done AC 5/1/17; GF 10/17), next due Spring 2022 (AC 2/7/200; GF 3/4/2000)
- J. Consider revising charge to Library Committee (AC 5/31/19)

**Ongoing Items:**

- 1. Report by SVPAA to AC each semester to inform the council of any approved exceptions to the Athletic Department's policy of not scheduling athletic events that conflict with final exams.
- 2. Report from the Committee on Conference with the Board of Trustees after each meeting with board members. At the end of each academic year, discuss items for the Conference Committee to put on the agenda for their meetings with members of the board the following year
- 3. Standing Calendar Review Subcommittee: A subcommittee of two people will be elected by the AC each September from its elected membership. The subcommittee's charge is to review all Fairfield academic calendars before their publication and make any necessary recommendations for changes to the Academic Council and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

## Academic Council Meeting

Monday, March 1, 2021

3:30 to 5:00 PM

via Zoom

### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Faculty Members Present:** Profs. Gwendoline Alphonso, Uma Balaji, Katsiaryna Bardos, Cynthia Bautista, David Downie Bob Epstein, Johanna Garvey, Shannon Gerry, Erica Hartwell, Jerelyn Johnson (Chair), Evelyn Lolis, David McFadden, Kathy Nantz, Shawn Rafalski (Scribe), Susan Rakowitz (GFS), Adam Rugg (Executive Secretary), Linda Roney, Aaron Van Dyke

**Administrators Present:** Provost Christine Siegel, Deans Andres L. Carrano, Richard Greenwald, Laurie Grupp, Meredith Kazer, Zhan Li

**Student Observer Present:** Mr. Vincent Gadioma

**Guests:** Profs. Ron Davidson (7b), Kimberly Doughty (7a), John Miecznikowski (7b)

Meeting called to order at 3:30 PM.

#### 1. Presidential courtesy.

Provost Siegel gave brief remarks. The University's SARS-CoV-2 testing continues to go well, and the University will continue to test the entire on-campus population weekly through March (Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays).

Following up questions from the most recent Provost Town Hall, regarding the nature of summer and fall teaching: Over the winter break, the decision was made for summer session I courses to be taught fully online. Now that the picture in March is a bit clearer, there may be some options available for hybrid teaching during the first summer session. For the fall, hybrid instruction will continue for undergraduate classes, and classes should be designated that way through the Registrar, with graduate classes designated as either hybrid or online to allow for flexibility in some graduate programs. There is reason to believe that we will still have some social distancing guidelines for fall, and as conditions change the University may modify its guidelines.

Professor Rakowitz made two suggestions: In the fall registration materials, perhaps a large "asterisk" that indicates "courses designated as hybrid may change to fully in person"; and the question should be taken up (at a later date) of what criteria will serve as the basis for deciding that "after a certain date, students may no longer be fully remote learners."

Professor Epstein asked when the academic tents for the spring would be installed (the answer was mid-March). Professor Hartwell thanked the Provost for giving graduate programs the freedom to elect online versus hybrid instruction.

## **2. Report from the General Faculty Secretary.**

We will have to reconvene next week (8 March 2021). The subcommittee on Guidelines for Non-Tenure Track Faculty Practices has been formed (Profs. Jocelyn Boryczka, Bob Epstein, Sally Gerard, Nick Kapoor, Evelyn Lolis, Kathy Nantz, and Harsha Sundarram,). Professor Rakowitz reported meeting with ITS three times to discuss access changes to the General Faculty Secretary website. Once details have been worked out, migration will be a big project, with new materials going behind password protection and older materials migrated to password protection later.

## **3. Report from the Executive Secretary.**

### **3a. Approval of minutes.**

Two sets of minutes (1 February and 8 February 2021) needed approval.

**Motion to approve both sets (Epstein/Bautista) passed 19-0-0.**

### **3b. Correspondence.**

Professor Rakowitz commented on a memo from the General Faculty Secretary to the Council, concerning one item that would not go straight to the Journal of Record as approved and required a minor revision. No objections or questions about this.

## **4. Council Subcommittee Reports/5. Petitions for immediate hearing/6. Old business.** (None.)

## **7. New business.**

### **7a. Update from the Public Health Advisory Team.**

Professor Doughty gave a summary update of the four meetings of the team since the last update to the council:

The 3 February 2021 meeting featured discussions on two major issues—the sharing of repopulation test results and weekly test results. The recommendations were to include some data into the University SARS-CoV-2 dashboard, and also to not strictly enforce weekly testing (although compliance is near 100%).

The 10 February 2021 meeting featured a discussion of the nasal evacuation stations at the Field House testing center. This was discussed at great length, and the consensus was that the alternatives were less ideal. As the weather improves, the plan is to move the stations outdoors. Also discussed were testing enforcement, Human Resources correspondence with employees, and the CDC two-mask recommendation.

The 17 February 2021 meeting addressed complaints about the testing center, logistics, and

supervision. Professor Erica Wuchiski was brought in as a guest to discuss. Among the topics were discussions about how long people should be allowed to continue remotely once a critical mass of the population has been vaccinated and the CDC guidelines concerning social distancing at three feet versus six.

The most recent meeting's topics concerned 100% testing through March, whether to convert to 25% testing for April, a discussion on activities during the 2021 Senior Week, and the format of classes for the upcoming summer and fall sessions.

Questions and answers: Professor Rakowitz asked about the four recent positive faculty/staff tests and whether they were traceable to the classroom. Provost Siegel indicated that, as far as is known, these were not classroom traced and that the number four included more faculty than staff. Professor Van Dyke asked for clarification that there was no concern for potential in-person classes during the summer session, and Prof. Doughty confirmed. Provost Siegel reiterated that the summer session decisions were made at an earlier time with not as much data as we have now, but that we still anticipate social distancing guidelines for the summer and fall. Professor Epstein expressed the thanks of the entire council to Professor Doughty for all of her work. Professor Alphonso asked whether the Health Team would be permanent (it will not), and if not then how long it might continue. Provost Siegel remarked that the team is an ad hoc group whose purpose is to inform the executive leadership about issues related to the pandemic, the duration of which will obviously determine the need.

#### **7b. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Proposal for a Credit/No Credit Policy.**

Professors Davidson and Miecznikowski were invited as guests to discuss the proposal approved by the UCC in February. Professor Miecznikowski gave an overview of the timeline and process that led to the current proposal.

Professor Davidson described the proposal as very narrowly circumscribed, driven by idea of credit/no credit as an “intellectual adventure” that was designed to run parallel to any future emergency policies that may be implemented. The proposal was designed to sit somewhere near the middle of some of the University’s peer institutions: a two course credit/no credit allowance, one course per minor discipline and not applicable to major disciplines, Core, Honors, or study abroad courses. This leaves electives and one course per minor. The proposed policy would apply to students with at least 60 credits. The students would be required to decide by the end of the add/drop period, but could reverse their decision at any time upon consultation with the faculty member instructing the course. The minimum grade for credit would be C, and this would count as regular course credit toward graduation and other requirements, but it would not count toward the grade point average.

Professor Davidson also outlined various objections the UCC considered. Vice Provost Mark Ligas had indicated that any policy should take into account students who find themselves “in over their heads” in a course; the UCC felt that the University already has a robust set of policies in place for these circumstances. Another objection was on the limited number of classes that are included in the policy; the UCC judged that this policy is in line with many peers and decided on a policy that promotes commitment on the part of students to the Core and their majors. Other

objections included the question of what to do if a minor course is taken as credit/no credit but then the student subsequently changes the minor to a major (the presumed resolution of these case by case circumstances included waivers by the appropriate Dean).

Questions and answers: Professor Epstein asked for clarification—does the decision to revert back to credit at any time go the other way (it does not, and must be done by add/drop deadline). Professor Epstein also asked about the deadline to revert back to credit (the answer was the last day of instruction). Professor Epstein asked about the C grade cutoff—if the student gets a C- or a D grade, the transcript says no credit and there is no reversal of this? Professor Davidson said there is no reversal as the proposal stands, but also that the no credit does not impact the grade point average.

Professor Johnson asked about the timing of the decision, noting that the student in the UCC group was concerned. Why not make the decision deadline a little later? Professor Davidson said that UCC was trying to emulate peer institutions.

Professor Garvey asked about minors—would high level capstone courses that count toward the minor be allowed for credit/no credit? Professor Davidson acknowledged that yes, but could envision a situation in which a department says a particular course is ineligible for credit/no credit.

Professor Alphonso praised the proposal's integrity, but had questions. On the role of faculty: what discussions were had about faculty decision-making in this process, including flagging courses; Professor Davidson answered that faculty should be involved, particularly in advising, and that flagging courses would be dependent on departments and is not prohibited by the proposal. On reversals: will faculty know that students are taking a course as credit/no credit, and are faculty now required to grade non-holistically; Professor Davidson answered that faculty should be encouraged to present the same involvement regardless of the student's status in the course. On the rationale for the 60 credit threshold, Professor Davidson said this was primarily based on peer comparisons.

Professor Gerry asked about courses that might double count as Core and towards a minor. Professor Davidson said such courses could not be chosen credit/no credit.

Professor Downie asked about students who might want to apply credit/no credit in a course for a second major. Professor Miecznikowski said the UCC didn't consider this question, but that at peer institutions this option is not available even for second majors. Professor Davidson added that part of the issue is students going to graduate school or other professional careers that require grades on a transcript.

Professor Rakowitz asked about excluding the Magis Core, given that “intellectual adventure” is a key point of the Core (especially in tier two). Given the options in tier two, maybe the credit/no credit choice would make some higher level options more appealing. Professor Davidson replied with the claim that the Core deserves the same status as the various majors, and that the UCC proposal emphasizes the seriousness of the Core. Professor Rakowitz followed up by noting that treating core and major courses differently doesn't necessarily signal valuing them differently.

We have a grade point average requirement of majors but not in the Core, and one major course would have a bigger impact on the major GPA than one core course would have on the overall GPA. She asked if UCC discussed this. Professor Davidson said they did in detail, and the fact that, over the past two semesters, 80% of the pass/fail courses were taken in the Core, and that it was the UCC's judgment that this could lead to a devaluation of the Core over time.

Mr. Gadioma asked for clarification: absolutely no Honors courses are eligible for this?  
Professor Davidson answered: no courses with an Honors designation.

Professor Rakowitz asked about the question of Dean's lists, graduation honors, etc. Professor Miecznikowski said that other schools have such designations and still offer credit/no credit options.

Professor Van Dyke asked if there are any other credit/no credit experiences at Fairfield. Professor Miecznikowski mentioned First Year Experience courses. Provost Siegel added that many students take internships for no credit but the experience is listed in their transcripts. Professor Van Dyke also asked about how this policy would fit into the existing Registrar framework. Professor Miecznikowski answered that the UCC invited the Registrar to their February meeting, and the Registrar said that comments could be added to the back page of transcripts.

Professor Alphonso asked if the UCC anticipates this having some kind of transformative effect, citing remarks made by President Mark Nemec on this topic. Professor Alphonso also asked about rollout. Professor Davidson said he did not think this was broad enough to have a dramatic effect and that the committee did not discuss rollout. Provost Siegel clarified that President Nemec's concern was that our students were put at a disadvantage relative to our peers, and that his comments should not be taken as expressing a desire to create any kind of paradigm shift.

Professor Rakowitz asked about logistics with respect to some courses potentially being allowable as credit/no credit for some students but not for others, and Professors Davidson and Miecznikowski both acknowledged this was possible or likely.

Discussion after the departure of Professors Davidson and Miecznikowski:

Professor Bardos remarked that, in the Dolan School of Business, many students have double majors and will not be able to take advantage of the proposed policy because of credit load, and also that exploration should perhaps happen earlier than the junior year.

Professor Van Dyke remarked on the pressure from peer institutions, namely, that we are giving students a reason to come to Fairfield, and if other institutions want to restrict credit/no credit options in their own core curricula, then that is fine, but it should not necessarily bear on our own decisions. Professor Van Dyke agreed with Professor Rakowitz that Core courses should be permitted, perhaps at least in tier two.

Provost Siegel made several observations: This proposal is not "middle of the road," but is rather quite restrictive, as even Professor Davidson noted. The request from President Nemec (and the

Council) was for a policy that allows students some self-determination. Provost Siegel also disagreed with the notion that a less restrictive policy would devalue the Core, and concluded saying that she appreciates the UCC's work, that the "C or higher" standard for credit is worth considering, but that the restriction to what is essentially only electives is too restrictive.

Dean Greenwald echoed Provost Siegel's comments about the proposal's restrictiveness, and expressed the concern that both no Core and all Core are neither appropriate as policies. Additionally, Dean Greenwald suggested that perhaps making the option available to sophomores and expanding some of the choices (including possibly to second majors) would be appropriate.

Professor Epstein remarked that the representation on the Council does not reflect the impact of this policy on departments that teach heavily in the Core. This would include huge impacts on grading and planning. While admitting that this policy seems restrictive, Professor Epstein noted that the distinction between the two tiers of the Core is not likely to be seen in practice, and that perhaps the better course of action would be to discuss which portions of the Core might be best for the credit/no credit option. Finally, Professor Epstein noted that the students are beginning to get a feel for the new Core and are becoming aware of the fact that they often have actual, legitimate free electives.

Professor Rafalski remarked that arguments about double majors not having access to this opportunity does not properly take into account the fact that the University does not have to offer every single opportunity to every single student. If a student chooses to double major, then that is their exploration based on their adult choices, and we should not set a policy that tries to accommodate every last student.

Mr. Gadioma remarked that the new Core appears great, and agreed with everything in the conversation, especially the comments about what makes the Magis Core unique to Fairfield University.

Dean Li expressed the thought that the policy (whatever its final form) should really be about giving students the flexibility to develop, and be student-driven, and that restrictions in the proposed policy undercut those goals.

Professor Johnson asked for any thoughts before a motion to recess and reconvene, but Professors Rakowitz and Rafalski were too fast:

**Motion to recess and reconvene (Rakowitz/Rafalski) passed zoom-unanimously.**

Attendees began closing their laptops at approximately 5:15 PM.

Anyways, submitted respectfully,

Shawn Rafalski  
Scribe

**Academic Council Meeting**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**Monday, March 8, 2021, 3:30 – 5:20 via Zoom**

**FACULTY ATTENDEES:** Professors Gwen Alphonso, Katya Bardos, Uma Balaji, Cynthia Bautista, David Downie, Bob Epstein, Johanna Garvey, Shannon Gerry, Erica Hartwell, Jerelyn Johnson (chair), Evelyn Bilius Lolis, David McFadden, Camelia Micu, Kathy Nantz (recording secretary), Shawn Rafalski, Susan Rakowitz (GFS), Carl Scheraga, Linda Roney, Adam Rugg (AC Executive Secretary), Aaron Van Dyke.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ATTENDEES:** Deans Andres Carrano, Rich Greenwald, Laurie Grupp, Meredith Kazer, Zhan Li, Associate Provost Mark Ligas (representing the Provost’s Office.)

**STUDENT OBSERVER:** Mr. Vincent Gadioma.

**GUESTS:** Professor Gayle Alberda (7e and 7f).

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The meeting was called to order at 3:33pm by Chair Johnson.

**1. Presidential Courtesy**

Provost Siegel sent regrets. Associate Provost Ligas attended for the Provost’s Office. Provost Ligas announced that tents are going up around campus and should be ready for classes soon.

**2. Report from the Secretary of the General Faculty**

GFS Rakowitz had no report.

**3. (7.b) UCC Proposal for Credit/No Credit Policy** (discussion resumed from previous meeting)

Chair Johnson suggested that the Committee limit discussion today, unless consensus could be reached. As a result of this discussion, she suggested perhaps the AC Executive Committee could craft motions and return to the AC with these at a subsequent meeting; these motions would address the following: 1) the appropriate timing of the student declaration of Credit/No Credit for a given course, 2) student eligibility for taking a course Credit/No Credit (60 credits or more, to include first and/or second year students, etc.), and 3) course eligibility -- which courses are eligible for students to elect as Credit/No Credit.

**Dean Greenwald** said the first week of classes (during the add/drop period), as described in the UCC proposal, is too limiting. Students need more experience with the class before they decide. He argued there should be no “backsies” (aka students reversing their decisions), and the deadline should not be as late as the last day of classes. This gives students some flexibility. He argued for a maximum of maybe 3 courses in a student’s undergraduate career, with no more than 1 in the Magis core, and no more than 1 in their major. This policy would require strong advising to make sure it works for individual students at the point of a decision. If there are no limits, students might take Credit/No Credit only for courses in the Magis core, diluting the experience for them. Students do need some access to Credit/no Credit in Magis core, but not unlimited access.

**Prof. Alphonso** reiterated and endorsed what Prof. Van Dyke said at the last meeting. The UCC proposal was developed based on other institutions, and did not tailor the policy enough to the specifics of Fairfield's culture, academic program, and campus environment.

**GFS Rakowitz** agreed, we need a middle ground between the first week and last day of classes each semester. Maybe the course withdrawal deadline would work, about 10 weeks into any semester. No backsies.

**Dean Li** agreed with Dean Greenwald's proposal. It is student centered, and provides clear parameters. About 10 weeks is a good deadline, it is generous enough but not too late. Adding more parameters will make the policy more difficult to implement.

**Prof. McFadden** agreed with the course withdrawal deadline as the right timing for the Credit/No Credit decision. He likes the idea of 3 courses over the academic program, with no more than 1 in the Magis core and 1 in the major.

**Provost Ligas** agreed that the withdrawal deadline is good deadline. It is just after the deadline for midterm estimates, so students have a good idea by then where they stand in a course. He said that he hopes to continue the policy of requiring midterm estimates for all students, a new policy implemented in response to COVID.

**Prof. Bilius** suggested the right place for the Credit/No Credit deadline is where there is a natural place for students to clearly evaluate a course. Students must have done enough work in the course to make a good decision, and have received meaningful feedback and assessments (grades).

**Prof. Epstein** reported on conversations with his department and other Humanities faculty. They tend to be very opposed to Credit/No Credit in Magis core courses for various reasons. Dean Greenwald's proposal for no more than 1 in the Magis core will make it more likely the proposal will be acceptable to faculty in the CAS. He pointed out a problem that if 1 course in the Magis core is allowed, but no courses in the first 2 years of the students' careers are allowed, there may be unintended consequences. Students might be encouraged to put off a course in their core to late in their academic career to make use of the Credit/No Credit option.

**Prof. Rafalski** guessed that math courses may be one of the most common Credit/No Credit option choices. He imagined that some students might, out of excessive anxiety, take calculus Credit/No Credit, but then decide to take a math major or minor. This would leave them with a major or minor course with no grade recorded.

**Mr. Gadioma** agrees with withdrawal deadline, but expressed concern about phrasing the criteria as above. The language implies that students should necessarily take advantage of all 3 of these opportunities for Credit/No Credit. If the rationale for the policy is truly to encourage exploration, it is too restrictive.

**Prof. Downie** asked about the procedure for our current conversation. If the Committee votes on this, does it go to full faculty for approval? **GFS Rakowitz** answered that the AC can make the judgement that it should or should not have GF approval; there's no requirement that it go to the GF. Any such proposal can move to GF if a petition is presented by faculty, as described in the *Faculty Handbook*. Prof. Rakowitz continued to say that she did not think we should vote today on this policy, but rather members should talk to more faculty colleagues about it. Prof. Downie continued that the larger question should be broken into pieces rather than voted on incrementally. He added a caution, that allowing 1 course in the major to be taken Credit/No credit could be a problem for students who eventually apply to medical, graduate, or law schools; these students need to have grades on their transcripts for important courses. Since this is a divisive issue, there may be reasons to let all faculty discuss it.

**Prof. Nantz** asked if schools individually and independently could determine that certain courses cannot be taken Credit/No Credit to protect students from making such mistakes?

**Prof. Bardos** suggested that students who have large numbers of degree requirements (large majors or double majors) and who have no room for elective courses might not be able to use the policy if it is overly restrictive.

**Chair Johnson** summarized, saying that there appears to be some consensus around setting the deadline for declaring a course Credit/No Credit as the same date as the deadline for course withdrawal. Now the question is which students will be able to take advantage of this policy? The UCC Proposal says only third-and fourth-year students. Is this what we want?

**Prof. Bardos** said that we should move eligibility back to the second semester of the first year. At that point, students can receive guidance from faculty advisors, and can make decisions after consulting them.

**Prof. McFadden** agreed that Junior year is too late. If we are allowing students to do Credit/No Credit in the Magis core, they must be able to choose courses before junior year.

**Prof. Alphonso** reiterated that if the policy is intended to encourage exploration, students must be able to choose courses before they accumulate 60 credits. She agrees with Prof. Bardos' proposal – students should be able to choose courses for Credit/No Credit after advising in second semester first year.

**Prof. Van Dyke** argued that first semester sophomore year is a better time to allow students to take this option. Students are doing Tier 1 of the Magis core in their first year, these courses are really foundational. We should wait until students are a little more mature, and more certain about their major and minor choices.

**Dean Greenwald** agreed with Prof. Van Dyke. We would not want students to choose, for example, their Tier I Magis core writing course for Credit/No Credit, as it is a foundational course that is a building block for the rest of the curriculum. This course affects retention and success in subsequent courses.

**Dean Li** suggested we return to the spirit of this discussion: to construct appropriate policy based on our goal of encouraging exploration. If we are adding more parameters, the policy becomes less capable of serving the goal. We have to consider the variety of impacts that any policy might have.

**Prof. Nantz** said that which courses are “foundational” depends on the student and the program. For example, math courses for Dolan students are foundational in that they are critical to success in future courses in any major in the School.

**Prof. Van Dyke** agrees that a “lifetime cap” is appropriate. He said again that when the policy came to us from UCC, the purported goal was to encourage academic exploration. However, in some programs (Honors, residential colleges) there are carefully designed experiences that students should be encouraged to engage with fully. Majors are also carefully designed experiences. Credit/No Credit is not a good option for students in these programs. Courses in chemistry and biochemistry, for example, that are credit intensive majors, are not appropriate options for student exploration.

**Prof. Alphonso** pointed out again that it is a good idea to have to have 1 open category -- no more than 1 in Magis core, no more than 1 in major, lifetime cap of 3. She was opposed to allowing Credit/No Credit in the major. She suggested that it should be left to departments and schools to determine whether and why students would be allowed to select Credit/No Credit in certain designated elements of the program.

**Dean Greenwald** restated his proposal, that for Credit/No Credit a student can select no more than 1 course in the Magis core, and no more than 1 course in their major, with a maximum of 3 total courses in a student’s academic program. This policy would protect the integrity of the Magis core. Many faculty members in CAS are in favor of having a limit placed on Credit/No Credit in the Magis core. If students can use no Magis core courses at all, the policy would be detrimental to students. He noted that 80% of all P/F course designations in Fall 2020 were in courses offered by 3 departments in CAS. This diminishes departments and their disciplines, as well as the Magis core as a whole.

**Prof. Bardos** suggested that offering a Credit/No Credit option in core courses will in fact enhance Magis core experiences. Students will be willing to take more risks in Magis core and will not look for the easiest way out. She expressed concern about allowing Credit/No Credit in the major. For example, there are only six courses in the major in Finance, so choosing any courses as Credit/No Credit is not the signal students want to send on their transcripts.

**David Downie** urged that the Committee not decide this today. He saw the conversation coalescing around some aspects of the policy – 1) not in major, 2) no more than 3 courses

overall, 3) no more than 1 in Magis core, 4) earliest second semester first year, 4) no “backsies”, and 5) deadline the same as course withdrawal deadline.

**GFS Rakowitz** agreed with what Prof. Downie said. Exploration is what the Magis core is all about, but we could limit the Credit/No Credit option to 1 course in the Magis core. Department autonomy should not allow any department to opt out of the entire process of allowing Credit/No Credit, departments should not assume that all of their course should be exempt from Credit/No Credit for all students.

**Dean Li** encouraged the AC to increase flexibility at the university level, but allow schools/discipline to determine parameters for their own students. No more than 3 courses Credit/No Credit overall, no more than 1 in the Magis core, then allow schools to determine whether or not courses in their curricula are appropriate for Credit/No Credit, and allow faculty advisors and Dean’s Office staff to consult with individual students.

**Prof. Downie** suggested starting small with a very narrow and simple policy, and then expanding on it in future years. Having a wide variety of policies across departments and schools would make it difficult for the registrar, for advisors, and for students. Keep it simple.

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4. **(7c.) COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE WITH BOARD (CC)**

**Prof. Alphonso represented the Committee on Conference.** She informed the AC that the CC meeting with the Academic Affairs (AA) subcommittee of the Board is on March 25. There are 3 items on the agenda: 1) How is the pandemic changing Fairfield University? Prof. Bowen will speak from the CAS perspective on professional advancement in COVID times. The CAS has been assessing how the pandemic is affecting faculty. 2) What are the lessons learned from teaching during the pandemic? Provost Siegel is working with CAE and the DNL librarians to document pedagogical innovations. 3) What plans are in place for moving forward post-pandemic? Provost Siegel plans to present on this topic. Prof. Alphonso said that she was happy that the Provost included faculty committee members in identifying the agenda items and in setting the process for the meeting. She also said that because of the pandemic, meetings were rescheduled this year to times when 3 of the 5 faculty CC members have classes. Prof. Alphonso asked that in the future if the committee meetings have to be rescheduled, faculty members' teaching schedules should be considered. The Provost agreed to look into this. At least a good faith effort must be made to accommodate faculty schedules. Perhaps this committee should have a designated meeting time, like the AC and the EPC?

**Chair Johnson** asked if the committee must limit comments to these agenda items? Prof. Alphonso said yes and no, they can squeeze other items into the conversation as they relate to these issues. Or, other topics might be addressed at subsequent meetings.

**Prof. Nantz** asked if the CC would talk with the AA subcommittee about resources moving forward. Given the impact of the pandemic on the University budget, would sufficient resources be in place to allow faculty to deliver on their teaching and research duties?

**Prof. Downie** followed up and raised issues regarding the budget timetable. Talent acquisition and retention has consistently been hampered by delays in budget implementation; some disciplines begun recruiting for full-time faculty during the summer, and it is common that the budget has not been finalized and made available to deans and department chairs until after national faculty recruiting seasons have kicked off. This means Fairfield departments lose out on the first rounds of recruiting, sending a negative signal to top candidates. Decisions about lines and recruiting for full-time faculty are made very late at Fairfield compared to our competitors. The Board is in a position to alter that calendar.

**Prof. Bilius** switched gears, pointing out that there is a natural recovery process that will occur after any trauma. Post-pandemic, what issues will boil up from Fairfield faculty, staff, administrators and students? What have we been suppressing? The recovery process is not just “reentry and repopulate”. The recovery process requires proper planning and continued vigilance. We have never been through something like this individually or collectively. How do we push forward and how do we recover? This needs to be acknowledged and resources will be needed to address issues that arise.

**Prof. Alphonso** said there is a set of recommendations that Prof. Bowen and her task force will deliver to the CC. The CC will emphasize that faculty have sacrificed a lot through the pandemic to get the job done for the institution and its students. As we recover, faculty resource needs have to be met.

5. (7.d) **SUBCOMMITTEE ON DUAL DEGREE GRAD PROGRAMS** PER AC MOTION OF 2/8/21.

**Names:** Profs. Balaji, Bardos, Hartwell, Bautista, and Alphonso. (One faculty member from each school.)

14 in favor/0/0. Thanks very much to volunteers.

6. (7.e) **Master of Public Administration REVISION** (MPA)

**Prof. Alberda** described these changes in the MPA as the byproduct of the fifth-year annual review. The changes were suggested by reviewers or by members of the advisory committee, and are important to helping the program remain competitive. Some changes address a broader University initiative of transitioning to more online delivery of courses and programs.

1. The program will transition from 42 to 36 credit hours. The internship requirement will be eliminated. Most students in the program already have work experience. The internship requirement creates red tape that is unnecessary for students.
2. The ethics and leadership requirements will be combined into one course. This is in response to internal discussions, there are elements of ethics and leadership that are unique to work in the public sector and that need to be tailored to the MPA students. Student in public administration need to know how the constitution impacts their

work. This consolidation allows for an extra elective course in the program so students can add that course to their area of specialization.

**Dean Greenwald** expressed thanks to Prof. Alberda for bringing this proposal forward. He considers these revisions significant improvements to an already strong program.

**Prof. Van Dyke** asked what the process is for students who would like to have an internship experience? Prof. Alberda replied that students can still do an internship but not for credit. Given the experience and connections that faculty in the program have, they can leverage connections to put internships together. Many students in the program are working full time. The internship requirement keeps students from being able to graduate in a timely manner. This revision makes Fairfield's program more competitive with other good institutions.

**Prof. Alphonso** pointed out that students in 4+1 program may need these internship experiences, since they do not have work experience. Prof. Alberda responded that though the internship will not be listed as a course on the transcript, it will be listed on the student's resume. She said that the resume is more important in this sector for jobs than a transcript.

**MOTION: *That the Academic Council approve the revisions in the MPA program as outlined in the proposal. (Nantz, seconded by Prof. Downie.) The motion was approved without further debate. (13-0-0)***

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7. (7.f) **UNDERGRADUATE MINOR IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Prof. Alberda** said that the undergraduate minor in Public Administration is a 6 course or 18 credit hour interdisciplinary minor. It will be overseen by the director of MPA program. The minor is a tool that will help recruit students into the MPA program by getting Fairfield undergraduate students involved and prepared. There are 2 required courses – Intro to Public Administration and then a course in the student's selected area of expertise. There is currently a "boatload" of jobs available, many at federal, state and local levels. Lots of job vacancies are coming due to demographic shifts in the industry. The minor provides students with the background needed to be public administrators. The minor is interdisciplinary in nature, and has core support in the form of courses that can be double-counted. The MPA committee supports the minor, which steers students towards an industry and jobs that we at Fairfield have not intentionally targeted in such a direct way.

**Prof. Downie** thanked the committee for developing this proposal. He argued that the program allows Fairfield to get up to speed with some competitor programs and to jump ahead of others. It is a cost neutral proposal; there are no new faculty lines required, and sufficient seats are available in existing courses. All courses for the program already exist. He clarified that not more than 2 courses can double-count towards a related major. The Public Administration "core" course, combined with topical courses, make a good minor to go with a number of majors, including Economics, Politics,

Communications, Marketing, and Management. This minor provides good value added without requiring new resources.

**GFS Rakowitz** asked for clarification regarding course numbering. Some required courses are cross-listed at both the 2000 level (intermediate undergraduate) and 5000, or graduate, level, "for qualified undergraduates in their last year"- how can the same course be both? Prof. Downie replied that undergraduates are allowed to take 2 grad courses at Fairfield in their senior year. He said that there are 4 elective courses in the minor, and 1 can be taken at the graduate level. There are graduate level options, but they are not required. Those courses are cross-listed. In these cross listed courses, there are different levels of work for graduate and undergraduate students.

**MOTION: *That the AC approve this new undergraduate minor in Public Administration.*** (Nantz, seconded by Prof. Bautista.)

Prof. Nantz spoke in favor of the motion. She said this is a strong interdisciplinary minor that would pair nicely with a number of majors in CAS and in Dolan.

Prof. Van Dyke spoke in favor of the motion. He said this is what we do as a Jesuit institution, preparing students for careers in public service. This is a great fit particularly as it is budget neutral.

**Motion passed.** 13-0-0

At 5:20pm, the meeting was recessed, with plans to reconvene on Monday, March 22, 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathryn Nantz

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING

### Draft Minutes of Meeting

March 15, 2021 3:30-5 pm

via Zoom

**FACULTY Attendance:** Uma Balaji, Cynthia Bautista, David Downie, Bob Epstein, Johanna Garvey, Shannon Gerry, Erica Hartwell, Jerelyn Johnson (Chair), Evelyn Bilius Lolis, Dave McFadden, Camelia Micu, Kathy Nantz, Shawn Rafalski, Susan Rakowitz (General Faculty Secretary), Linda Roney, Adam Rugg (Executive Secretary)

**ADMINISTRATORS in Attendance:** Deans Andres Carrano, Richard Greenwald, Laurie Grupp, Meredith Kazer, Zhan Li, Provost Christine Siegel

**Student Observer:** Mr. Vincent Gadioma

**Regrets:** Prof. Aaron Van Dyke

**Guests:** Prof. Shannon Harding and Associate Vice Provost Jennifer Ewald (7g); David Crawford, Dina Franceschi, and Janie Leatherman (7h)

Meeting started: 3:31

**Professor Johnson:** Provided order for meeting (first the pending parts of the agenda, then credit no credit discussion). Professor Johnson asked Provost Siegel if she had a courtesy update.

**Provost Siegel:** Noted the next Town Hall meeting is Wednesday at 3:30p comments saved for then.

#### **7. g. Proposal to amend JOR re: approval of courses taken abroad (attachments)**

**Professor Johnson:** Welcomed Associate Vice Provost Jennifer Ewald and Prof. Shannon Harding for an overview/ response to questions.

**Professor Harding:** (Faculty liaison for Global Fairfield). Summary- Last April, the UCC passed a motion in response to courses being de-listed from catalogs when Harding had been appointed faculty liaison for Global Fairfield. She was made aware of the motion and worked with Jennifer Ewald and others to form a subcommittee (Associate Vice Provost Jennifer Ewald, Profs Brian Walker, Cathy Giapponi, and Christa Esposito). The subcommittee worked collectively to bring recommendations to AC. Additionally, (Harding) met independently with GFS Susan Rakowitz (to structure the language for the Journal of Record) and the Magis Core Curriculum Committee. Before UCC, revisions were suggested and made. The document in the meeting packet included guiding principles drafted by the subcommittee to reflect support on an academic level for study abroad and the Office of Global Fairfield. It also contains suggestions for updated language to Global Fairfield and a timeframe for course review in departments to every five years.

Courses will still be reviewed and approved at the department level. Consideration should be given as these courses impact Fairfield and non-Fairfield students who are studying abroad. Short-term Fairfield faculty-led courses should be approved at the level of school curriculum committees. The motion provided to AC suggests removing outdated language in the Journal of Record, and replacing it with language that addresses assigning credit to new courses; how courses will relate to the core (vetting by the Magis Core Curriculum Committee); the appeals

process for courses. Fairfield has contractual agreements with our partner institutions related to courses offered to our students and students should be able to plan for what classes they will take abroad.

**Associate Vice Provost Ewald:** Offered thanks to Professor Harding for her summary. Two years ago, the advisory group recognized the challenges that our course approval articulation process presented for academic departments.

**Professor Johnson:** Noted that there seems to be a discrepancy; the notes indicate Global Fairfield will find courses. Suggests articulating a process if either students/faculty identify a course of interest to pursue approval for visiting students.

**Associate Vice Provost Ewald :** Shared that it is important to be sure that we are articulating courses that are in the interest of the general population, as opposed to one specific student's interests.

**Professor Johnson:** Noted that she understands and was hoping there would be language that would allow for articulating courses as in (her) department, faculty have close relationships with the universities where students study abroad.

**Professor Harding:** Suggested a faculty member in consultation with Global Fairfield could articulate courses.

**Professor Nantz:** Suggested courses that do not have exact fit matches to classes at Fairfield University should be approved as elective credit.

**Professor Rakowitz:** Asked for clarity on the motions noting that in the first motion the suggested text would replace Journal of Record text. The second motion seems (intentionally) vague about the placement of the guiding principles. The Journal record is for policy, not for advice or expectation, but the guiding principles are generally not phrased as advice or expectation.

**Professor Harding:** Shared that there was a lot of discussion in the subcommittee about that point. Initially, the language was more geared toward advice. The subcommittee feels they want to share this with departments, whether in the Journal of Record, online, or handouts. The committee supported putting this in the Journal of Record, but if there's a better fit for it somewhere else, or if it belongs in multiple places, the group is amenable to that.

**Professor Downie:** Offered for the minutes (as somebody who supports study abroad)-There's nothing in this policy that anticipates restrictions on academic departments, limiting the number of classes, or classes that someone could count towards a major.

**Associate Vice Provost Ewald:** Noted that the Journal of Record's language states that students will take a minimum towards major-minor and a minimum towards the core. Global Fairfield's goal is for the work that we do with the students abroad to complement and supplement what you do to strengthen your work here, rather than replacing your work here. We very much respect that the departments can and should have a voice as to how study abroad best works for them, which programs their students should engage in, and what courses make the most sense. Enough courses should be articulated that a student from virtually any major or minor could go abroad and find something that works. We by no means want to create a situation where our faculty feel that their jobs are being outsourced through study abroad. So, we do feel that that the

departments should be in the driver's seat, so to speak, around what makes sense for students in their majors to study abroad such as when is the best year to study abroad and what are the optimal courses for a student to take while abroad.

**Professor Downie:** Noted for the record that there'll be classes available during study abroad that actually don't count for anything at Fairfield, and don't count for any minor; they're just really great classes that you could only take abroad which would seem like one of the reasons to go.

**Professor Harding:** Responded yes, there's nothing in the policy to prevent this. Policies that are being made by departments (for example in psychology), the department decided that students can take x number of courses abroad that will count. And by the way, the department applied the same policy to transfer credits. That's something that we can continue to work on; this is really just about how are courses approved and how are they reviewed.

**MOTION 1 (Nantz/Bautista): To remove the current language from the Journal of Record and replace it with the following language:**

**Assignment of course credit in Global Fairfield programs:**

**1. New courses.**

- a. The Office of Global Fairfield (OGF) will determine which courses seem to be good candidates for Fairfield University credit. For each such course, the OGF will send the syllabus to the most relevant Department/Program Chair/Director who will work with the Department/Advisory or Steering Committee to determine whether the course fulfills major or minor requirements and / or is equivalent to an existing course at Fairfield University:
- b. After review of the content and course learning objectives, the department will recommend whether a course should qualify for departmental designation as (i) the equivalent to an existing course or (ii) as a departmental elective or (iii) would be a better fit for a different Department or Program and should be sent on.
- c. If the course is determined to be the equivalent of an existing course, then it will have the same Orientation or Exploration status in the *Magis* core as does the existing course.
- d. If a College of Arts and Sciences department/program grants the course credit within the department/program, without finding it to be the equivalent of an existing course, then they should use the process outlined for the designation of courses to fulfill Orientation and Exploration Tiers of the *Magis* Core to determine whether the course can earn *Magis* Core credit.
- e. Courses denied departmental or *Magis* Core designation may be sent by the department to the UCC with a recommendation for General Elective designation...
- f. In the event that a department/program does not judge the course to meet the standards for departmental and / or Core designation, or refer the course to a different department/program as a better fit, they will provide a rationale and minutes from the department/program to OGF.

g. Appeals:

- i. If a course is denied departmental designation, the OGF may appeal to the school curriculum committee.
- ii. if a course is granted credit in a CAS department/program and denied *Magis* Core designation, the OGF may appeal to the UCC.

## **2. Previously approved courses.**

- a. Study abroad courses that have received departmental or *Magis* core designation should continue to meet those requirements for at least 5 years, unless the granting institution notifies the OGF of substantive changes in the course.
- b. To ensure that all subject areas remain updated, at least once every 5 years courses in the database will be audited by departments on a rotating basis in consultation with OGF.
- c. If the OGF is informed of a substantial change in a course outside of the auditing process, it will notify a department and the course will be reviewed. After review of the course, a department may recommend retaining or removing a designation (delisting).
- d. A department / program may also review a previously approved course in consultation with OGF if there has been a substantial change to the Fairfield curriculum (e.g. changes to the equivalent course at Fairfield University, or changes to major or minor requirements).
- e. Removal of a designation of an approved study abroad course requires a written justification and departmental minutes submitted to the OGF and the UCC Chair for review. Removal of courses will typically occur the following academic year.

## **3. Faculty led courses offered abroad.**

- a. Short-term courses led by Fairfield University faculty must follow approval procedures set forth by schools with an additional focus on whether (i) the proposed course has equivalent credit (contact) hours to semester long courses and (ii) the relevance of offering the course in the proposed location.
- b. Courses approved by school curriculum committees will be reviewed by the OGF to assess compliance with the University international travel policy.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened discussion and shared her concern that the motion doesn't give students or faculty any flexibility for looking into courses on their own, and the Office of Global Fairfield is expert/decides where the courses come from.

**Professor Lolis:** Suggested departments and the Office the Global Fairfield should have synergy in this process.

**Professor Nantz:** Offered her perspective (Chair/working with study abroad as Associate Dean in the Dolan School) that Study Abroad brought large numbers of courses each semester (~10) to

review. Now, Global Fairfield has always reached out to departments get their consideration/approval of courses.

**Professor Johnson:** Noted that her department's experience varied from what Professor Nantz described, suggesting it might be different perhaps to foreign language study and how many of their students go abroad.

**Professor Nantz:** Spoke in favor of motion one noting that these guiding principles have been carefully crafted and that the changes in the Journal of Record that are referred to in motion one provide a streamlined process, more global process of vetting courses and opportunities for students. She then Called the question.

**Vote on calling the question 14-0-0.**

**Vote on approving Motion 1: 14-0-1.**

**Professor Johnson:** Questioned if a member wanted to endorse the guiding principles for Study Abroad and to add language to the Journal of Record.

**Professor Rakowitz:** Endorsed the guiding principles and added the language of all except number four and number nine to the Journal of Record. Noted opposition to adding language "we will follow procedures." Seconded by Professor Rugg.

**Provost Siegel:** Agreed with Professor Rakowitz about removing the language "we will follow procedures" because it is assumed that we follow all procedures in the JOR; and noted her support of the other guiding principles.

**Professor Nantz:** Questioned if any of the members of AC recalled for #9, is there a process for removal of Study Abroad courses outside the regular review cycle? Professor Rakowitz recalled that there was something in this item in the proposal.

**Professor Nantz:** Supported the motion noting that she liked the guiding principles as it will help students to understand the rules of how we approach study abroad, that the university supports students who study abroad and their exploration in the context of their broader four-year plan of study.

**Professor Johnson:** Noted that on 2e page 105 of the packet notes process for removal designation of approved Study Abroad courses.

**MOTION 2: To endorse adding the following guiding principles for study abroad to the Journal of Record:**

Guiding principles:

1. All qualified Fairfield students will have an opportunity and be encouraged to apply to study abroad.
2. Courses in all majors, minors, and in the Magis Core will be available for students studying abroad.

3. Departments & programs will work with Global Fairfield to find locations where major and minor classes can be taken. These programs should be actively promoted by departments and programs.
4. Courses that do not have exact fit/matches to classes at Fairfield University should be approved as elective credit in the relevant discipline.
5. Approval of courses will be based on content, learning objectives and outcomes, as foreign institutions tend to operate on different schedules, including contact hours, methods of assessment, and specific course requirements.
6. Fairfield University will respect the decisions of partner universities that the faculty they choose for their courses are well trained and appropriate for the course.
7. Departments will have a regular cycle of review of courses offered abroad.

**Vote 13-0-0.**

**MOTION 3 (Nantz/Garvey): That the faculty liaison shepherd the policy through governance and begin to implement the review of courses in partnership with OGF, departments and schools.**

**Professor Johnson:** Opened discussion.

**Professor Nantz:** Spoke in favor of the motion as this is something that faculty have called for and they would like to see the review of the list of courses in each department with Global Fairfield.

**Vote: 13-0-0.**

### **7h. Request from International Studies/Business Program**

**Professor Johnson:** Introduced Professors Crawford, Franceschi and Leatherman to talk about the request from international business program (page 109-117 in packet.)

**Professor Crawford:** Provided an overview. The international business program is still in limbo; the administration asked the international business program to create governance documents. It was within the purview of the Provost's Office to hire and fire staff. This particular staff member was hired as a part of our governance documents, had advisees, and ran our internships in an academic position. Disclosure of the termination happened when the employee herself texted me while she was being terminated. To this day, her duties have not been reassigned. There's no plan for how they're going to be reassigned and that's related to the fact that we didn't follow the governance documents to do this. There's a coordinating committee that includes the Dolan School of Business because this is very impactful on the Dolan School but they have yet to be consulted by anyone in the Provost's Office. We asked the Academic Council to consider this motion because we don't want any other program to be gutted this way, we don't want any other program, to lose their only full-time staff member, with no plan for reallocating those duties.

**Professor Leatherman:** Agreed with Professor Crawford's summary and noted that position of the Associate Director was fundamental to the restructuring of the International Studies program which was a collaborative effort across schools and guided through the provost's office at the time. The anchor to that reconceptualization of the entire program was a full time, Associate Director position. It was conceived as an academic position, a very vibrant core to the program and received accolades from our external reviewers. We haven't figured out how to move forward since and really, our entire governance document is structured around that position. We don't really have a clear sense of how to sustain the commitments that we've developed over 15 years in relationship to the duties that this position encompassed.

**Professor Franceschi:** Offered that the reason that they came to Academic Council was to sort out the role of shared governance in this situation. She stated that external reviews have asked them to put together governance documents but they wanted to inquire about what role does Academic Council have when those governance documents are ignored.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened discussion to questions and there were none. She noted that it's a sign of a good presentation and documents noting that the Council heard them and sensed their frustration.

**Motion (McFadden/Rafalski): Regarding the elimination of the position of Associate Director of International Studies on July 1, 2020: the Academic Council strongly objects to the administration's unilateral action and disregard for the governance procedures of the International Studies and International Business Program in the elimination of this position.**

**Professor McFadden:** Spoke very strongly in favor of the first motion as a participating faculty member in international studies. Noted that as a participating faculty member in international studies he relied on the Associate Director for all kinds of things including internships and advising. This (the termination) came as a profound shock and he stated that it was a violation of the governing principles of the International Studies program, and we should speak out against so it never happens again.

**Provost Siegel:** Noted that she cannot comment on specific personnel decisions; however, she would like to comment that there were several years of meetings between the Provost's Office and the leadership of the International Studies program, during which no government documents were presented. Governance documents may have been solicited from the program by my predecessor, who held the title Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; but those currently serving in the Provost's Office were unaware of the documents. Personally and professionally everyone in the Provost's office respects shared governance. She noted that she is working with the deans to make sure we have a collection of all governance documents in the Provost's office not only at the university level, but the college and program level, and we are committed to following them. She reiterated the decision about this position will not be reversed nor can she comment on it.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened discussion on the first motion regarding the termination of the position of Associate Director on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Professor Nantz:** Asked what other council members were thinking as she was struggling with this. Was this the new administration's unilateral action and disregard for the governance procedures, or was it an honest unawareness of the fact that this program had its own governance documents? She shared that some programs have governance documents but programs don't necessarily, and that that doesn't excuse not being aware of policies, particularly the deans of the two schools that oversee this policy.

**Provost Siegel:** Objected to the language "unilateral disregard." In two years of working with the leadership, she asked for program reviews and other materials about the program, and reports and no governance document was provided during that time. This decision was made in July and the governance document was not forthcoming at that time. She reiterated that she objected to the language that this was a unilateral disregard and spoke against the motion.

**Professor Johnson:** Solicited questions or other comments.

**Professor Hartwell:** Responded to the spirit of this that supports that it won't happen again to another program, and it seems like the reason this particular staffing change was felt by the program so deeply is because this staff member had faculty-like responsibilities. She noted that moving forward, most programs that would want to hire somebody at the master's level to have faculty responsibilities, would hire a PoP (Professor of Practice). She suggested that we might not be at risk of a similar type of situation because it seems like a very unique situation. Professor Hartwell also agreed that it was beyond the ability of the Council to make the call that this was a unilateral decision with disregard. While she agreed that this was an unfortunate situation that had a big impact on the program, she was not in favor of the motion.

### **Motion 1:**

**Regarding the elimination of the position of Associate Director of International Studies on July 1, 2020: the Academic Council strongly objects to the administration's unilateral action and disregard for the governance procedures of the International Studies and International Business Program in the elimination of this position.**

**Professor Nantz:** Called the question on this motion. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Professor Bautista. Vote 9-3-0 on calling the question.

**Vote: 1-8-4**

**Motion (Nantz/Rugg):** that the Provost's Office compile a list of governance documents for Fairfield University and maintain them in an updated format on the General Faculty Secretary website.

**Provost Siegel:** Noted that the Provost's Office has already started engaging in the process of gathering governance documents but that the Provost Office cannot maintain them on the GFS website as it is outside of their purview. She suggested the modified language to read "work with GFS to maintain them in updated format on GFS website."

**Professor Nantz:** Noted the pain of losing an important staff member to a program and this group could still bring in making an argument for the need for this position. The role that the Council needs to play is in process and that that is what my motion is meant to convey.

**Motion: that the Provost's Office compile a list of governance documents for Fairfield University and work with the GFS to maintain them in an updated format on the General Faculty Secretary website.**

**Vote: 13-0-0.**

**Professor Johnson:** Asked about other motions, including the second motion in the packet, or others. Upon seeing no further hands, notes that the Council feels that they have addressed this agenda item.

#### **7i. . ACEC Proposal for Subcommittee to explore forming Graduate Curriculum Committee**

**Professor Johnson:** Noted the ACEC proposal for the subcommittee to explore forming a graduate curriculum committee. States the Academic Council has seen several graduate programs come through that do not have the level of review that we have with undergraduate curriculum committee. There is increased attention to graduate instruction and the executive committee have stressed the following motion:

**(Rafalski/Hartwell): The ACEC will create a subcommittee to draft a proposal for a Graduate Curriculum Committee that would provide university-wide curricular review. The subcommittee will discuss the need, and propose a Handbook amendment describing Membership, General Purpose, and Specific Duties. They will also propose revisions to the current routing procedures needed for graduate curricular review and approvals. The subcommittee will report back to the Council with a proposal at the May 3, 2021 meeting.**

**Professor Hartwell:** Asked could it be a possible outcome of this committee that they determine that there isn't a need for a graduate curriculum committee? Because the way that the motion is written, it notes that we will have one, but what if they get together and determine that this would ultimately be less helpful?

**Professor Rakowitz:** Agreed that yes, they certainly could come back with a memo explaining in great detail why after careful consideration, they thought this was a bad idea, and the Council could decide what to do with it.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened up the motion for discussion. Noted she was in favor of this motion.

**Professor Hartwell:** Spoke in favor of the motion asked for that clarification because she has a vested interest in graduate education. We are all dispersed and siloed across campus and there is merit in potentially creating a central structure. Noted that she hoped that the committee considered the value that the committee can add, knowing how many committees we have to go

through. Not intended to add any additional burden but to just follow similar processes that undergraduate programs need to follow that are also disparate and very different.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened voting for Executive Committee to form a committee that will look into a graduate committee.

**Vote 13-0-0.**

## **7b. UCC Proposal for Credit/No Credit Policy**

**Professor Johnson:** Reviewed past discussion from last week on credit/ no credit. Some consensus: withdrawal deadline being the deadline, definitely not only juniors and seniors and possibly the first semester of their sophomore year. Sticky points include which courses; discussion around that a lifetime cap of two just like in the UCC document; no more than one in the Magis core; and we ended the meeting talking about it seemed no major courses. So that would mean that the courses that were eligible for this would be Magis Core, minor courses and electives. So, we could look at it either like which courses are prohibited or which courses are allowed.

**Professor Epstein:** Shared that he had heard a lot of concern about the possibility of credit/ no credit or people don't actually understand that they should think of it as pass fail, but only in terms of the Core (very strong concerns about it within the Core.) Offered that if it were as minimal as no more than one course in four year or their entire undergraduate career if each student could take no more than one course in the Core as Credit/No Credit, a lot of faculty might not like it but would probably not strongly object to it.

**Professor Johnson:** Shared she had a question posed to her about how only offering credit/no credit to electives would be limiting to students and was asked about how many electives do students generally take.

**Professor Epstein:** Noted that he didn't distinguish a great deal between minor and elective. Some minors, like students in the education minor depending on whether they're going to apply for it later on, there are some minor assumptions. Some elective classes students should be advised not to take credit/no credit or pass/fail.

If students take courses toward a minor and don't complete them, they become electives.

**Professor Johnson:** Asked about the lifetime cap, and about this previous year and last summer, and last spring, about a student who happened to choose pass/fail during this crisis period, would those be counted towards a lifetime cap or now, just everybody starts over when this is implemented?

**Provost Siegel:** Offered that it was her understanding and in talking with Associate Vice Provost Ligas that this would be a credit no credit policy going forward, starting in September. Whatever was taken for pass fail, which is different from credit no credit, would not be counted towards this lifetime cap. Asked for clarification for Council's view of what constitutes credit (UCC recommended C or better) as opposed to pass/fail, in which a "D" or better for a pass.

**Professor Johnson:** Opened discussion on credit/no credit from the Council.

**Professor Downie:** Offered that if it's really exploration then it's exploration and passing is passing; noting the equivalent of pass/fail. He didn't remember what the motivation was behind choosing the C threshold.

**Professor Rafalski:** Offered that he is strongly in favor of making the credit/ no credit barrier be a "C" grade noting that if you tell a student that they can get a credit with a D, the level of work that some students might put in an exploration of this might be so abysmally bad that they might run the risk of just failing outright, and ending up with no credit. Noted that it puts the faculty member in a precarious position of fail vs D-. Some who's aiming for a "D" might be disruptive to the classroom as a whole. Spoke in favor of having a standard.

**Professor Johnson:** Asked for clarification about policies from the other institutions.

**Professor Epstein:** Noted that if the credit no credit line is "C" it displaces the bubble area. That concern will just happen at the C/C+ line. This is kind of a new area for us because we don't have a distinction between passing credit.

**Professor Johnson:** Asked for clarification about the line (C/C+ or is it C/C-).

**Professor Rafalski:** Offered that maybe this is discipline-specific but in a math class, there's a clear difference between a student who's earning any C grade and a student who's earning any D grade.

**Professor Johnson:** Asked a clarifying question, we said no major courses could be credit/no credit?

**Professor Rakowitz:** Raised the issue that the proposal from UCC also excluded honors courses, and last week Professor Van Dyke suggested excluding residential college courses.

**Professor Johnson:** Suggested that this might encourage exploration of a certain type of residential college course that they'd want to take.

**Dean Greenwald:** Noted that there is an application process for residential college and the honors program.

Suggests that rather than developing at the policy level here maybe there could be something about the application process that makes their activities contingent on remaining in good standing, including No Pass/Fail, right, because once you start to say okay this program is allowed to, you know, to be exempt from this then you'll have an open door for other programs to say "me too."

**Mr. Gadioma:** Shared that as someone who just came out of the residential college program, he offered that the courses that are selected are not the explorative sort of nature. He acknowledged Professor Van Dyke's vantage point but in the honors program with 5-6 courses before they take

their capstone, the Honors Program could benefit a lot for a lot of students in this credit/no credit policy.

**Professor Downie:** Emphasized from a political operations point, Dean Greenwald's point about having as few specific exemptions and whatever is passed, is very important. Offered that the group also needs to think about the impacts that this is going to have on different departments.

**Professor Gerry:** Asked for clarification about what has been discussed in terms of study abroad courses and if they counted toward the policy or not.

**Professor Johnson:** Noted that she did not recall that they were necessarily ones to be excluded and might fall under the same parameters like no major courses, only one in the core. Opened for discussion.

**Professor Gerry:** Noted she was looking back at what the UCC had originally suggested and just going forward and they had something in there about study abroad and she couldn't recall if the Council had discussed it or not.

**Professor Rugg:** Reviewed the appendix document that had the other policies and many of them have the C grade be the lowest level, even for some of them that called it pass/fail, they still had C as the the letter grade. Agreed that the fewer exemptions is the better..

**Professor Rakowitz:** Noted the proposal from UCC does rule out Study Abroad courses and it's in the same line as honors courses. On the issue of "C" versus "D", the fact is that the graduation requirement is a "C" average overall as well as the "C" average in the major even though "D" courses are passing in principle, students have to have C courses to graduate so that is a distinction that exists in our curriculum.

**Motion to adjourn:** Rafalski/Roney. Meeting adjourned 5:03.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Roney

To: Members of the Academic Council  
From: AC Executive Committee  
Re: Credit/No Credit Proposal

On March 1, the Council heard the proposal from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for a student-determined credit/no credit option for undergraduates. The Council further discussed this proposal on March 8 and March 15. Throughout these discussions it seemed that members of the Council were in support of some aspects of the UCC proposal, but found other aspects too limiting.

Based on these discussions, the ACEC proposes the following revised version of the UCC proposal:

#### Undergraduate Student-Determined Credit/No Credit Option

The credit/no credit option is intended to encourage intellectual exploration and risk-taking. Over the course of their undergraduate career, students may elect to take up to two (2) courses credit/no credit.

- Under this option, if the student earns a C or above (73-100), the instructor will enter the grade as "credit" and the credits will count toward graduation, but will not be factored into the student's GPA. If the student earns a C- or below (0-72), the instructor will enter a grade of "no credit." The course will be listed on the student's transcript as "no credit," but will not be factored into their GPA. The student is responsible for determining how and when to make up the course/credits. The student will not receive any allowance/refund for a course that is designated as "no credit."
- Students may not use this option for:
  - courses in their major(s) or courses required by their major(s);
  - courses that are part of competitive programs that they have joined upon successful application, including, but not limited to: the Honors Program, Study Abroad, and the Residential College program.
- Students may use this option for:
  - no more than one (1) course used to fulfill a Magis core requirement.
  - any courses not otherwise restricted by the limitations above.
- Students are eligible for this option once they have completed 30 credits
- Students must declare (to the Registrar's Office) their intention to take a course credit/no credit no later than the deadline for withdrawing from the course. The decision is irrevocable. Students are strongly urged to consult with their academic advisor, instructor, and/or academic dean when considering this choice.

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TEAM**

**February 26, 2021**

***Notes by Kim Doughty***

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Members:

Kevin Lawlor, Executive Vice President

Susan Birge, Associate VP for Health & Wellness

Julia Duffy, Director of the Student Health Center

Joanna Wynne, MD, Medical Director for the Student Health Center (Chair)

Diana Mager, DNP, RN-BC, Associate Professor of Nursing

Shelley Phelan, Chair and Professor of Biology Department

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Assistant Professor of Public Health

Kim Doughty, Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health

Amy Boczer, Director for Institutional Research

**In attendance:** Kevin Lawlor, Susan Birge, Julia Duffy, Diana Mager, Shelley Phelan, Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Kim Doughty

Surveillance testing compliance: Susan Birge shared that ~450 students were found to be noncompliant with weekly surveillance testing. A pop up Binax (rapid antigen) testing clinic was offered for those students. Only 39 students showed up, but many may be seeking external testing. They have until 5:00pm today to submit a negative test. The consequence for those who still remain noncompliant has yet to be determined, but Kevin Lawlor explained that students will likely be barred from campus until they can submit a negative test. For those who live off-campus, it will not be a big deal, but will be a considerable inconvenience for residential students.

The group struggled to understand why so many students did not complete the required testing. Shelley Phelan suggested that it may be consistent with overall student responsiveness at this time of the semester when they are buried in work and emails. Diana Mager asked whether students made appointments and just didn't show up, but Susan Birge said that these students did not even make an appointment. Diana wondered whether some students somehow missed the fact that they need to be tested every week, but this seems unlikely given the number of reminders that have been sent out and the number of students who did comply. Kim Doughty suggested that some students may have thought that the requirements were not going to be strictly enforced and that it wouldn't be a problem if they missed a test. She hoped that if some students are kicked off campus now, that may serve to remind students that they need to take the requirement seriously.

Updates on vaccination distribution: The group briefly discussed the recent change in the State of Connecticut's plan for vaccination distribution, which will now be solely based on age or employment in preK-12 education or childcare. Kevin Lawlor shared that the University has

entered the names of eligible people into VAMS and they should be getting emails to make appointments soon. Individuals are able to add themselves to the system, so it is not necessary for the University to do this, but it helps.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether there has been much pushback on the change from higher education groups, given that this was the only segment of the education sector excluded from early eligibility. Kevin Lawlor said there has not been as much pushback as he expected to see. However, some groups representing younger people with underlying health conditions are upset.

Shelley Phelan asked whether adjunct instructors are included in the list submitted to VAMS and Kevin confirmed that, as far as he knows, they are.

Diana Mager asked whether it would be a problem for someone to be registered in VAMS by two different organizations (e.g., an external healthcare agency and the University). Susan Birge said it would work out fine.

Kevin Lawlor added that he was part of a conversation with DPH yesterday. They think the vaccine will be broadly available as of May and maybe even sooner with the introduction of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. University representatives made it clear to DPH that it would be helpful to get college students vaccinated before they leave campus because they can be more efficient when the students are all in one place. DPH representatives did make note of the comment, but Kevin does not know whether anything will come of it.

Surveillance testing frequency: Kevin Lawlor said that the decision to maintain weekly testing through March was made in the absence of guidance from DPH. However, the State did issue guidance late last night, which included the option to reduce the percentage of non-residential students tested each week to 25% of the population. That can be considered for April.

Shelley Phelan noted that there have been quite a few Biology faculty with invalid test results, so it seems like it's a not insignificant percentage. She asked Julia Duffy what she has seen overall in the rates of invalid tests. Julia said that there were only 3 invalid tests among students this round. They were all negative on retest. Julia added that she is working with HR to streamline communication about invalid test results and clarified that if an employee receives an invalid (or "test not processed") result, they will not be barred from campus.

Kim Doughty asked whether there had been any issues with employee compliance. Kevin Lawlor said it is near 100%.

Senior week and commencement activities: Kevin Lawlor asked the group for input on senior week and commencement activities. The current guidelines for graduation activities allow an unlimited number of attendees outdoors so long as 6 ft distancing is maintained and mask wearing is enforced. The limit on indoor gatherings is 100. Therefore, any activities would have to be outdoors, rain or shine. However, DPH said yesterday that those standards were a year

old and they had not revisited, so they could change. Kevin said that the University is considering holding a number of small group events in-person and a virtual ceremony.

Shelley Phelan said that is a great idea. Fairfield Prep had their commencement outdoors last year even. She would be in favor of that. Kevin Lawlor thought that Prep had a drive-by event, but Shelley thought that the students were also able to gather together, outdoors and spread out, at some point.

Diana Mager asked whether students would be able to walk across a stage or if that part would be virtual. Kevin Lawlor noted that one dilemma with that is determining who would greet every student with a diploma. Diana suggested that there could be some creative ways around that issue.

Kevin Lawlor said that senior week activities present a particular challenge. Although we can confidently provide activities that will comply with the guidelines, we can't control what happens after that. If the students all gather at the beach or go to a party, that could present a problem. Some schools have moved up graduation to immediately after exams end so that students are not hanging around campus for long. Diana Mager thought that was smart. Kevin added that the problem with this approach is that it takes a few days to sort out grades and determine who can graduate.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch added that some students will finish earlier than others anyway depending on their exam schedule; some even a week earlier. If there aren't planned activities, students will plan their own. Kevin Lawlor noted that Karen Donoghue is planning a lot of outdoor activities, which can be safer and more spread out.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked if any of the scenarios being considered would allow only students to attend the ceremony itself, with visitors watching virtually. She felt it would be difficult to screen visitors the same way we screen students.

Kevin Lawlor said that one idea is to use a companies that can stitch together videos—of different speakers, individual students, etc.—and make it coherent.

Diana Mager agreed that a virtual event would work, but the ability to watch live would be important. Parents will want to see their child walk, live; not in a recorded video that they play back later. She said we should let students do something on that stage and allow parents to watch in real time.

Kim Doughty asked for clarification about whether any of the plans being considered would include guests in-person. Kevin Lawlor said they were considering allowing each student to have 2 guests at their planned small group activities. Kim Doughty also asked what exactly these small group activities would entail—would they be smaller commencement ceremonies or something else? Kevin said the thinking is these would not be commencement ceremonies, but other events appropriate to each program. For example, for Nursing it might be their

pinning ceremony; for others, it might be an honors convocation. If anyone has any good ideas, they should send them to Walter Rankin and Mark Ligas.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch expressed concern about allowing guests on campus. Once students' families come, if they're coming from out of town from all different areas, that brings in a whole new layer of potential risk. Students will be interacting with their parents, taking pictures, etc. Diana Mager agreed and thought that, for this reason, attendance should be virtual only for guests.

Kevin Lawlor shared that Quinnipac University had a student-only graduation that parents could watch virtually. They received a lot of backlash.

Shelley Phelan asked if it would be out of the question to have parents/guests test before coming to campus. Kevin Lawlor said this is under consideration. Diana Mager noted that there are some potential problems with this approach. There can be a delay in getting test results, so people may get tested early but if they get tested too soon then by the time they arrive on campus, the test is no longer that valuable. However, it may provide a sense of security and it may be better than nothing.

Kim Doughty thought that the sense of security provided by testing could actually cause people to feel more protected than they actually are and perhaps behave in more risky ways. Julia Duffy also noted that it would be very difficult to vet all of the test results provided by guests.

Shelley Phelan asked when decisions need to be made about this. Kevin Lawlor said mid-March. Shelley pointed out that the percent of vaccinated individuals will be higher by May, so the risk may be lower at that point.

Kim Doughty hoped that the vaccination rate will be higher and infection rate lower by May, but given that we can't predict exactly what will happen, she was basing her opinion on the current situation. As it stands now, she felt we should not have guests coming to campus. She agreed with Jen's concerns about people traveling from all over and then interacting with students. Even if guests are not hanging around campus after the event and therefore not posing a risk to other students, they're then going back to their home communities and potentially bringing the virus back with them. She didn't feel good about the University having a hand in that. Diana Mager, Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, and Susan Birge agreed.

Shelley Phelan said she was on the fence about allowing guests at the commencement. We've been able to do a lot of things safely, including move-in, during which parents were all over campus for several hours. If the events are smaller and more spread out, they may be done safely with 2 guests per student.

Kim Doughty suggested that the group keep thinking about this. While decisions do need to be made soon, they do not need to be made today.

Summer 2021, Fall 2021 and graduate student policies: Diana Mager had asked to discuss the mode of teaching for graduate students. She understood that graduate courses would be online at least through the summer and probably the fall as well. She was worried that graduate programs will lose students.

Kevin Lawlor didn't think any decisions had been made for the fall yet, but for the summer graduate courses would be online. Diana asked if it would be possible to change that, especially for nursing students, many of whom have been vaccinated. Kevin Lawlor thought there were already some exceptions for labs and similar courses. Diana Mager said that there were exceptions for clinicals, but not for other classes. She asked what the justification was for having graduate courses fully online when we are able to hold in-person classes for undergraduates. Further, it will be easier to hold classes outdoors in the summer so it doesn't seem to make sense to restrict in-person classes then. Kevin Lawlor said he would raise this point with Walter Rankin, who has been overseeing the graduate side, and noted that faculty would need to be brought into the discussion. Kim Doughty agreed with Diana's points. From a public health perspective, there's no reason to have a different policy for graduate courses vs. undergraduate courses.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch thought the original concern was about graduate students going back and forth to and from campus.

Kevin Lawlor suggested that the group could make a recommendation to reconsider in-person classes for graduate students this summer. The group members agreed with that suggestion.

Susan Birge added that she was part of a webinar for graduate students in December with Walter Rankin and it turned into a venting session because many students were dissatisfied with the online-only format. One student said he would not return for the spring semester.

Shelley Phelan thought that Provost Siegel had said during the most recent Town Hall event that summer session I for undergraduates would also be online, whereas summer session II would be hybrid. She asked Kevin Lawlor if this was correct. She wondered what the rationale is, with the number of students we have on campus now, for going online in June. Kevin Lawlor said he would have to check with Provost Siegel on that.

Diana Mager suggested that it could have to do with the lack of staffing for the testing clinics because the Nursing students won't be available during the summer. Susan Birge added that, if desired, testing clinics could continue at a reduced rate (not 3 per week). Julia Duffy noted that another challenge with testing in the summer is that we don't have the Student Health Center to receive the tests. However, more people should be vaccinated by June, so that may change the testing requirements.

Kevin Lawlor referenced an article he sent out by email about vaccine mandates. The thinking seems to be that as long as vaccine is classified under emergency use authorization, it's unlikely that anyone will mandate it, but that may change once full approval is given.

Addressing vaccine hesitancy: On that note, Kim Doughty shared that the two students who are completing their Public Health internship requirement under her supervision are working with the Marketing department to create and distribute social media content geared toward students and one of the things she has asked them to do is share content that could address vaccine hesitancy among students. However, a different avenue would likely be needed to reach employees. She asked Kevin Lawlor if there were any plans to provide any kind of education or outreach on this to employees. The Public Health interns could help.

Kevin Lawlor said that Jen Anderson has this on her to-do list, but the more help we can give her, the better. At the state level, they see this as an equity issue. Black Americans in particular are less likely to want to get the vaccine and so the state is looking for creative ways to encourage this population to get it.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch noted that she shared some resources with Kim, including videos of people describing their experience with the vaccine. She thought it would be helpful to have faculty and students represented in similar videos. There are a lot of good resources for vaccine hesitancy that have already been created. It would be helpful if we could create a repository to collect and share those. Diana Mager suggested that the Center for Social Impact could be a good connection to get information to vulnerable groups.

Kevin Lawlor shared that the University's DPS officers have been eligible for the vaccine. Of the 30 officers, 6 have refused to get the vaccine, so this is an issue.

**Summary of Recommendations:**

The Public Health Advisory Team advises Senior Leadership to:

- Reconsider plans for online-only courses during summer 2021 sessions at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Advisory Team does not believe there is a public health reason to exclude in-person experiences at this time.

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TEAM**  
**March 3, 2021**  
*Notes by Kim Doughty*

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Members:

Kevin Lawlor, Executive Vice President

Susan Birge, Associate VP for Health & Wellness

Julia Duffy, Director of the Student Health Center

Joanna Wynne, MD, Medical Director for the Student Health Center (Chair)

Diana Mager, DNP, RN-BC, Associate Professor of Nursing

Shelley Phelan, Chair and Professor of Biology Department  
Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Assistant Professor of Public Health  
Kim Doughty, Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health  
Amy Boczer, Director for Institutional Research

**In attendance:** Kevin Lawlor, Julia Duffy, Diana Mager, Shelley Phelan, Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Kim Doughty, Amy Boczer

Senior week and commencement activities: Kevin Lawlor shared that among peer institutions, a lot of schools are moving up graduation so that it is more proximate to last day of exams. The model that the University seems to be moving toward is to have graduation on the Tuesday or Wednesday after last day of exams (a Friday), with 4 days of small group celebrations between the two (e.g., Nursing pinning, etc.). One important question for this group is to what extent should we test parents who want to come on campus. There are mixed opinions on that right now.

Kim Doughty asked for clarification about whether commencement itself would be in person and with guests or just other small group activities.

Kevin Lawlor explained that, for the class of 2020, most would not come back in person, so it will be virtual for them. For the class of 2021, we are going to try to put together some semblance of a physical celebration within the context of the COVID-related guidelines at the time. There are two potential options. One is to break down commencement into smaller ceremonies, after which each group would leave campus. The other is to have smaller non-commencement ceremonies or celebrations leading up to a virtual graduation.

Shelley Phelan asked whether the smaller ceremonies would span senior week. Kevin Lawlor said yes, but senior week would be shorted to just 4-5 days.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch suggested that if graduation was held mid-week, that might discourage some from traveling, which might help keep the total number of attendees manageable. She also acknowledged that, as controlled at the University can make the formal events, they may nevertheless influence the things people do outside of those events (e.g., interacting with friends and friends' families without masks).

Shelley Phelan suggested giving students 1-2 days at the beginning of senior week during which they can go wherever they want with their classmates on campus to take pictures, in an effort to reduce the post-ceremony picture-taking. She added that allowing only a short window of time to leave after graduation may also help.

Diana Mager commented on the question about testing guests. She felt this would be unwieldy, noting that it is difficult enough to inform our own students about the requirements and achieve compliance. To get that information to outsiders would double the workload. Another consideration is what to do if a guest—say, a student's grandmother—shows up without a test. It could make an already busy day a lot more complicated.

Kevin Lawlor said that the counterargument to that would be that we have this theoretical bubble and if we allow it to be penetrated by a whole host of other people, it defeats the purpose. Diana Mager said that is why she felt it would be better to just have the ceremony for students and live stream it for families. Kevin Lawlor added that when students get their cap and gown now, they own it. They used to have to turn them in, but now they can take them home and take pictures with family members after the fact. Shelley Phelan noted that another thing to keep in mind is that, in those last couple of weeks, with regard to seniors who mostly live at the beach, it's not really going to be a bubble.

Kevin Lawlor added that a lot will depend on the stage of the variants at that point.

Kim Doughty said that, the way she sees it, there are only 2 realistic options: either don't allow guests or allow guests but not require them to be tested. In the latter scenario, we'd have to accept that there will be some risk but hopefully that risk will be low, especially by May when more people will have been vaccinated. To Diana's and Shelley's points earlier, there really is not a bubble on campus, especially with the seniors, and there are too many potential holes in testing. She also speculated that guests (in particular, parents) who test negative early in the week prior to graduation but then develop mild symptoms or become exposed to a confirmed case would be unlikely to skip their child's graduation.

Kevin Lawlor shared that this same kind of discussion is occurring in the NCAA. There is pressure from both Prep and the Athletics department right now to allow some spectators at games. So again, there is a threat to the bubble. We have made access to campus very limited to protect the campus community. Do we abandon that? The University's preliminary position is that guests are not coming on campus unless they are tested.

Shelley Phelan asked what is happening with tours. Kevin Lawlor said that those guests are preregistered, the tours are limited in sized and socially distanced, and masks are required. Tour group members also complete the LiveSafe questionnaire, but they are not required to be tested. He added that the answer for graduation may be that if we let guests in and don't test them, we get them in and out quickly.

Jen Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether indoor spaces would be restricted if guests come on campus. Even if those buildings are locked, students could swipe into them. She also mentioned that she has noticed when she comes to campus on Sundays for testing and there are sports teams there, there seems to be a lot more loitering around the game area that she sees at any other time. If students, who have all been tested regularly, are able to participate indoors in a safe way (with masks, spaced out) they may be less likely to gather in unsafe way.

Diana Mager asked how we would ensure that people leave quickly. Kevin Lawlor said that, if a group has a ceremony on Sunday, they will need to leave on Sunday, not on Wednesday when the last ceremony is. Diana asked how move-in has worked. Kevin said that students had to sign up for a time slot and were limited to that time. They could have one parent to help and everyone needed to stay masked. Julia Duffy added that people were only allowed to go up certain staircases and down others. It was all very controlled.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwsich noted that, even if we are able to get people off campus right away, they can still go back to their beach houses. They won't necessarily leave right away. Kevin Lawlor said that we would invalidate their Stag card so they wouldn't be able to get onto campus after graduation. He noted that that would help with residential students, though those comprise a minority of all seniors. There are ~950 seniors and approximately 600 live at the beach.

Kim Doughty observed that the group still seems torn on what the right approach is and asked whether anyone was leaning in one direction more than the other. Kevin Lawlor shared that the University has received enough feedback from parents and other groups requesting guest attendance that if we can do something in-person with 2 guests per student, we will. Quinnipiac, SHU, and others are planning to do the same.

Kim Doughty asked how difficult it would be to change plans for in-person ceremonies with guests if circumstances change in a way that makes that riskier. Kevin Lawlor said it would be easier to do that than to switch from a virtual ceremony to in-person.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether it would be difficult to say that the in-person plans were contingent on the color-coded alert level at the time. Diana Mager added that what's happening off-campus with infection rates would need to be considered as well and Kevin Lawlor noted that travel advisories would also be a consideration.

Kim Doughty suggested including a broad disclaimer in any communication with families about commencement that the plans are subject to change.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether it would be appropriate for the group to make a recommendation that any in-person events should be strictly outdoors. Kevin Lawlor thought so, and added that the events would be held rain or shine.

Kim Doughty asked what the graduating class sizes were for each school, to determine how large these events would be with 2 guests per student. Amy Boczer shared that it varies depending on whether you look at academic year (based on expected graduation year) or class year (based on current earned hours). Using academic year, the largest group of seniors is SOB at 395 (or 350 based on earned hours), CAS is 309, Nursing is 155, Engineering is 74. Kim Doughty noted that, for SOB that means over 1,000 people including guests.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch said that the events should be broken up further to make them smaller. Kevin Lawlor asked what the target number should be. Diana Mager said it would need to be based on the available space and how many people could be accommodated with 6 feet of distancing. Kim Doughty asked whether anyone knew the capacity of the field. Kevin Lawlor wasn't entirely sure, but he thought it was 500 with spacing. Kim Doughty noted that, if that number is accurate, then Nursing would be able to have one ceremony, but SOB would probably need to have 3 and CAS would need 2. Kevin said he would check the numbers and also suggested inviting Walter Rankin and Mark Ligas to the next meeting to discuss further. All agreed.

Kevin added that the stadium is another option for a venue and noted that we'd likely be talking about 8 or 9 ceremonies. Kim Doughty asked whether that would be a problem. Kevin said it could be a problem for the speakers who would need to attend each event. Diana Mager suggested recording and streaming videos of speakers.

Fall 2021 policies and graduate courses: Kevin Lawlor shared that he had had discussions with Christine Siegel and Walter Rankin and they are now actively considering bringing graduate students back on campus in the summer, as long as sections are filled.

Kim Doughty asked whether this was also being considered for the fall. As of the last Town Hall meeting, it sounded like the plan was to keep graduate courses fully online. Kevin Lawlor said that this is actively being discussed right now. The inclination, with the exception of study abroad, is to be as close to normal as possible for the fall semester. There may still be masks and testing, but the 6-foot distancing requirement may shrink to 3 feet, which will allow more density in the classrooms. Most faculty and students will have been vaccinated by then. The question now is, if the vaccines transition from emergency use authorization to full authorization, should we make them mandatory.

Kim Doughty asked whether the group should we make an explicit statement about resuming in-person experiences for the fall semester for graduate courses. Kevin Lawlor said yes, based upon the facts as they stand now (and this is subject to change), there is no reason not to resume to close to normal operations.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch added that the summer could be almost like a pilot. If all goes well, that will provide more data to support in-person activities in the fall. Diana Mager noted that graduate students would need to be woven into surveillance testing. Although those that have certain courses in person have been included in the testing, more will need to be tested as in-person classes expand for graduate students.

Kevin Lawlor shared that March probably will be the last month that we require 100% of the population to test each week. We will probably move back to the model of surveillance testing we had in the fall semester.

Kim Doughty shared that, although Shelley Phelan had to leave earlier, she sent a comment by email indicating that the hybrid format is not working for labs. Kim Doughty asked whether there was something this group should do to address the concern. Shelley had noted that she was already discussing this issue with Richard Greenwald. Kim asked whether students should have to take labs in person; if that is something that could be considered. Diana Mager shared that Nursing is already doing this. For some labs, students cannot attend remotely.

Students in shared spaces on campus: As the meeting neared its end, Kim Doughty mentioned briefly that she and Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch were both concerned about students using shared spaces on campus without wearing masks. They had seen it happening a lot. Jen shared that, in one instance, she entered a classroom and students were in the room not wearing

masks and did not even put their masks back on when she entered. Kim Doughty said that she has not been good about confronting students because it's not something she's comfortable doing. Jen said she hadn't been either. Jen suggested that maybe just putting up some signs in the study rooms to remind people that they still need to have their masks on would be helpful. Kim agreed and said that it might not do much, but it couldn't hurt. Perhaps some students will struggle with the idea of keeping their masks off while looking directly at a sign indicating that masks are required.

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

The Public Health Advisory Team advises Senior Leadership to:

1. Hold multiple, small, in-person commencement ceremonies outdoors (rain or shine). It is reasonable to allow 2 guests per student so long as the total number of attendees is limited. The Advisory Team will issue further guidance on a maximum number of attendees for each ceremony. At a minimum, this number should not exceed the capacity of the venue with 6 feet of distancing between seats.
2. Allow graduate courses to include in-person experiences in the Fall 2021 semester.
3. Post signage in study rooms and other common areas on campus reminding students that masks are required in those areas.

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TEAM**  
**March 10, 2021**  
***Notes by Kim Doughty***

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#### Members:

Kevin Lawlor, Executive Vice President  
Susan Birge, Associate VP for Health & Wellness  
Julia Duffy, Director of the Student Health Center  
Joanna Wynne, MD, Medical Director for the Student Health Center (Chair)  
Diana Mager, DNP, RN-BC, Associate Professor of Nursing  
Shelley Phelan, Chair and Professor of Biology Department  
Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Assistant Professor of Public Health  
Kim Doughty, Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health  
Amy Boczer, Director for Institutional Research

**In attendance:** Susan Birge, Julia Duffy, Shelley Phelan, Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Kim Doughty, Amy Boczer

Updates on testing and compliance: Shelley Phelan shared that the testing lines were longer than usual on Tuesday. Kim Doughty noted that she also experienced a longer line this week. Susan Birge said that, going forward, individuals are going to need to adhere to their

appointment times and there will be a separate queue for those who are arriving for a scheduled appointment. Public Safety officers will help with this.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked about compliance this week and what ultimately happened with students who did not comply last week. Julia Duffy explained that in addition to the Binax clinic that was held to test any non-compliant students, Public Safety Officers went to students' rooms to inform them that they needed to go to the Health Center for testing or leave by 5:00pm on Saturday. Almost everyone did go to get tested. This may be part of what's driving the increase in individuals coming to the testing center on Tuesdays.

Cases in Campion Hall: Julia Duffy shared that there were 6 cases identified among residents of Campion Hall within 24 hours. She thought the number was up to 7 cases. Contact tracing suggests that of the initial 6 cases, 4 could be linked to each other. Although there were some rumors of a social gathering, no one admitted to being at any party. Every one of the cases were symptomatic and had been symptomatic for several days. Most were identified through surveillance testing. One student came into the Health Center with an unrelated concern and tested positive.

Amy Boczer pulled up the data breaking down the cases. She shared that there were 8 cases at the time, including 2 new cases in the last 24 hours. Most cases were male students, only 1 was an athlete, and cases were spread across the floors. Amy confirmed that 5 of the 8 positive tests were identified through surveillance testing.

Shelley Phelan asked how many students had been contact traced in relation to these cases and were in quarantine. Julia Duffy said there were at least 8, but that number was not up to date. Many of the cases had overlapping contacts, so there weren't as many unique direct contacts as there could have been.

Amy Boczer added that she meets with the data managers most mornings and they've said that, while some students are getting wise to the contact tracing process and reporting contacts strategically to avoid quarantine, this recent group of students seemed to be more honest than the previous group.

Julia Duffy noted that it is discouraging that this modified quarantine for Campion was necessary. However, the students' attitudes were generally positive when they came for testing. A 2-hour Broad Institute testing clinic was held for the Campion and it went smoothly with relatively few staff. It was easier than previous clinics using rapid tests because students did not all have to pack their things in the event that they would need to immediately quarantine.

Kim Doughty asked what the modified quarantine looks like for Campion residents. Julia Duffy said that students can go outside and pick up some grab and go meals, but otherwise they are supposed to stay put and in their own rooms. Kim asked how this was being enforced. Julia explained that Public Safety officers are stationed outside and the RAs are enforcing inside.

Amy Boczer mentioned that she was fairly sure some of the students who tested positive were symptomatic while in line for testing. Julia Duffy and Susan Birge confirmed that this was the case.

Shelley Phelan asked whether students required to show the LiveSafe app anywhere on campus, now that it is not required at the testing center anymore. Julia Duffy said that athletes have to show it to get into the athletic center and Susan Birge added that students also need to show the app to gain entrance to the Tully.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether students' symptoms could have been confused with seasonal allergies and perhaps the students were not trying to be dishonest. If so, we may see more students in this same position.

Kim Doughty said that, while she was glad that students are tested weekly now because that may have helped to identify these cases before they were able to spread the virus further, she also wondered whether some students are more reluctant to seek out diagnostic testing in a timely manner because they know they have a regular surveillance test appointment coming up anyway. She also suggested that it should be clearly communicated to students that they need to get tested promptly if they experience any symptoms and maybe the signage at the testing center could be updated. Instead of simply "Do not enter if you are symptomatic," the sign could list the specific symptoms and urge students to report to the Health Center if they have any of them.

Shelley Phelan felt that seasonal allergies make this difficult, and that we are doing all we can do. She suggested that maybe Karen Donoghue could send an email reminder to students. Susan Birge added that there is probably some pandemic fatigue. Students may not be reading the signs anymore.

Mask policies on campus: Kim Doughty noted that the Advisory Team's previous recommendation about minimum mask requirements (2-layer cloth mask, no gaiters) did not appear to manifest in any kind of formal communication. Shelley Phelan added that several faculty have expressed concern to her about students wearing gaiters or bandanas and being lax about mask wearing. She felt the University should make a firm statement about it.

Julia Duffy mentioned that the initial communication about masks came from Will Johnson and he also puts out some messaging every Friday, so perhaps he could help. Susan Birge offered to reach out to Will to ask him to communicate with students about both masks and the need to report to the Health Center for testing if symptomatic.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruiwsch was also concerned about masks this week because several students in her classes were wearing gaiters. In addition, in her classrooms, which have long tables, the chairs are spaced out horizontally across rows, but they are not adequately spaced out between rows. In other words, students might be far enough from the student to either side of them but not from students in front of or behind them.

Susan Birge said that David Frassinelli and Curt Krushinsky designed the classrooms for social distancing and they could figure out a better arrangement. She suggested that Jen contact Kurt with a photo of the classroom. Shelley Phelan agreed that David and Curt are helpful and responsive and suggested that it's possible that the tables were moved since the classroom was initially set up. Shelley had not seen inadequate spacing in her classrooms or labs, so she hoped it was an anomaly. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch shared that she has seen this in 3 separate classrooms. Shelley Phelan suggested that Jen communicate with Meredith Kazer if it appears to be a problem in the Egan School specifically.

New CDC guidelines for vaccinated individuals: Julia Duffy shared that she received a communication from the CT Department of Public Health yesterday evening. It indicated that fully vaccinated individuals may forego testing and quarantine. Given this, Julia asked why we are still requiring surveillance testing for fully vaccinated employees. Fairfield Prep employees should be able to receive their second dose on April 1<sup>st</sup>, so 2 weeks after that, we could eliminate 80 individuals from the weekly testing, which would help to alleviate the burden of administering the tests and monitoring compliance.

Shelley Phelan agreed with Julia's perspective and added that, as people get vaccinated, more will come to campus and that will increase the demand for surveillance testing. Kim Doughty also agreed it made sense not to require testing for fully vaccinated individuals.

Susan Birge added that this stance could also give us an idea of how many people are vaccinated because those individuals would need to provide documentation of their vaccination status in order to be exempt from testing and quarantine.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked for confirmation that the exemptions would apply starting 2 weeks after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna or the first and only dose of J&J. Julia Duffy confirmed this.

Shelley Phelan asked whether the new CDC guidelines allowing fully vaccinated individuals to gather indoors without masks would technically mean that students who have been vaccinated can gather with each other in this way. She felt that these questions will start to come up as students hear about the CDC guidelines.

Julia Duffy said that if vaccinated students were identified through contact tracing, they would be exempt, but there is an exception for Nursing students and others working in a clinical setting. These students would still be excluded from the clinical setting until the quarantine period was over.

Kim Doughty suggested that if fully vaccinated students are getting together with each other, the odds that they would be exposed and need to complete this kind of modified quarantine as a result of that gathering would be low.

Julia Duffy felt it might confuse other students if some groups receive approval to gather without social distancing and masks. Shelley Phelan added that students may figure out on their own that they can get together, but the University probably should not make any statement

about it. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch noted that students could start claiming that they are vaccinated in order to gain access to social gatherings.

Kim Doughty asked whether it would be worth making any kind of statement regarding faculty and staff who are vaccinated. For example, can they meet in individual offices or break rooms without masks if all are fully vaccinated?

Susan Birge said there's not a need to comment on that. Employees will do the right thing on their own.

As the group defined the recommendation that would be made regarding testing and quarantine exemptions for fully vaccinated individuals, Julia Duffy clarified that DPH has not stated that vaccinated students should be exempt from weekly surveillance testing, but they can be exempt from quarantine. Employees can be exempt from testing because there is no directive coming from DPH regarding surveillance testing of employees.

Shelley Phelan asked Julia whether she had said earlier that the 90-day window of assumed immunity after a prior infection had been lifted. Julia clarified that that 90-day period was not lifted for prior infection, but for vaccinated individuals.

Senior week and commencement activities: None of the members present had any new information to share about commencement activities. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether there should be any specific testing requirement for seniors before graduations. She did not know for sure, but she did not think that all beach students were showing up for testing, based on what she has heard from her students. Perhaps it could be a requirement that students participate in testing regularly throughout the semester in order to attend graduation.

Kim Doughty was not sure that it would be reasonable to require students to be tested every week as a condition of participating in graduation. While many are probably not being conscientious about testing, others may be skipping it because most or all of their classes are online. Shelley Phelan said that students should at least be tested before graduation. Kim agreed that that made a lot of sense.

Amy Boczer shared that in the past week, 516 beach students were tested, which is a large proportion.

Fall 2021 policies: Kim Doughty asked the group to consider what impact, if any, the more optimistic predictions for vaccine distribution might have on the fall semester. For example, if everyone has the ability to get a vaccine prior to the start of the fall semester, does it still make sense to accommodate remote learners?

Shelley Phelan said that she did not think the University had made a definitive decision on allowing remote learners in the fall. The plan for a hybrid model is just a plan. The lab science faculty cannot meet their course learning objectives with a hybrid model, so the science department Chairs are advocating for in-person labs only. There is a precedent, in the Nursing

program, for even remote students to be required to come to campus for labs. Shelley also was not sure how much of these decisions fall under the purview of the Public Health Advisory Team.

Kim Doughty said that, in her understanding, the role of this committee is to provide guidance on public health issues and leave the rest to University leadership. So, we don't need to provide a full-throated endorsement of a policy, but we can weigh in on whether a policy is safe and appropriate, from a public health perspective. She also added that what this group is being asked to is to think about some hypothetical scenarios. While we cannot know exactly what will happen between now and the fall, we can come up with some "if, then" statements to guide decision-making. She asked what would need to happen in order for it to be safe and appropriate to revert back to in-person classes as a default and not accommodate fully remote learners. For example, would it be only if we can mandate the vaccine? Or would it be okay if we can demonstrate that a certain proportion of the campus community has been vaccinated?

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch said if there was a way to demonstrate that we have herd immunity on campus, then it would be okay, but it's not clear if we have a way to know that. Shelley Phelan asked Julia Duffy her take on whether students could be required to disclose their vaccination status. Julia said she wishes the University would require students to be vaccinated to live in the dorms, even if the state does not require it. She was not sure how long the emergency use authorization will be in place, but noted that the state requires several other vaccines.

Kim Doughty shared that she was in favor of mandating the vaccine for residential students once it is fully approved and not under EUA. She asked whether anyone else thought it was possible or desirable to require the vaccine while it is still under an EUA. Shelley Phelan was not sure if there was a legal reason and felt that the group should have this conversation when Kevin Lawlor is present.

Julia shared that, on a positive note, the state seems to be softening to the idea of vaccinating students before they leave, and although some students will not get the vaccine no matter what, it is probably a small number.

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

The Public Health Advisory Team advises Senior Leadership to:

1. Allow employees who are fully vaccinated (i.e., 2 weeks after receiving their terminal vaccine dose) to be exempt from surveillance testing and quarantine if asymptomatic, per CDC guidelines.
2. Communicate with students, through the Office of the Dean of Students: 1) a reminder about minimum mask requirements, including unacceptable face coverings (gaiters, bandanas, etc.); and 2) a reminder that students experiencing any potential COVID-19 symptoms must promptly seek testing at the Health Center and not participate in surveillance testing at the Field House.

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY  
PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TEAM**

**March 17, 2021**

***Notes by Kim Doughty***

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Members:

Kevin Lawlor, Executive Vice President

Susan Birge, Associate VP for Health & Wellness

Julia Duffy, Director of the Student Health Center

Joanna Wynne, MD, Medical Director for the Student Health Center (Chair)

Diana Mager, DNP, RN-BC, Associate Professor of Nursing

Shelley Phelan, Chair and Professor of Biology Department

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Assistant Professor of Public Health

Kim Doughty, Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health

Amy Boczer, Director for Institutional Research

**In attendance:** Kevin Lawlor, Susan Birge, Julia Duffy, Diana Mager, Shelley Phelan, Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Kim Doughty, Amy Boczer.

Updates on vaccine distribution: Kevin Lawlor shared that it is looking more likely that the University will be able to hold vaccination clinics for students before the end of the semester. The state is asking colleges to survey students to determine how many would get the vaccine.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch noted that a Public Health student has developed an informal survey about students' attitudes and behaviors related to COVID, including their attitudes towards the vaccine. This survey has been approved by the IRB. Although the plan was to distribute this through informal channels, Jen wanted to mention it in case it could be valuable as the University seeks to survey all students.

Amy Boczer suggested that Jen have the student reach out to her. Institutional Research is developing a survey now, so there may be an opportunity to collaborate with the student. Jen was appreciative of this suggestion.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked whether the vaccination clinic being discussed would be held in late April. Kevin Lawlor said that the timing depends on availability of the vaccine. It is not anticipated that much of the J&J vaccine would be available until the end of April, which is why the State would like the University to be set up to be able to quickly administer the vaccines when they do become available.

Julia Duffy added that Sands Cleary, Director of the Fairfield Health Department, mentioned that a clinic could be billed as a Fairfield U student clinic but technically open to the public as well. Kevin Lawlor mentioned that there have been some closed clinics for the K-12 employee population. Some were clearly closed to public, but others were quietly open.

Kim Doughty asked whether a campus vaccine clinic would be held only if the J&J vaccine is available. Kevin Lawlor said that it is possible that a different vaccine could be used if there was not enough J&J. Susan Birge added that it is possible to give only the first dose of a 2-dose vaccine if there is not another option.

Kevin Lawlor noted that the Moderna vaccine appears to have a higher percentage protection after one dose as compared to Pfizer. Diana Mager said she thought she read Moderna's first dose provided 92% protection. Some are saying they may ditch the second Moderna dose. After the meeting, Kim Doughty confirmed the 92% figure and found that the Pfizer vaccine confers 70% protection after the first dose.

Kevin Lawlor also heard that a 3<sup>rd</sup> dose is being considered as a booster, with the intent that the booster would address any variants.

Shelley Phelan suggested that one possibility is to separate out the students who live within driving distance and could come back for a second dose. Kim Doughty asked whether it was even feasible to administer a second dose on campus over the summer. Julia Duffy said it would be possible, but difficult. She added that VAMS is a national system, so students could receive their second dose in their home state.

Shelley Phelan pointed out that there will be at least a small group of students who will be on campus in the summer. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch felt that having students come back for a second dose or obtain it in their home state could leave a lot of holes. It might be better than nothing, but it could be complicated.

Kevin Lawlor noted that there is a perception among a lot of people who that J&J is a lesser vaccine. Shelley Phelan acknowledged that the efficacy is lower, but she would not call it a lesser vaccine. All of the available vaccines are highly effective. Kevin Lawlor added that the vaccines were tested at different times and in different groups, so it is difficult to compare them directly.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch suggested that it may help to emphasize that there have not been any hospitalizations or deaths with the J&J vaccine. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch noted that a small group of individuals might be hesitant about the J&J vaccine because it is more similar to AstraZeneca vaccine, which has caused some safety concerns recently (these concerns have since been determined to be largely unfounded).

Fall 2021: Shelley Phelan shared that there has been some discussion among faculty and students already about expectations for the fall. Some students are saying they hope that they can request that their roommates be vaccinated. Kevin Lawlor said that leadership has begun to have discussions about the fall. There are a lot of challenges with making the vaccine mandatory, but many schools are actively considering it. A lot depends on the status of the vaccine at that time.

Shelley Phelan shared that she had read a couple of articles suggesting that the vaccine could be mandated while under emergency use authorization, under certain circumstances. She asked if the University's legal department was looking at that. Kevin Lawlor said that the

University can mandate the vaccine but would have to allow exceptions. Kim Doughty noted that exceptions are already allowed for other vaccines, so this would not be any different.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch added that we could achieve a high degree of compliance if the default is mandatory vaccination and students have to opt out. Julia Duffy noted that there is a different policy for the meningitis vaccine for commuters as compared to residential students, implying that it would not be unusual to have a similar approach for the COVID vaccine. Shelley Phelan said she would be in favor of a vaccination requirement.

Kevin Lawlor shared that discussion is currently underway about removing the virtual option for the fall semester, noting that it is very likely that the distancing requirement in the fall will be 3 feet or even less. Kim Doughty felt this would be a very welcome decision, if it comes to fruition. She added that she has heard from some faculty who are concerned about having to continue to accommodate remote students even post-pandemic. Shelley Phelan said that this issue has come up at recent College of Arts and Sciences meetings, and the question seems to be when an accommodation request would fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Kevin Lawlor noted that the ADA requires *reasonable* accommodations.

COVID infection rates and trends.: Kevin Lawlor noted that trends in Europe have frequently predicted trends in the U.S. and infection rates are not good there now. There is a higher prevalence of variants as vaccination rates have stalled. In Europe, they still don't have access to Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. Astra Zeneca has been the mainstay and now that has stalled.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch said that, on a smaller scale, we are seeing an uptick on campus as well. The increase is slow, but steady. She asked if there was something in particular that increase could be attributed to.

Kevin Lawlor noted that the infection rate is still below 0.5%. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch agreed that the rate is low, but it is nevertheless increasing steadily.

Kevin Lawlor said that, anecdotally, this increase is being attributed to behavior and parties that people deny attending. Campion and Jogues seem to have the bulk of those cases. Julia Duffy added that the Health Center is starting to see students not come forward with their contacts. There were 2 students on the day of the meeting who came forward as contacts of existing cases because they had developed symptoms. These were students who should have been in quarantine, but were not identified as contacts by the original case. This pattern seems to represent a change from the fall.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked if there had been any change in contact tracing from last semester. Julia Duffy said that it is a little different this semester, but better. Last semester, some of the contact tracers were not trained nurses and there were some irregularities.

Senior week and commencement activities: Kim Doughty understood that the plan was to have a virtual commencement and smaller in-person ceremonies, but asked if there were any additional details to share. Kevin Lawlor said that for the class of 2021, there will be 3 days of senior week with many outdoor activities, followed by 4 days of small ceremonies by school. Students will be allowed to come with up to 2 guests and they will be spread out on Bellarmine

lawn. There will be some taped pieces of the graduation but some in-person pieces as well. Larger schools like CAS will get broken up by major to limit the number of individuals to 500.

Kim Doughty asked for confirmation that these in-person ceremonies are not being called commencement ceremonies. Kevin Lawlor said this is correct. The official commencement will be virtual. The in-person events are “celebrations.”

Testing: Kim Doughty noted that the Advisory Team had previously discussed requiring testing of students prior to senior week and asked the group whether this should be a recommendation. Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch thought that it should be. Julia Duffy noted that it would depend on the testing strategy at that point.

Kevin Lawlor said that the Governor’s emergency power will expire on April 20<sup>th</sup> and it is not expected that there will be any move to renew the powers at that time, so we will likely need to determine our own testing strategy after that. The CCIC schools seem to be in favor of maintaining the current testing regime through April.

Julia Duffy said she would endorse that because testing 100% of the population has been helpful for the Health Center in terms of identifying contacts. Kim Doughty agreed. She noted that several cases have been identified from surveillance testing and some students have also expressed support for the weekly testing.

Kevin Lawlor shared that the University signed a new contract with SalivaDirect. They are on the cusp of being able to deliver not only positive or negative results but also whether any variants are present. It will be incorporated into the testing program. Shelley Phelan asked when that would happen. Kevin said as soon as it can be worked in; the contract has been signed already. However, feedback from students is that they don’t like the idea of spitting in a tube.

Kevin Lawlor shared that SHU has already stood up a vaccine clinic. One idea that has been discussed with Sands Cleary is the possibility of SHU opening up space to our community members. The higher education institutions are trying to establish collaborations for vaccination clinics, so UNH and Yale might get together as would Fairfield and SHU. On a different note, UCONN is sending their students home on April 9<sup>th</sup> for a break and teaching virtually for the remainder of the semester. They are also not testing their off-campus students.

Julia Duffy asked whether weekly employee testing will continue through April. Kevin Lawlor said that, as vaccinated individuals are exempted, the number required to test will decrease, but the University will continue to ask those who are not vaccinated to get tested. Julia Duffy shared that 130 employees and 270 students have provided documentation of vaccination so far.

Kim Doughty asked to return to the topic of testing before senior week because she didn’t think a consensus was reached. Shelley Phelan said that if students have to come to campus for those events, they will need to test anyway. We just need to remind them.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch added that some students who have a long break between finals and their celebration ceremony may not come to campus in between. Shelley Phelan reiterated that students still already know the testing requirements and should only need a reminder.

Kim Doughty noted that pre-senior week testing might be more of an issue if the testing strategy changes, but it sounds like that's not likely. Julia Duffy added that compliance has been better.

Kevin Lawlor asked whether testing should be required for guests. Kim Doughty said that she thought the group felt that it was not worth the effort. Others agreed. Shelley Phelan asked what SHU was planning to do regarding testing of guests. Kevin Lawlor said they were not testing guests either.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch asked how we would separate the checking in of students vs. guests? If we want to verify testing compliance, students would need to show their Stag card. Kevin Lawlor expected that it would be possible to control students' access to campus up to the day of the ceremony, but on the day of the ceremony, there will be some comingling.

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch felt that, by having an in-person ceremony, on that day there will be some level of risk, but it would be manageable as long as faculty and students are not gathering in different rooms beforehand as is the usual practice.

Kim Doughty asked how likely is it that students will come to campus for the senior week events prior to their School or Program ceremonies. If there are students who would only show up for the ceremony, it sounds like it would be difficult to ensure that they have been tested recently.

Diana Mager said she thought most would come for senior week events. Shelley Phelan added that she was not sure how many students would not be coming to campus regularly; maybe just those who have all online courses.

Kevin Lawlor added that there are about 370 remote students this semester in total. Shelley Phelan suggested that seniors who are fully remote and planning to come to campus for a ceremony will need to be tested. Julia Duffy clarified that those students would need to provide an external test.

### **Summary of Recommendations:**

The Public Health Advisory Team advises Senior Leadership to:

1. Continue weekly surveillance testing of 100% of the campus community (with current exceptions) through the remainder of the semester.
2. Require students who have not been participating in weekly surveillance testing but who are planning to attend in-person pre-commencement ceremonies to submit external COVID test results within 7 days prior to the event.
3. Allow up to 2 guests per student to attend pre-commencement ceremonies with no testing requirement.

## Memo from the Rank & Tenure Committee

Date: March 12, 2021

To: Academic Council Chair, Secretary, General Faculty Secretary

From: Mousumi Bhattacharya, Chair, Rank and Tenure Committee, 2020-2021

Re: Additions and modifications to JOR language for Rank and Tenure

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Committee on Rank and Tenure, I submit the following additions and modifications to the Journal of Record (JOR) language for Rank and Tenure. These are issues that have come up frequently this year during the application process and review process. The committee met twice to discuss these issues. After much deliberation we have put forward these recommendations.

1. Sharing of external letter summary or otherwise with internal letter writers (appropriate faculty)

Proposed revision of Rank and Tenure Guidelines in JOR (additions in bold)

7. BY OCTOBER 15: External reviewers send their evaluation directly to the Dean. **The Dean maintains confidentiality of the external reviewer evaluations.** The applicant checks with the Dean to verify that the letters have been received. The applicant will submit paper and electronic copies of his/her dossier and all supporting material to the head of the curriculum area and appropriate faculty (normally those with rank at or above the rank sought by the applicant, within the department).

Rationale: The foremost aim of the Rank and Tenure Committee is to provide the most objective assessment possible of each candidate's case for tenure and/or promotion. In making that objective assessment, the committee considers multiple letters of evaluation on each candidate, including letters from external reviewers and letters from school/department members. To ensure objectivity and fairness to the candidate, it is critical that these letters represent the independent and unbiased evaluations of each letter-writer. So, for example, letters from school/department members shall be written based on that individual's professional evaluation of the candidate's materials. The individual letters are written without reviewing external reviewer letters, and/or letters from other school/department members. This practice will produce a multitude of independent evaluations of each candidate based on the unique professional expertise of the letter-writer that, when taken together, provides the committee with a diversity of unbiased information. In the service of ensuring that each candidate is treated as fairly and objectively as possible, we thus ask that school/department members do not review letters from external reviewers or other school/department members before or after writing their own letters. Since the letter from the candidate's Dean is meant to provide a summary evaluation of the candidate's entire case, the Dean should review all letters.

2. Sharing of Internal letters (from appropriate faculty) with head of the curriculum area

Proposed revision of Rank and Tenure Guidelines in JOR (additions in bold)

8. BY NOVEMBER 8: The appropriate faculty, normally those with rank at or above the rank sought by the applicant, write an evaluation that clearly states their recommendation. They send a signed electronic **letter** ~~copy~~ of ~~their~~ evaluation **only** to the Dean and to the Assistant to the Provost. **The Dean maintains confidentiality of the internal reviewer evaluations.**

Rationale: Same as # 1 above

3. Whether Head of the curriculum area writes a summative letter for internal letters and/or his/her own letter

Proposed revision of Rank and Tenure Guidelines in JOR (additions in bold)

9. BY NOVEMBER 15: **The head of the curriculum area writes an evaluation of the applicant's role in the curriculum area, and explains the process of evaluation, including, but not limited to whether it is a summary of other faculty perspectives or it is from an individual perspective. If the head of the curriculum area is not at the rank of the applicant or above, then a past head or senior faculty of the curriculum area could write the letter. If the head of the curriculum area is the applicant, then a past head or senior faculty of the curriculum area would write the letter.** The head of the curriculum area forwards a signed electronic ~~copy~~ **letter** of ~~his/her~~ evaluation to the Dean and to the Assistant to the Provost, and delivers the applicant's paper and electronic dossier and supporting documentation to the Dean's office.

Rationale: The letter of evaluation from the head of the curriculum area is different from the letter from the appropriate faculty as found in the Faculty Handbook A. 2. a. (Procedure on p. 22). Details of this letter of evaluation is found in the JOR timeline # 9 and there is lack of clarity in the current language as to whether it is a summative letter from the curriculum area or an independent letter from the head of the curriculum area. What is clear is that the head of the curriculum writes this letter with an evaluation of the applicant's role in the curriculum area. Historically, the heads of different curriculum follow a wide variety of practices in writing this letter of evaluation. The absence of a clarification of the evaluation process makes an objective assessment difficult on the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the rank and tenure committee. In the service of ensuring that each candidate is treated as fairly and objectively as possible, we thus ask that the process of evaluation by the head of the curriculum areas is explained in the letter. The proposed addition of language also clarifies the purpose of the letter and the rank/eligibility clarification of the letter writer.

## **Memo from the Rank & Tenure Committee**

Date: Feb 22, 2021

To: Academic Council Chair, Secretary, General Faculty Secretary

From: Mousumi Bhattacharya, Chair, Rank and Tenure Committee, 2020-2021

Re: Applications for Tenure and Promotion in 2022

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Committee on Rank and Tenure, I submit the following.

Given the experience of the 2020-2021 Committee on Rank and Tenure, we propose that electronic submissions be a practice carried forward in 2022. Because electronic submissions were helpful to the review process during the circumstances of these times, we suggest,

- Applicants should continue to follow personnel policies in the Fairfield University Faculty Handbook, and consult revised Guidelines and Timetable for Applications for Tenure and Promotion
- Electronic submissions should include dossier and supporting materials
- “In preparing a dossier and supporting documentation, a candidate’s principal obligation is to present coherently and document substantially his or her case for promotion and/or tenure” (Journal of Record, Appendix 5, pp. 53).

DiMenna-Nyselius Librarians are available for consultation on best practices for digitizing materials.