

Michael J. Grant Campus

# Academic Assembly

**December 1, 2020 Zoom Meeting Minutes**

1. Alexander Kasiukov called the meeting to order at 3:35pm
2. Approval of [October 20, 2020](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-10-20/assembly-2020-10-20-minutes-draft.docx) meeting minutes - approved unanimously without correction.
3. College and Campus Update (Donna Ciampa)
   1. COVID Pool Testing – thank you to the FA and Guild for agreeing to the pool testing for its members. We’ve had about 140 employee tests administered up until today. Thank you for your participation in the initiative. Students are in their 3d round of testing. The numbers for students have been dwindling, we are hoping to get more in for testing. The numbers are reported to SUNY on a daily basis.
   2. Enrollment – brief earlier today regarding generating enrollment. With 50 days out from the spring semester, we are down 33% in enrollment. Winter enrollment is looking good – we are offering 21 sections compared to 22 last year and this year’s seat utilization is at 82%. For spring, last year we offered 959 sections, this year we are offering 866 section with the seat utilization at 41%. We are looking to advise and engage more. Arena advising is being considered dependent upon the COVID regulation at the time. Students responded well during the summer Arena Advising. Volunteers are being requested for phone outreach and advising volunteering. These can be used for contractual advising hours. Contact Pat Buehrle-Johnson for phone calls and Debra Wolfson is coordinating the advising.
   3. SUNY Satisfaction and Plans Survey for students enrolled Fall 2020. Approximately 1,500 SCCC students responded to the survey. Highlights are:
      1. 60% were very satisfied/satisfied/neutral regarding modality of the class
      2. 76% plan to attend in the spring, 15% do not plan to attend and 4% are not sure
      3. Of that group, 17% preferred in-person learning, 40% preferred totally online and the remaining preferring a mix of the modalities
      4. Students concerns regarding in-person classes: 92% responded COVID-19 is their biggest concern, 70% indicated that the ability to social distance was a main concern, 42% responded that finances were a main concern
      5. More direction should be coming from the President’s office.
      6. Question in chat regarding the response rate? It was 1,500 out of the 18K-19K of our population
      7. Marc Fellenz – Who implemented the survey?
      8. Donna Ciampa – SUNY sent it out.
      9. Marc Fellenz – Can you update us from the Central perspective about the budget of the College? We understand that things are not looking good, but we doubt have details or feedback. What are the discussions in the NFL building? How is information being communicated out to the College?
      10. Donna Ciampa – I can’t speak for the NFL, I am the Executive Dean for this campus. I can tell you that it is as dire as you think. NYS has yet to give us any information regarding money to come to us, they are waiting for the determination of the federal dollars coming to us. We are making the best plans we can in a speculative manner. We will be 10s of millions of dollars short if we don’t hear soon. Mark Harris is the person that these questions should be directed to. We are trying to do the best we can with what we have got. The more students we enroll, the better off we are. We are seeing less adjunct slots, the release of our College Aides and part time employees.
      11. Marc Fellenz – I respect that, but if you could bring back to the Cabinet, if VP Harris is the person that has that information, I think there many folks who would like to hear that. A College-wide meeting, a Town Hall meeting, attendance at the Governance bodies, I think that would be appropriate.
      12. Donna Ciampa – I can make that request on your behalf.
      13. Donna Ciampa – With regard to the response rate comment in the chat, we were not a part of their survey, the Chancellor has inserted himself into every institution in a way I’ve never seen before. Somethings are going well because of it, but then there are pieces like this that are not good. The same survey was given to students at the University of Albany that was given to our students. We know our student body, he does not.
      14. Hope Sasway – it also differs based on discipline. I know some of my students are not coming back until they can come back in-person. The sciences are difficult for them to not be in-person, not have the hands-on lab piece.
      15. Donna Ciampa – the percentages I am giving are based on 1,500 responses which is not representative of the 18K students in our student body. It certainly does not take into account our Workforce Development students, our non-credit students, who are a part of this community as well.
   4. Today is Giving Tuesday and I am thankful to all you have done.
4. [Chair's Report](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/index.html" \l "Grant-Campus-Academic-Assembly) (Alexander Kasiukov) including discussion of Student Retention initiatives
   1. When people started to return to campus, they all thought that their plants would be dead but returned to find them thriving – all thanks to Public Safety Officer Paul Minott who was watering them all along. I want to publicly thank Paul Minott for his kindness – the plants owe their lives to him – but what is more important is the gesture of this action. When no one is watching, the spontaneous acts of kindness is the glue that holds society together. Thank you Paul for your kindness and for giving us an example that we all can follow. Paul Minott is joining us today. I also want to thank Janet Haff and Anabelle Darini for collecting the money to express our gratitude to Paul. Janet will you gives us an update?
      1. Janet Haff – Yes. I personally expected to walk into my office and find my plants dead and was surprised to see them green and thriving. Kathy Cotis **(spelling?)** told me that Paul had been watering the plants. Altogether we have a thank you card with $260.00 to give to Paul.
      2. Paul Minott – Thank you very much - I didn’t expect that. Thank you so much.
   2. Given Dean Ciampa’s update and our potentially dire situation, I wanted to start a discussion about doing a better job with our current students so that people who come here don’t get disappointed with regard to the modality of the teaching and get the most out of education. There is a lot of movement around the country that is lowering the academic quality of education. I think we need to invigorate the conversation about how we can provide the best possible education to students that come to us. So there are many initiatives for the ongoing improvement in student retention. One is reporting on the students that are I need of help. I wanted Donna to be here for this discussion because some of you have reservations about it. The idea is not to snitch on students, the idea is to coordinate the services of the College in a centralized way that can improve the efficiency of the operations**.** So that when the students fall behind, in our classes or stop attending, if we have a centralized system of keep track of those students then that will help the College to direct the resources to where they are most needed. I think that at least to me it seems like a sensible solution. But I know that some of you have reservations or questions about it, so I wanted to start this discussion. This will be an unusual Chair’s report because I want it to be a discussion, not just a report. Does anyone have any comments, questions or remarks about that particular initiative? How the idea of how it can be implemented better next semester? What are the best ways to move forward? How can we recreate the successes of the Arena Advising and how can we improve the new student enrollment and how we can improve student retention for the students that are already here? What are the things that are working in your discipline/department that we can borrow?
      1. Al Heraghty – Alex is your question how can we improve retention next semester dealing with the new modality that we are in? Things I’ve observed with faculty. There are so many tools within Blackboard and YouTube that you can use. Just to take your course and put it in Blackboard is an issue. I’ve seen professors doing phenomenal things, whether it’s incorporating YouTube videos or recording their lectures so that students can listen to them later, there are things that can work well. There are professors here that are using these tools that can go into more depth. I also thing that we have to think about our office hours. What are we doing for our office hours? Many concerns that I hear from students are maybe misunderstanding between the student and the teacher because the main method of communication is email. And email can be misunderstood. We may need to look at virtual office hours using Zoom. So that we can better explain things to students – the expectations, etc. Use the tools available to us to improve retention.
      2. Josh Wolfson – This is something that came up in the DE Committee. One of the workshops that I have done is the tools within Blackboard – specifically the retention center. Right now, there is an issue with it so we are not getting the last date of attendance. That handcuffs us, it’s a massive piece of information that is missing. The only way to track our students is to run reports or see if they are submitting work. Blackboard is not as useful, so we check in with our students more. With is an issue. The more emails you send, the less meaningful they become. I think we can try to figure out a way to emphasize enrollment without overloading the student. We pay for Blackboard, yet Blackboard is not providing the full suite that we pay for.
      3. Hope Sasway – So I have brought this up in at our EC meeting, a lot of my COL 101 students have commented that many of their professors in Real-time Online classes are not actually meeting with them at all and they were very upset. That’s an administrative duty to ensure that the faculty member is following the modality that they have signed-up for. To give the students the guidance that they are supposed to receive. Even when students are online, they are not really there. Today I checked 4 times, raise your hand if you listening to me. There are students that are logged in but not really there. There’s nothing that you can do about it. There has to student accountability as well as faculty accountability. Administration needs to check up.
      4. Ginny Horan – We are trying to check up. A bunch of us got together and came up with an abbreviated form for an observation, where we could just get in and see the course and make suggestions, work one-on-one because we do have the release time to help faculty members update their Blackboard sites. It was brought to Donna, and Donna brought it up but we don’t know where it went from there. Observations at this College are either a carrot or a stick. Either for promotion or you are in trouble. They really should be for professional development. I think if we could come up with a cultural shift that would help. We are trying because we do know that there are a lot of people that signed up for Real-time Online that got on line and changed. It’s unbelievable what’s happening and it is full-timers and adjuncts. We have amazing jobs; in any profession you need to better your skills to make yourself valuable. I think in education that message has gotten buried. I would say Al was being generous, you have to have a personal meeting ID and you have to encourage office hours and to make appointments if you have to. You have got to get them in. Especially in fully asynchronous. They have no connection to you; they are lost. I have concerns about the survey results that were reported because that is not what I am hearing anecdotally at all. We cannot recycle old lectures, they are not going to watch a 75-minute lecture. They need to be at the most 20 minutes. I have 25students in a Real-time Online class. Community College students desperately need a connection to their professor. If you can hold an office hour and reward them in some way for showing up – something like I expect to see you in an office hour in the 1st 2 weeks.
      5. Hope Sasway – How do you know that the 25 students are showing up? Do you require them on camera?
      6. Ginny Horan – Yes, I explain that at the beginning. I also explain that if there is a specific reason why you can’t be on camera, can you tell me. But that’s what you signed up for, so you can drop this class and take a class where you don’t have to be on camera. But I had to shift my participation grade. They desperately need the connection and they might not even know it which is whyI will say 5 points on X assignment for everyone that gets to my office hours this week.
      7. Barbara Fox – I wanted to say I am having good luck with the combined where it’s 1 Zoom meeting a week. I don’t convey new material during that meeting, I use it to go over stuff, to discuss, etc. The remainder is like asynchronous. I am having much more success that fully asynchronous. It’s almost like a once a week required office hour. I switch all of my classes in the spring to a combined online format. I think it’s a great compromise.
      8. Ginny Horan – Part of the issue is that so many people were given the freedom to choose what they were going to do and not informed about what we experienced. Combine would be the best of both worlds and now it’s probably too late to go back and change that. We did all real-time and one combined because we’re in communications. All the research is saying that online should not be in community colleges and if it is it should be in a combined format. That gives them the flexibility but also the connection.
      9. Alex Kasiukov – I know that for me the real time online works much better than the asynchronous. I still hate it but I don’t hate it as much. I think that a major concern that is still not addressed by this modality is the integrity of the tests. It’s a concern of the science faculty as well. It’s a concern for me teaching mathematics. This modality is very open to “inventive” and “collaborative” learning that I didn’t intend for my classes.
      10. Maria Alzugaray -What works for history or communications is different than what works for math. My experience with hybrids in math, in Pre-calc 2 and higher, they don’t work. The students need to hear the explanation. I think it should be completely online or live. In math we have a huge cohort of developmental students. What seems to be working the best in my classes, is 100% group work. They have the best attendance, participation. They work in small group where the sessions are recorded and I evaluate the participation within the group. Another developmental, where they don’t want to be speak in front of the whole class or be on camera in front of the whole class, but in small groups it works well. It creates a different dynamic. In other classes they sign in and turn the camera off. At home there is too many distractions. How does the administration run the reports about student’s attendance, but they have no idea about what faculty is showing up for class? How can you not show up and get your salary? The main problem I see with students is that because the class is on Zoom they think that they can sign up for a class at the same time they have work. Then they realize that they have to drop because you can’t be in work and class.
      11. Chris McDougal – On the subject on engaging students, I think it was Josh that mentioned not bombarding students with too many emails so that they pay attention to the ones they get. Another issue that discourages engagement is the requirement that we check the identity of the person we speaking to. I do most of my office hours by Zoom which works well, but sometimes it would be better to just make a quick phone call. But we have to go through this checklist, to ensure we have the student, which discourages me and then I just send an email. I wish we had an Office for the Reduction of Red Tape.
      12. Lynn Liebert-Marx – I wish we had more opportunities to share best practices, I wish the administration would allow the check in with faculty, I want my faculty to do their best work. I think many want to do their best work, but some are really overwhelmed. Asking them to do more by checking in with every student when we know that Blackboard isn’t functioning properly, safe assign isn’t working, the feature to track attendance isn’t working. My folks are overwhelmed. I hear it, I see it, I feel – we are given very little support for helping.
      13. Marc Fellenz – I want to be explicit about the moral dilemma that we are facing here. On the one hand we are getting pressure from administration to sell our classes, to do everything that we can do to keep the students, we need the FTEs to keep our jobs in the spring. But I think our collective experience, which Ginny has been saying for years, the online modality is simply not a good fit for the community college student. At our first Assembly meeting, Alyssa raised that she was seeing students after the summer that thought it was great that they didn’t have to go to campus, so they thought they could take a bunch of online classes and then they crashed and burned. As a result, there is a credit on the number of credits students can take in the winter session. We saw the same in the fall, there were many who thought they could take 18 credits, what’s in the best interest of our students is simultaneously not in the best interest of the finance of the College. So, we are all in this moral dilemma. But it doesn’t address the fact that this modality just doesn’t work for so many of our students. If I am having an honest discussion with my students, I might suggest a gap semester or taking a lighter load, but that’s heresy when we need every FTE. But that conversation may be in the best interest of our students.
      14. Alex Kasiukov – I have to admit that this was the guiding principle for me all along – that I would take the students best interests above anything else when advising them. I take the approach that Marc advocated. We should not enroll students or try to retain them at all costs but only when it is in their best interest. Marc, do you want to speak about reservations about reporting students when they fall behind?
      15. Marc Fellenz – Basically, it’s the same concerns that I just expressed. The idea of giving additional support to students, of course, who’s going to object to that? But if we report students and they show up on a list – there are students that are going to feel that we have ratted them. That happened in the spring. I had students that emailed me very angrily that they knew that I had reported them and they got a phone call and that they had a lot on their plate and they didn’t need a phone call because a missed a couple of classes. If when they get a phone call that they are feeling a sales pitch, when in my opinion that’s not the case. Again, I have moral problems with that. Sure, doing everything we can to support that can succeed, but let’s not lie to them and tell them everything will be ok. To say that it’s in every student’s best interest to be here and to be at the maximum credit limit simply is not true.
      16. Maria Alzugaray – I find it more effective when we reach out personally. I had a situation this summer when a student was replying to me with very different information than the administrator that was tasked to follow-up. I’ve had students with just an email from me works. The College could support us with reaching out to the students. I’ve been using my time more composing personal emails to the students or calling them.
      17. Alex Kasiukov – I think this issue may be a problem with implementation. I already suggested to moving information down the chain rather than up the chain. I think that there is a concern about the centralized distribution of resources being more effective. The problem is that the student doesn’t know who gave the information to the administration. The students feel they were reported but it’s really that they were referred for help. I agree with marc and putting student best interests first, but there is validity to centralizing the information to share the resources. It may be that it just need to be better implemented.
      18. Janet Simpson – I agree that I get better results when I connect with my students directly. That personal contact gets them to come back. I want to add to that this demand from administration that we track our students, report on them, contact them and report on our contact, and send that up the chain so someone else can contact them – that is an enormous amount of time. My discipline are classes have 37 students, are writing intensive, add the Zooms, then for my asynchronous class which were going so poorly, I added optional Zooms, I have this suspicion that the reason we are being asked to send it up the chain is because we are not trusted to reach out to our students and make connections and try to help them. Then they get a call from a stranger and they going to say this is awful. I literally talked half of my Bio Ethics class off the ledge on Wednesday because they were saying they were never coming back to Suffolk. Because they cannot get a personal connection, they are not getting emails returned, they are not getting phone calls returned. I feel strongly that the personal contact is way more important than the personal approach.
      19. Ginny Horan – Everything we’re talking about in terms of outreach to the student is short-termed. The outreach piece has been problematic because the message to the student is that you can come back in and that puts the teacher in a horrible position, especially when it’s happening 4 or 5 weeks in. Know that the chairs are trying to address that. You can’t them to say where are you and then tell them it’s too late for you to finish. I, too, have advised students that maybe this isn’t the right time for you. Our ethical and professional duty is and always was about the students. But we’ve gotten off track. In terms of FTE’s and enrollment, if that administration can text to register, they can text to pay their bill, they can text them to enroll and check their online classes. The misuse of texting to only promote enrollment and then drop the ball when all you have to do is remind them that online classes have started are you in? Using texting to line their pockets and getting FTE’s. And don’t ask me to do outreach and then not again after the enrollment rosters are in. Because you are just showing us what you are all about, so whatever we have to do, we have to get the texting. That’s what the students respond to. In terms of the future of online, I participated in a conference and they were very interested in getting pre-packaged curriculum that is graded by a teaching assistant. When Amazon and Google figure it out, not even colleges will be able to buy a pre-packaged course that competes. As far as COVID, I love this school and what we do because we changes lives every day. We can do amazing things but knowing that this is where online is going to take us, I would ask everyone to think about whether we are put our professional out of business. The original argument is that this gives access, but this is not true at community colleges in densely populated areas. But greatest disappointed as an adult is that the people I respect refusing to read the research that online education does not benefit community college students because it causes them cognitive dissonance and it will feel uncomfortable. What we need and what we offer are vastly different. I am not saying that we should not have online classes, but can we ethically put up an online readiness test. And can we decide what’s going up by discipline and can we link it to programs, instead of I want to teach online and put a class up. The last think is let’s think about overload – we need to think long-term. Chairs get release time and then teach overload. Isn’t that saying we don’t need the release?
      20. Alex Kasiukov – Ginny, I wholeheartedly agree with the points you raise. It may come as a shock as a position expressed by someone teaching mathematics – often perceived as a cold and objective discipline – but I believe that in teaching any subject human connection is the most important part. I think that part is very easily lost in the online environment. We need to keep this in our classrooms so that students have a reason to come to us rather than get lost in the universe without any education.
      21. Jill Malik – I think the conversation is great and I echo what everyone is saying, but it’s 4:42 and I want to make a motion to table this discussion, we have a lot of other things that need to be addressed. Maybe another avenue to discuss this would be beneficial.
      22. Joshua Wolfson – I second the motion. Motion carries.
5. Update from the [College-wide Academic Standards Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/academic-standards/index.jsp) (Jill Giresi​), including discussion of draft proposals
   1. [to include Physical Education courses among unrestricted electives](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/collegewide-academic-standards-2020-11-16-draft-proposal-physical-education-as-unrestricted-elective.docx), and
      1. Jill Malik – Academic Standards created 2 proposals for your comments. I will bring your comments to CASC at our meeting on Thursday. We will draft proposals and then hopefully vote on them in the spring. The 1st one allows PE courses to be considered unrestricted elective in any program. Currently PE classes cannot be used as unrestricted electives. There are cases when a student only needs 1 or 2 credits of an unrestricted elective to graduate, but are forced to take a 3 credit course since PE doesn’t count as an unrestricted elective. Making student pay more. There are other examples. The biggest bone of contention at the campus and college level is whether there should be a cap on the number of PE courses that should be allowed.
      2. Al Heraghty – I’ll add. This came up on the advising side. In the last couple of years, students are taking more 4 credit courses in the math and sciences and then have 1 credit left of an unrestricted elective. Right now there is only 1 1-credit class that can serve as an unrestricted elective and that’s MUS125 that’s only offered at the Ammerman Campus. Tis came from advising, not PE.
      3. Alex Kasiukov – Jill what’s the timeframe for feedback? Comments are needed by Thursday at 3:30 for the CASC meeting.
      4. Janet Haff – Are they thinking of restricting the number of credits of PE that can be taken.
      5. Jill Malik – that’s the contentious piece. Half of CASC wanted a cap. That’s what we need your feedback on. We want to write a proposal that is passable. The proponents say other disciplines can do it (Music). The other side is whether 9 PE credit would be transferrable? What would you be more likely to pass?
      6. Christine Davidson (from CASC) – Due to scheduling constraints, the likelihood of a student taking that many classes is not likely. We didn’t want to restrict PE when other disciplines are not restricted. We wanted feedback from everybody.
      7. Josh Wolfson – Regarding capping, it’s the student’s right to make their own schedule and not every student transfers. We also don’t know what the students are interested in transferring into. Some programs will accept 9 PE credits, if that’s the discipline they are pursuing, some may not. This is where proper advisement comes into play. I don’t see a strong enough justification for capping PE.
      8. Maria Alzugaray – Why would we capped an unrestricted elective? If a student wanted to take 9 credits of math, would we restrict them? No.
      9. Joshua Wolfson – I believe it was the transferability issue. 9 credits of math may more easily transfer, but again, that might be program specific. It’s the student’s education and they can control what they take. We should be advising them to take or not take courses, not prevent them.
      10. Jill Malik – Most people didn’t realize that PE was restricted. A chairperson could override the cap, if it’s in the best interest of the student.
      11. Alex Kasiukov – Let’s wrap up the discussion on this proposal. Please email Jill any comments or concerns.
   2. [to eliminate Physical Education graduation requirement waiver](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/collegewide-academic-standards-2020-11-16-draft-proposal-physical-education-graduation-requirement-waiver-elimination.docx).
      1. Jill Malik – I’ve spoken about this previously. We originally passed this through all 3 governance bodies, which was eliminating the PE waiver. Historically, student have been able to petition for a waiver, particularly part-time and evening students. This made more sense in the past when we didn’t have a lot of offerings, East didn’t have a gym building. Those issues have been resolved. This is just to reaffirm our position. This was approved in 2014 and then denied by administration without notice or reasons given. We tried to get that information but many people have changed in the VPA’s office. We just want to get faculty feedback to make sure that we still agree that we should remove the waiver.
      2. Christine Davidson (CASC Chair) – The proposal that we have submitted has be updated to reflect the current College policies.
      3. Marc Fellenz – not a comment on the resolution and I’m not sure if CASC wants to do this, but I would recommend that when the bodies put forward the resolution that a “Resolved” paragraph be added asking why was this passed and then ignored for so long. We ought to express that this is unacceptable something that is passed, is then ignored without feedback or discussion as to why it was implemented. If there was a good reason, then fine, but give us feedback, treat us like colleagues. Don’t just ignore something and allow years to go by without notifying us that it wasn’t accepted. I think that should be expressed in a resolution.
      4. Christine Davidson – We’ve already had a conversation that improved communication needs to happen when a resolution passed by governance is denied. It wasn’t ignored, it was denied.
      5. Marc Fellenz – So the resolution wasn’t ignored, we were ignored because they didn’t bother to tell us that they were rejecting it.
      6. Jill Malik – Matt Okerblom and Jen Browne sit in on every CASC meeting. They have assured us that they are tracking everything. This proposal is from before they held their current positions. They are our liaisons to administration. We have gotten assurances from the VPAA’s office that they will be tracking each resolution.
      7. Christine Davidson – We don’t know why it didn’t pass, we just know it didn’t and the people that were in power at the time are no longer here. There is no answer here. We have made it very clear that better communication is needed and if something is denied, we need to be notified.
      8. Jill Malik – and why it was denied in case we want to amend the resolution and put a new one forward.
      9. Alex Kasiukov – I agree that this is a very important structural issue. This is something that needs to be raised with the higher echelon of the College. This is something that should be addressed with the new President so that this is not something that will fall through the cracks in the future. I propose that we move on. We have 3 curriculum resolutions to vote on. Jill is accepting comments until 3:30pm on Thursday.
6. Resolutions from the [Grant Campus Curriculum Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/grant-assembly/curriculum/index.jsp):
   1. [Resolution 2020-09-[06]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/assembly-resolution-2020-09-N_06-new-curriculum-as-in-sports-management.docx) Approving the A. S. Sports Management [New Curriculum Proposal (G)](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/grant-assembly/curriculum/documents/2020-2021/grant-curriculum-proposal-new-curriculum-as-in-sports-management-2020-11-02.pdf) (Janet Simpson, Al Heraghty) Approved [41-1-1]
7. Resolutions from the [College-wide Curriculum Committee](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/index.jsp):
   1. [Resolution 2020-09-[07]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/assembly-resolution-2020-09-N_07-course-revision-bio-105.docx)  Approving the BIO 105 Survey of Human Body [Course Revision Proposal (AEG)](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2020-2021/bio105-survey-of-the-human-body-course-revision-proposal-2.pdf)  (Janet Simpson) Approved [37-0-2]
   2. [Resolution 2020-09-[08]](http://kasiukov.com/assembly/updates/2020-12-01/assembly-resolution-2020-09-N_08-course-revision-bio-132.docx) Approving the BIO 132 Anatomy and Physiology II [Course Revision Proposal (AEG)](https://www.sunysuffolk.edu/governance/college-curriculum/documents/2020-2021/bio132-anatomy-and-physiology-ii-course-revision-proposal-2.pdf) (Janet Simpson) Approved [37-0-2]
8. Discussion about the communications regarding U. S. President's Executive Order and SUNY Statement opposing it (Alexander Kasiukov)
   1. Alex Kasiukov – I want to explain what I have done and provide my philosophy as to why I think it was the right thing to do in this case. My philosophy is to give you the full information on any given topic, to provide you with the full background and to give you my take on what I am passing your way. So of course this was something that was out-of-bounds for a normal Assembly communication. It was political. But I was not the one that placed this conversation outside of the normal bounds, it was the Chancellor. The Chancellor asked us to support the statement on the political issue and to support it individually. An individual expression of support is not the normal format for the Assembly. The Assembly does not speak in the language of signature collections on petitions. The Assembly speaks in the language of resolutions. From a procedural point-of-view, the Chancellor’s request had the same formal status as an item “For the Good of the Assembly”. But coming from the Chancellor, it created a catch-22 situation for me. I felt obligated to forward it your way based on its source, but I also felt morally obligated to give you my perspective on it. My perspective is that what is happening in the higher education is a worrying development. The first thing that made me realize that was the diversity training that we had several years ago. When we were given a mandatory training not on the law and the behavioral requirements that we had to follow, but on ideology we were supposed to internalize and conform to, with an affirmation at the end. Regardless of your position on diversity and the content of the training, I think the idea of mandated ideology itself is antithetical to the spirit of free intellectual inquiry that we should maintain at an institution of higher learning. That’s why I opposed it. I also wanted you to have the opportunity to express your opposition or concern about my conduct, so let’s open the floor to anyone who wants to give feedback on it.
   2. Lynn Liebert-Marx – I just want to say that I appreciated your feedback on it and I took it as pertinent advice for us to consider the entire content of that request. I certainly saw nothing wrong with what you did and you did exactly what you should do when asked to share with the community something in your official capacity that doesn’t conform directly to the purpose of the Assembly.
   3. Alex Kasiukov – Thank you, Lynn. This is exactly what was intended, the way you describe it.
   4. Ginny Horan – I just want to echo what Lynn said. That is the spirit in which I took your email. I thought you certainly had a lot of relevant experience in being told what to do or to think. I appreciated it. I didn’t take it in a negative way.
   5. Marc Fellenz – I want to reiterate what I shared with you and the EC. On the one hand having a discussion about the President’s Executive Order and what the Chancellor did is a legitimate topic of conversation to initiate. But I think there were some legitimate concerns given the nature of topic and the nuance that an intelligent conversation about diversity requires that some of the language that you used in the email was vulnerable to misinterpretation and starting the conversation that you wanted to start could have been handled differently. With that said, I think it was a good move on the part of the EC to reinforce the fact that they support in general the goals of diversity and made clear that you were sharing your personal opinion. Not one that had been vetted by or supported by the EC. I think as a precedent for the EC and the Chair going forward to keep in mind our collective responsibilities for the thoughtful administration for governance. I though even though some of the discussion the EC had were uncomfortable and difficult, I thought the outcome was positive. I want to publicly thank the EC for what they did. Alex, if you’d like to continue the conversation, let’s do it in another forum and prepare the Assembly to consider all of the issues. Maybe have someone from legal affairs to participate so that we are getting all of the information.
   6. Alex Kasiukov – That point is well-taken.
   7. Kerry Carlson – We did take a lot of time to discuss this. The EC said their piece. I will say that personally, I fully support you in this position and what you have done for the Assembly and the EC. I don’t think that what was sent out by the EC should be taken negatively at all. It was just a statement explaining our position and I wouldn’t want anyone to misconstrue it as a criticism. It was not and was not intended to be. It was just an explanation of what our discussion.
   8. Alex Kasiukov – I also wanted to point out that I immediately offered to the EC to forward verbatim its letter to Assembly explaining that I was speaking in my own voice and not for the EC. At the same time I want to stress, that my philosophy has been that the EC has a very limited role. The EC is not a decision-making body, the Assembly is. The EC doesn’t have the tools to deal with disagreement within its ranks, it has no voting mechanism. It comes to its decisions by consensus. My reading of the Constitution is that the EC is in charge of the schedule and format of the Assembly’s proceedings – not the content, and not the decision-making. The Assembly expresses the voice of the faculty, not the EC.
   9. Hope Sasway – I agree completely agree with Alex in sharing his opinion about the brief. It opened people’s eyes and got them to read it because we get bombarded with emails constantly. As a committee, we had a lot of discussions and my personal opinion is that it was blown way out of proportion. I support Alex’s leadership, I think he does a great job.
   10. Karen Dovell – (Alex,) I communicated with you after you sent the email and let you know that I disagreed with you. I would appreciate having a larger discussion about how diversity training is conducted. It seems to me in that moment, that it’s important to affirm, as an institution, diversity as a goal. I certainly meant nothing against you in my emails. But I also appreciated the EC’s email putting things in context. It’s a complex topic that I hope we can go into greater detail down the line.
   11. Alex Kasiukov – I appreciate your opinion and our ability to disagree. I want to stress that my argument is a meta-argument. It is not about diversity. It’s about mandated ideological training on diversity – or any other issue. I think that mandatory ideological training is out of place in an academic institution and -- I would say -- in any free society as a whole. I think that we may have a difference of opinion – which is great. To have different opinions and to be able to express both of them is the great thing about living in a free society that supports academic freedom.
   12. Hope Sasway – I can tell you from personal experience that going through diversity training reporting and waiting over 2 years without getting a respectful response is part of the reason why this diversity training is complete BS. It doesn’t work, it’s a façade. It’s not productive and it’s offensive to people that bring concerns to the administration and get ignored.
   13. Jill Malik – I just wanted echo some of the comments. My biggest was the form in which it was brought up. Alex, we’ve spoken about this. You and I have always been able to speak, whether we agree or not, and work through it and I appreciate that. As Marc has said, something so nuanced and potentially charged, this forum would have been a better place for that. Although I know the email was time sensitive, I think sending something more neutral in your capacity as Chair, using the emails that you have access to, a more neutral comment, pressing faculty to consider it more carefully and then plan a discussion for Assembly or another forum would have been something that I would have been more comfortable with. I had faculty reach out to me that were uncomfortable with it. As an EC member, I am not looking to speak for faculty as you said the role of the EC is not to make decisions. I do think it was helpful because I brought attention to the issue and faculty that may have overlooked the email took note of it.
   14. Maria Alzugaray – I have a question, what is the issue with Alex expressing his opinion? The Chancellor expressed his opinion.
   15. Jill Malik – Because as Chair, Alex should be disseminating information. Others should be able to express their opinions on an equal footing. The EC couldn’t send out an email to everyone, only the Chair has access to those lists. Alex had to send the EC’s statement to everyone, the EC couldn’t do that independently. This issue caused over 100 emails back-and-forth within the EC. I believe that piece could have been avoided if the original email were more neutral in nature.
   16. Alex Kasiukov – I can’t stay neutral when the fabric of free society is at stake. Something here is totalitarian in nature, and I will not be neutral about it. In this particular instance I want to remind you that I sent you the email the day that the reply was due. I had only received it the day before but had not had the chance to read it until the next day. So, I did not have the chance to consult anybody. But I do no need to consult anybody to pass information that is outside the formal bounds of Assembly communication. I don’t think the EC is the proper body to consult in this case. What is there to consult about? I am sending you the information from the Chancellor with my own take on it. And I am also supplying the background information that was missing from the Chancellor’s email, so that you can make up your own mind. What Chancellor did was performed in the best traditions of Soviet Communists: they pressed people to condemn certain things without giving them full information about what they were supposed to condemn. I wanted to provide you with the full information, including the President’s Executive Order, which – I think – was misconstrued in the Chancellor’s email. Are there any other remarks? We are a half hour over our time, but I don’t want to cut the discussion short, as it may seem self-serving.
   17. Joshua Wolfson – Alex, I’ll do it for you. I move to end discussion.
   18. Kerry Carlson – I second.
9. For the Good of the Assembly

Meeting adjourned at 5:33pm