

Report on Activities of the Collegiate Senators

The Collegiate Senators met this summer to discuss College faculty concerns regarding plans for instruction this fall. We met with Dean Gillespie August 6, where we raised issues including: a mask mandate for all (regardless of vaccination status) and the establishment of some committees that include College faculty that would have input into plans this fall. In addition, we asked that CAT provide some resources for faculty instructing students who have been online for more than one year. We are pleased that at least a temporary mask mandate was announced, that the Covid Working Group (the chairs of the following committees: Committee on Academic Affairs (CAA), Committee on Academic Planning (CAP), Committee of Collegiate Senators, Curriculum Committee, Online Education Committee (OLEC), was convened and will meet biweekly, and that CAT is working to provide some materials for faculty teaching students who have been online during the pandemic. There has been special concern for parents with children under 12 or those caring for unvaccinated people. The newly announced Chaplain's Emergency Fund is a positive response to these faculty and staff. The recently announced required vaccination of new hires is another positive development.

We support the goal of providing mostly in-person classes this fall, but we affirm that Wake Forest is not a "bubble" and have urged more caution in returning to in-person instruction as Covid infection rates remain high locally and nationally, the effectiveness of vaccines to provide protection against new variants is being questioned, and public health issues are being politicized.

The Collegiate Senators have discussed the following concerns:

1. The ability of College faculty to require masks in their classrooms after the temporary mask mandate ends.
2. The ability of College faculty to use online platforms for tasks that occur outside the regular class period such as one-on-one advising and office hours. These platforms had been used successfully in these ways pre-pandemic.
3. Meetings that involve College faculty should provide an online option, and more concern for social distancing should be exercised.
4. There have been concerns over the process used by HR to evaluate College faculty ADA accommodation requests. The College Committee on the Faculty and the College department chairs are continuing to study this process in the College.
5. Concern about the unplanned over-enrollment in the College, particularly the past two years.
6. Concerns that some College faculty are losing trust in the administration, given the distribution of some misleading information and, in other cases, the lack of information. As one example, the total number of cases of Covid reported on the university dashboard does not increase at a rate that seems consistent with the numbers of students reporting Covid cases to faculty.
7. Some College faculty are still uncertain of the protocols surrounding slightly modifying the mode of instruction to fit changing circumstances.
8. Concerns that students are not following mask mandates, particularly outside of classrooms and in the community, and that the university devote messaging on the importance of wearing masks.

9. Concern that upcoming strategic planning will involve input from all of the College faculty.

The College Senators have created a “Suggestion Box”, a googledoc where anonymous concerns/comments can be communicated to the College Senators.

The Collegiate Senators are:

Sharon Andrews, Margaret Bender, Saylor Breckenridge, Simone Caron, Stewart Carter, Errin Fulp, Katy Harriger, Natalie Holzwarth, Ellen Kirkman (chair), Pat Lord, Ellen Miller, Ananda Mitra, Olga Pierrakos , Paul Pauca, Barry Trachtenberg.

September 9, 2021