THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The University Faculty Senate

AGENDA

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 – Special Senate Meeting
Immediately following Senate Plenary Meeting

112 Kern Graduate Building

Senators participating via Mediasite due to Coronavirus Pandemic.

In the event of severe weather conditions or other emergencies that would necessitate the cancellation of a Senate meeting, a communication will be posted on Penn State News at http://news.psu.edu/.

A. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

B. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #2: COVID-19 Resolution: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Appendix A

Resolution #1: COVID-19 Resolution: SRTE Appendix B

The next meeting of the University Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 1:00 p.m., via Zoom.

All members of the University Faculty Senate are asked to sit in their assigned seats for each Senate meeting. The assignment of seats is made to enable the Senate Chair to distinguish members from visitors and to be able to recognize members appropriately. Senators are reminded to wait for the microphone and identify themselves and their voting unit before speaking on the floor. Members of the University community, who are not Senators, may not speak at a Senate meeting unless they request and are granted the privilege of the floor from the Senate Chair at least five days in advance of the meeting.
COVID-19 RESOLUTION ON SATISFACTORY/UNSATISFACTORY GRADING

Maureen Connelly Jones, College of Health and Human Development

(Legislative)

WHEREAS, due to the impact of Covid-19 on our communities, we live in a time of uncharted experiences and uncertainty for faculty, students, and the University as a whole; and

WHEREAS, assessment of learning outcomes from improvised remote delivery presents challenges for both students and faculty while maintaining academic integrity; and

WHEREAS, respecting that students have made substantial efforts and financial investments to enroll in our courses and need to be able to complete their courses and earn credit, but that they have legitimate concerns about the impact of remote learning on their grades and academic success; and

WHEREAS, in this extraordinary situation, we need to provide students with additional flexibility and options that will allow them to make academic progress and adjust to new learning environments; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the administration should consider that students will be permitted to change, if they opt to, the grading basis from a quality grade to satisfactory/unsatisfactory up until the last class day of Spring 2020, for any number of their classes, including general education classes. These changes should be made in consultation with the student’s academic advisor or instructor to consider academic and financial implications.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the administration should consider that no student will have their academic standing penalized (e.g. placed on academic warning or suspension) because of the COVID-19 situation during the Spring 2020 semester.
COVID-19 RESOLUTION ON SRTE

Maureen Connelly Jones, College of Health and Human Development

(Legislative)

WHEREAS, due to the impact of Covid-19 on our communities, we live in a time of uncharted experiences and uncertainty for faculty, students, and the University as a whole; and

WHEREAS, open-ended responses and ratings should be evaluated as a way to learn from this exceptional set of circumstances, they should not be used in any punitive way that could impact promotion, tenure, renewals, or graduate instructor continuances; and

WHEREAS, in this extraordinary situation, we need to provide faculty and instructors with significant grace as they traverse uncharted online teaching situations, adjust to new expectations, and be agile to student situations and hardships; and

WHEREAS, we commend the Penn State faculty and instructor efforts to provide our student body at 24 campuses across the Commonwealth with continued rigorous educational opportunities in their courses with no break in continuity; and

WHEREAS, their willingness to quickly adjust to these new circumstances has taken significant effort and time.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the administration should consider that Spring 2020 SRTEs be used only as formative (and not summative) feedback for both graduate instructors and faculty at all ranks and titles.