

Department of Journalism and Digital Communication Faculty Meeting  
January 15, 2020

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Casey Frechette  
Deni Elliott  
Mark Walters  
Janet Keeler  
Chris Campbell  
Kaylen Alvarez  
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Joan Eldridge  
Tony Silvia  
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CF: Thank you all for joining us. Welcome back to a new semester. We have a number of items on the agenda, but first let's hear from Joan in advising.

JE: I know JOU 2100 was originally TR, and I know you've been under a lot of pressure. But, the class got moved to Thursday only for a longer period of time. Students who added the class before this change was made then had a time conflict because the system didn't know to tell them. That became a problem for some students, so please remember not to make time changes like that in the future.

JK: But the time didn't change?

JE: But if you switch it to one day, it becomes a longer period.

CF: I thought MMC was the one that changed?

CP: It could be that MMC and JOU got swapped out in the switching of instructors. It could be my mistake. How many students were affected?

JE: At least four came to me but I don't know how many went to Solitaire. There was an environmental issues course that made the issue for some students.

JE: I also know that the next registration will be tough because students will register for summer and fall at different times. Please nail down your fall schedule ASAP. Also, we need more sections of Advanced Reporting and more seats in Multimedia Reporting because those are the squeeze classes and students are having to take Advanced Reporting, NNB and Senior Seminar in the same semester, which isn't ideal. We need to make a plan to offer an additional section of Advanced Reporting in the fall, or at least in the spring.

CF: Any estimate on how many seats we'd be able to fill in the fall? 30? 40?

JE: I think we can fill two sections in the fall.

CF: We are working on the fall schedule in the next couple of weeks to get it done this month. We'll look at adding that second section. We might consider an in-person and online offering to appeal to students across campuses.

JE: Electives are very popular. We need to make a general practice of doing what we've done this semester not having wait lists on critical sections. That's a conversation you should have with Dean Toler. If you have a wait list on classes, it would behoove you to have a very small wait list of one or two.

JE: Lastly, how will spring classes be delivered? Some were going to be partly in person, some were hoping to meet at some point... the ones that were going to be in-person: how?

CF: In person, in person. Hybrid classes meet mostly online with a select number of in-person experiences in the latter half of the semester, customized on a course-by-course basis. Face-to-face classes are offered in a synchronous online option as well.

JK: NNB meeting in classroom two days in small groups in March.

CF: Sidenote: in the president's town hall, one question that arose was about meeting with students outside of class. Donna Peterson basically said if possible, don't meet or find a remote alternative. My overall impression is that despite the push toward face-to-face offerings, the university is happiest with the fewest number of people on campus.

CF: Our summer schedule is 100% online, by the way.

CF: Reminder: please file first day attendance, particularly for full classes. If our new faculty have questions, let me or Casey P know.

DE: University is allowing students to log in by end of day tomorrow, but that doesn't match with drop/add dates.

CC: I marked someone as absent in my face-to-face class. That's OK right?

CF: Yes.

CF: An update on the NNB hire. Not a big one, no major news. But, wanted to let you know that process is moving forward. We submitted an up-to-date copy of Roslyn's CV and got some initial feedback from folks in Tampa and Dean Michael. Roslyn is working to address these questions about her trade publications and teaching record. Steps after this – hopefully in the next week or two – will take this process into a more official type of gear. We need to gauge Dean Eisenberg's receptiveness, on up the line. This is among the hiring freeze (with exceptional circumstances) and 8.5% budget cut. Will let you know when I know more.

CF: Other notes from the town hall. Donna Peterson noted additional mitigation efforts. More random testing than in the fall. Also asked faculty meeting with students on campus to request students show them proof of completion of daily symptom checker. Vaccine rollout slowly underway through USF for 65+ faculty and staff. If you sign up for USF distribution you can also seek other vaccine sources.

DE: The distribution is really well done.

MW: Which vaccine is USF using?

DE: Pfizer.

CC: What are your thoughts on Currall's response to how things will look when we're "back to normal?"

CF: He wants a return back to an in-person, interactive return to campus PLUS more online learning experiences. We as a department have done the online portion for years now, so we're ahead of the curve.

JK: He also mentioned more hybrid offerings. Part of the problem is that people think of the term hybrid as an option to either stay home or come to class. I'm not sure that's what we should shoot for.

MW: Do you see being online now during the pandemic as a way of accelerating the trajectory toward more online?

CF: Yes, I see that as a possibility. Another update: our enrollment is really good this semester. We're up about 11% in SCH year over year. That's striking when you look at the trend across the university, which is down about 3%. We're up because we have lots of online options and high enrollment in those courses. Enrollment benefits of online delivery will be a force that push us toward more online courses. With that comes challenges – how do you effectively teach online or hybrid classes with increased enrollment?

CF: On to discussion phase of the agenda. First, following up on the strategic renewal process the university is embarking on. I've heard concern that St. Pete is not well represented on that board. Here, our focus is on the upcoming academic clusters championed by Dr. Tadlock. We need to think about how we're represented on that forum. Dean Eisenberg has asked all CAS units to submit a short summary of their unique strengths, particularly with regard to research. We need to be distinct within the college, particularly from the Zimmerman School. And, how are we distinct from other R1 institutions?

CF: Let's focus on Zimmerman's strengths and see how we stack up. I need to submit something fairly soon and am curious to get input on how we want to present ourselves with regard to our scholarship as a unit. Is there something we need to emphasize?

MA: Because we're a STEM program, we need to tie our research to the intersection of journalism and technology.

MW: I don't know how this ties into creative scholarship. Is that part of this?

CF: Part of that answer lies with how we define our tenure and promotion guidelines. That document was revamped this past summer. As part of that, we continue to prioritize creative scholarship. Since that's embedded in our T&P guidelines and was recently approved, we should use that as a guiding factor to include some representation of creative scholarship.

MW: It seems they're leaning toward hardcore research rather than applied work.

CF: It's a balancing act. Expectations moving forward will be different in terms of publication focus and research productivity. We can think about applied research and creative scholarship and hedge our bets that way. Looking at bios of faculty in the Zimmerman School, research isn't mentioned at all in many of them. In our case, we can describe a research pursuits alongside our creative scholarship.

MW: Does the fact that we're so heavily online give us an advantage of being able to collect a lot of data that could influence research?

CF: Good point. Janet, I know for your doctoral work you were focusing on data generated in online courses. Along with that are foci of learning and data analytics, which have been a focus of the academic cluster conversations.

DE: I don't think it's a question of research OR creative scholarship, but both. We have two strengths: opportunities for turning applied NNB experiences into academic scholarship, and design & analytics, which is what Frechette and Vanya and I are working on.

MA: We have our own T&P guidelines, right? We added descriptions of all the types of research that count.

TS: I agree with both Mark and Deni. It's smart to think about how we turn what we do into formal research that can be applied both toward the profession and the academy. I once co-authored an article with an economics department chair on teaching economics to journalism students and journalism to economics students. We then published a qualitative and a quantitative paper based on the experience. We could do a similar thing with Neighborhood News Bureau.

CF: The interdisciplinary component is also important to focus on in our statement. A variety of small and maybe bigger partnerships with our colleagues across campus will be necessary.

TS: We almost naturally gravitate toward interdisciplinary partnerships, but not every discipline does. That's an intrinsic advantage we have.

CF: I have enough material to work with to make a first pass on this statement. I'll circulate the document for reviews/additions/edits later today. We could also include the statement on the website.

CF: Moving on to applied research project expectations.

DE: I was on a couple of ARP committees last semester and realized that the current guidelines don't specify what we're seeking in terms of length or depth. So, I have been collecting ideas from faculty members and will share. I am not so concerned with theses, since they are on par with academic articles. If you have any ideas you'd like included, let me know.

MA: I am chairing a student's thesis, and it's very ambitious. Doing 3 credits this semester and 3 in summer.

DE: We can discuss her separately, just wanted to make sure she's taken care of.

MA: I put together a draft at some point when I was grad director and will send it to you.

CF: A related topic. Mark, you shared with me a conversation you had with someone interested in the program. But they're trying to figure out how they can tailor the program to their specific needs.

MW: The student was in my multimedia reporting course last semester and is focused on mental health journalism. I often get the question about how students can adapt the program to their interests. I think this could be a great selling point for the program.

JK: Would that be easier now that students can take courses at all campuses?

MW: Yes, but we might begin with how flexible our courses can be.

JK: It also seems that some of our classes, like Intro to Blogging, naturally allow students to focus on topics that interest them.

CF: I recently covered the theory and production classes – particularly with the big projects, students can focus on any topic or content. I don't know to what extent that's the case across other DJD courses. Perhaps moving forward we can formally identify classes that can be tailored to other topics or interests.

MW: Good idea, especially in some of the core courses. If I could answer potential applicants with a more formal answer it would help. Could people please send me a brief description of what individual opportunities can be offered in classes you teach regularly?

CP: Our small size also lends to customizable classes.

CC: I was in the MLA program. All the classes I took in the grad program were able to be customized to my areas of interest, which was film and documentary.

MW: If you don't see anything that lends to areas of focus let me know that too.

CC: Just for DJD? Or all of our classes?

CF: DJD is a good starting point. That would include any of our dual-listed courses that DJD students could pick up as electives.

CF: Next, I wanted to raise the issue of KTA stewardship heading forward. Any volunteers to take over KTA induction oversight from Dr. Silvia? KTA has been in a bit of flux due to pandemic restraints. We should also consider getting back into this habit?

TS: It's important to keep the KTA affiliation. Last year was atypical in that we hadn't become accustomed to the technology to do an induction but I think we can do it now. It's really good for students and faculty in terms of professional and academic credentials. I think there is potential for meetings and speakers and the like. The big thing is to identify students by GPA who qualify and invite them to join. In the past, one problem has been that many students didn't accept the invitation. Induction is \$30, but I don't think the issue was economic – people didn't see the value of this lifetime induction. Whoever takes this on next needs to market it more.

CF: Let's give this serious thought, as this is an important initiative to keep alive. We have our end of semester gathering on April 30, and I could see us carving out some time that afternoon to do inductions.

CF: Tony, how about an update on the book?

TS: The majority of the faculty are involved in this project. Working title: Journalism after the Pandemic: Challenges and Changes. I submitted a proposal to McFarland editing yesterday. The acquisition editor is excited. The faculty will all collaborate on chapters, so it will be an edited volume. McFarland is poised to produce this project very quickly. I think that given our productivity, we could have our part done by June and the book could get out in 2021. I expect a formal answer by next week, and I expect it to be positive.

CF: Walters doing a chapter on medical journalism, Frechette technology, Elliott ethics. Each chapter plays toward each of our strengths, but the overall theme is how journalism will look after the pandemic in terms of process and education.

CF: Thank you, Tony. I can't wait to contribute, but I also can't wait to read the book. Now, for regular updates.

CF: Update on undergraduate front. Deadline for catalog copy edits is fast approaching. Digging into this and with guidance from Joan Eldridge, we found some issues with how our two and four year plans are laid out in the catalog. Some highlights from the edits, made with Joan:

- We need to make clear that MMC 2100 is a state mandated common course prerequisite, and explicitly state it as a requirement in the first semester of the two-year plan
- Should we specifically list MMC 4910 as eligible for major elective? Cap at how many credits?

- Expanded list of potential job titles. Added newsroom and design jobs.
- Expanded salary range to be more realistic
- Clarified gen ed category of ANT 2410, State Computation Requirement, VIC 3001
- Clarified that “General/Unrestricted” means “Non-Major” elective
- Queued law and ethics into separate semesters

JK: When can we start proposing classes again?

CF: I don't know. Will check.

MW: No DJD updates.

JK: Two new Food Writing certificate students. Our grad studies office only handles certificates now.

JK: Faculty Council hasn't met but we put together a budget realignment statement that went to the president, provost, dean and faculty senate president. Concern about budget cuts and student success, etc. Council felt they should say something. I'm the liaison from the Council to the newly formed diversity committee. They had a couple of people who resigned from the committee over the summer come and discuss those circumstances. The committee brought in the article from the Crow's Nest on the issue of (not) hiring African Americans. We meet the last Friday of the month.

CF: Anything new happening in NNB this semester?

JK: I feel like the caretaker for the class to keep it afloat in this odd time. Having guest speakers to communicate about the community. Thanks to Aya, we started an Instagram for NNB. I am also fortunate to have funding for a student instructional learning assistant (Courtney Amos) from the CARES act. She's helping organize the class, which is over the cap at 22. Divided them into 3 beats: faith, food and youth. A slightly different experience, but it should be beneficial for them.

CF: Mark, faculty senate update?

MW: We will meet next week, will update you.

CF: Saving accreditation fun for next meeting.

CP: Give me your syllabi.

CF: Good of the order?

JK: Now all the syllabi are archived.

CF: That will be handy next self study.

CF: One last thing. Fall schedule is something we have to get to work on. University wants this out to students in February. Our internal deadline will be 1/29. We have been told to be optimistic about the position we will be in in terms of the pandemic. We will use that as a guidepost and hope to have that amount of on-campus activities.

JK: We were put in the same position this semester. Told to be on-campus then the numbers spiked. How flexible will we be?

CF: We had a good number of baseline online courses in fall 2019. Hybrid classes will continue to be treated as “face to face” in terms of meeting those demands. I would recommend those teaching in-person to lean toward a hybrid format, as that will give the most flexibility. They say that student demand is for face-to-face classes, but look at our online enrollment and it tells a different story. So, we need to make as many decisions as we can to keep our options open.

CF: Important dates. Today is the end of drop/add. Monday is a holiday. Application to graduate deadline early February. Spring break moved back to end of April. Last day of classes April 30. Next faculty meeting in a few weeks. Be well, stay safe.