

USF St. Petersburg campus Department of Journalism and Digital Communication Faculty Meeting
Friday, October 15, 2021

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CF: Welcome all. Let's dive in. Joan and Solitaire are unavailable this morning so we will skip the advising update. Would anyone like to make a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting?

CC: I so motion.

JK: Second.

DE: We can talk about student success, or meeting our metrics so we keep our preeminent status. Midterm grades are due Oct. 19 and it's really important that we retain people. We don't want to lose students mid semester so please take advantage of the student success center. They can make a difference with their writing lab. Feel free to send them over for help. If you find students are having trouble with other classes, like math, the student success center can help.

CF: To underscore the midterm deadline – the 19th is the deadline and getting them turned in is important. For every undergrad course, not just 4000-level. If you don't turn them in, Canvas will give you trouble when you try to submit your final grades.

CC: Some students are still trying to navigate college with Covid. But they're handling it.

CF: About the Institute on Russia. It's one of a dozen or so centers in CAS in Tampa. They host experts and have event series. The first week of November, they're hosting an 8-member delegation from higher education in Russia that will kick off an exchange program they're looking to cultivate. There's also an interesting sister city (St. Petersburg/St. Petersburg) connection that is being revived with this delegation. They will be visiting the St. Pete campus on Thursday, Nov. 4 in the afternoon and it would be great if they could interact with the department in some fashion. I'll meet with them re: my media literacy work. We can give them a

tour and talk about how we deliver our curriculum. We have time to flesh out an agenda for this afternoon. They can stop into some classes. This is an opportunity to begin connecting with these centers in CAS – a chance to get to know our colleagues in Tampa.

CC: I'm teaching photojournalism that afternoon. I like the connections the department has had with Russians in the past. I can also do a tour of the studio.

JK: If any classes on Thursday, might be good to prep the students. A Russian journalist recently won the Nobel Peace Prize.

SL: I teach advanced reporting before Chris' class that day. When I was in community college, we had a Russian exchange program. I took Russian there. Does the St. Pete campus offer the Russian language?

CF: I don't know. Not to my knowledge. Any other ideas?

SL: Would the Russian students be coming here? Or us over there?

CF: Good question. This would be a good thing to discuss with the institute. There are many possibilities, and this is one of those things that takes some time to develop.

CF: Moving on, Chris can you tell us about Poetry Out Loud?

CC: It will be taking place one day on campus next semester – March 5. VideoWorks will be involved in some way. An opportunity for students to help in terms of streaming or covering it.

CF: Poetry Out Loud is an NEH funded program for high school students to learn about poetry, practice performance skills. USFSP will be hosting the statewide competition. All the high schools in Florida that are participating will send their top student to the campus to compete at the state level.

CC: When will we get information from them about what they want?

CF: Amberly Nelson and Karen Nesmith are heading the effort and we will communicate with them later this semester. As far as I know, this will be the first time we will host the event physically. Our job is to document the event and make it accessible to anyone who isn't on campus – a hybrid event approach.

CC: We can do mobile streaming and multiple camera switching outside the studio. Will it be in the USC?

CF: Yes.

DE: Out of order but I have to leave. CF and I have talked briefly. Looking at Sunday, Jan. 23 afternoon at my house for a potluck for faculty and graduate students.

CF: Edgardo, update on departmental technology?

ED: We have been building a dashboard that will give access to everyone depending on the systems they need to interact with. It's hosted on our website.

MW: What will be in the enrollment section?

ED: Class level enrollment.

CF: All that data is drawn from the staff OASIS search.

CF: A number of you have access to the assessment portion, and you will be able to use that same login for this new dashboard. We are particularly focused on the self study section of the website. We will all be called on to enter data and upload files as part of that process.

CF: New items for discussion. First, concerning the Tampa Bay Times Foundation Scholarship. TBT is one of a handful that are managed by the department (others are Deadman, Dardenne and to a degree the Tomalin Scholarship). TBT is earmarked for graduate students. We haven't used the fund in some time so we have about \$60,000 we can spend from the account. Moving forward we'd have about \$10,000 per year in earnings that we will be able to disperse to our students. Let's talk about how we can best make use of this scholarship and come up with a plan to disperse the funds. Beyond the bare requirement that the student be enrolled in DJD, we can set up additional merit-based requirements (GPA, portfolio of work). We could tailor it to be more available to second-year students. We could alternatively open it up to all students. We could make it need-based. We could give a single large scholarship per year or give smaller awards to multiple students. We could make it a recruitment tool to attract students (along with teaching assistantships). Any thoughts on how we could best approach?

MW: Do the earnings have to be spent or is there an option of putting them back into principle?

CF: Don't need to be spent, but I'm not sure we can put it back into principle.

MW: The basic question is whether this will be need based. I don't know how complicated proving need is. We could add on top of that merit – the two don't need to be mutually exclusive. The basic idea of this is to increase enrollment. But how will we go about it?

MA: How much would the scholarship be per year?

CF: Expected annual amount is \$10,000.

MA: That is a considerable amount. Isn't that comparable to the stipend GAs get?

MW: I'll find that out.

CF: There is a complication with teaching assistants. We aren't able to cover them over the summer. In some cases, our students want to take summer classes. We are trying to figure out

whether the scholarship money could cover a TA's summer semester. Once we know that, we can make decisions about whether we want to do that. Further complicating it, our TAs won't always be enrolled over the summer.

MA: Whatever we decide, we need an objective rubric. Last semester, we were asked to review some scholarship applications and there were no criteria. We had to give a score without clear rules about what we were awarding.

CF: That's important – we need a strong rubric so we can evaluate applications explicitly.

MA: And some of the requirements should be journalism-related.

CP: TBT is a paper application so we have a lot of leeway.

CF: The only base requirement is that they're in our graduate program.

MA: Then let's open it to everyone. We can come up with criteria we value as a department. We can ask about their understanding of journalism and how it contributes to advancing equality and justice in the community. We could emphasize some of the digital aspects of journalism.

MW: I suggest we do it based on need because that follows the ethos of our program.

MA: Yes, it should be a combination.

CF: We also have discretion in terms of the duration. We could do it as a one-off or for the duration of a student's enrollment in the program.

CF: We have this bulge in earnings to spend right now, so we will burn through that and then be back to the roughly \$10,000 per year.

MW: Could we use this to increase the number of TAs? We have two now, we could increase to four and use this to lobby for additional TA support from the college.

CF: This is a good question. The issue is that we don't know that we can tie expectations to the scholarship.

CP: TAs get a check. Scholarships go into the student's account.

CF: Yes, and once the account is paid off, the students get a check. One complication: some students who take loans could be negatively affected by getting a scholarship.

CF: I like the idea that we can use this as a recruiting tool. An objective rubric that measures need and journalistic interest is a good idea.

EW: Is there a minimum GPA?

CF: Since this is a paper application, we can do that.

MA: When do we have to award first scholarship?

CF: The goal is to have our plan in place for the upcoming cycle, making decisions in May.

NY: Are we creating an application form? If so, is there a way that we can ask students whether they currently carry student debt?

CF: Good point. I'd like to research this and see how other units approach the issue. I'm sure there are all kinds of rules about how we measure need.

JK: When they apply for study abroad, there's a question about need. Every student has some sort of need – it's all relative. The students tell a story, but there's no checking of that. It would be nice to know if they have outstanding debt from undergrad.

MA: Some scholarship applications ask if attending the program will require taking out a loan.

MW: I don't think we can do it based on financial aid without students filling out a FAFSA.

NY: My undergraduate program required a FAFSA for any scholarship application.

CF: Next steps are to put together a one pager on how we will approach this. Mark, will you help me with this and we can circulate to everyone before we get the plan back to the college.

MW: Happy to help.

CF: Second discussion item is around hy-flex teaching modalities moving forward. Let's talk about how we want to approach this. There are a handful of modalities USF offers: CL, OL, Hybrid. In addition, there's hy-flex, which entails students enrolling either in an in-person or online section and participating in the course with their selected modality. Beginning in the spring, this will be an official option. If you're teaching an in-person class, you'll have the option of offering a crosslisted online section and students will have the option to select one of the two courses. If we want to offer this option, we have to go through training.

CP: Do you get paid twice?

CF: Nope.

CC: So twice the work with no compensation.

CF: It's unappealing. And yet, there's something about the premise of giving our students different ways of taking our classes that's important. Embedded in this is the important question of maximizing access for our students. I'm not pushing anyone to doing this in the spring. But I wonder what everyone thinks about how we, and USF, could do to make this work. Are there other things from a technological or pedagogical perspective that could make this work?

MW: Our whole premise of online education is to not simply transport a face-to-face class to online. Might be some sticky issues if we are pretending to do what we do in the class online.

EV: I have many students with Covid and I've been forced into this hy-flex option. It's so much work. I give some assignments to in-person students and others to online, and it's very complicated.

MA: Do we know whether there's a demand for this? All the students I talk to are excited about how many convenient online classes there are. If we have these flex classes, how would that affect enrollment? For skills classes, would it still be capped at 20?

CF: We would want to keep skills classes at 20. So we would cap the in-person class at, say, 10 and the online class at 10.

CF: I like the idea of asking our students about this. When we offer a face to face and online offering of the same class, online fills sooner. If I'm understanding, Monica is saying we should offer more online classes rather than forcing this awkward format.

MA: I feel disconnected with the students teaching online and not being on campus. We also have a lot of Tampa students taking our courses. Our own students might benefit from face-to-face interaction, but it's unclear whether our students want to be on campus.

CC: I've been on campus since the beginning of the pandemic. In my experience, students are very excited to be on campus. The hybrid approach where you stick a webcam in front of a class just isn't affective. From a technology point of view, it can be made better. But the university needs to make a decision to invest in this.

MA: At the K-12 level, Pinellas County did away with hybrid.

CC: In photojournalism, I do a lot of classes outside now. So those tuning in online are looking at an empty classroom much of the time. People are excited to be back face to face.

MA: Most of my students are juniors or seniors. So they have probably had their share of time on campus.

CC: For hy-flex, adjuncts are only going to do so much.

SL: I taught MMC 2100 last spring and the majority was online. I'd have three people come to class. I'm teaching JOU 2100 this semester and had to move online for two weeks. And the students hated it. Now, they're stressed with midterms and I was able to connect with them face-to-face in a way that I wouldn't be able to online.

CC: Frechette has a unique perspective, piping into my class via TV.

CF: It makes it hard to feel connected when you're interacting with a face-to-face class via the

Internet. Part of the issue with hy-flex is the emergency shift. Moving forward, having an infrastructure and plan to make hy-flex work will be needed – if not for a class, but for a meeting of a class.

JK: Now it's hard to divorce the idea of hy-flex from Covid. We need to hold the students to the modality they signed up for: online is online, face-to-face is face-to-face. Covid adds another element, sure, but the idea of bopping back and forth doesn't help the instructor. I have also found that the one who want to come to class are the younger ones who are living in the dorms. Maybe we should focus the hy-flex classes on the upper level classes.

MA: Online, I don't even know if they're listening.

MA: We can put a Qualtrics survey together to test interest. When we had on-campus classes, you could see relationships develop between the students.

CC: Good point about the dorms. The majority of my students live there and don't want to take online classes from their rooms.

JK: There's a lot of negative about all this, but there's some exciting potential. The whole class isn't going to be online. You could give them information online and then send them out into the world to do hands on activities.

CC: The main issue is the question of whether a class is online or face-to-face.

EV: I'm all for Janet's hybrid model, but not the idea of having some students in class and some online.

CF: My two takeaways are (1) We need to think about this in a tailored way – different students have different needs. And (2) there's an opportunity to touch base with our students via survey to see how they'd like to see things go. I gather no one will shift to hy-flex for the spring.

CF: Moving on, no updates on undergrad program.

MW: Graduate admissions, we're still facing the issue of tracking who has been accepted in the admissions process. The weekly updates and Archivum don't match. We don't know exactly where we stand.

MW: Internships, we have the challenge of tracking. Is this something Edgardo could build into the new dashboard?

MW: Faculty Senate, a three points: (1) A couple of months ago, the worst-case scenario of budget cuts was floated, but this is not coming to pass. We aren't facing anything near what we could have faced. (2) Pushback on proposed layoffs of tenured faculty in the School of Health. Three faculty were put into departments of one so they could legally be let go. Not related to us, but interesting. (3) The Senate is pushing back on development of the wetlands by the golf course.

MW: Tenure and Promotion – Came away from being the St. Pete representative feeling treated as an equal. I think consolidation will change the way we're treated. The process was very numerically-based, thorough and consistent.

NY: Had a meeting with the head of the Institute on Black Life at USF. Holding annual conference in February. Reached out to us to see if students would cover event and contribute content for an art exhibition. Asking whether we can cover/livestream event. Discussed with Eric finding students who can best represent culture of St. Petersburg. One challenge is what stories we want to represent from NNB and who's voices will be speaking on behalf of USF and our department.

CF: In terms of representation, is there any opportunity to reach out to different entities in Midtown? Weekly Challenger? Organizations the students covered in stories?

NY: Once we get the conference program, we will have a better idea of the medium we employ. I'd love to get Eric's input and contribution on bringing in students.

EV: Definitely.

CC: When can we tell our classes about the event?

NY: Until we have the conference program.

CP: Self-study is coming, you will all be asked for something.

CF: Any scholarship updates?

NY: I had a paper accepted with R&R for a special issue on life narratives. A lot of writing about processing trauma. Out in September 2022.

CC: Will you be writing about the economic crisis in Lebanon?

NY: Thanks for bringing this up, it's dire.

MW: In keeping with our new trajectory about science, I'm writing a book about climate change and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

CP: Keep an eye out for furniture for NNB.

CF: Have a wonderful weekend.