

USF St. Petersburg campus Department of Journalism and Digital Communication  
Faculty Meeting  
Friday, April 29, 2020

Casey Frechette  
Casey Peterson  
Chris Campbell  
Mark Walters  
Edgardo Dangond  
Monica Ancu  
Gabrielle Jarmoszko  
Natacha Yazbeck

CF: Audio issues. For the fall, let's consider some hardware upgrades.

CF: Let's kick off the final meeting of the spring semester. The main discussion item for today is assessment. Wanted to do some work we'll need to do anyway for our annual assessment report. First, some news.

CF: It's been a trying year with so many faculty departures and efforts to replenish our ranks. Fortunately, we are welcoming three new faculty members in August. Thanks to all involved in that accomplishment. We had some bumps along the way, but we are fortunate to be able to bring these folks on. The caliber of the people coming in is great. Each of them is an accomplished scholar and educator, and it sets us up for a great academic year.

CF: I'm reaching the end of my three year term as chair. I'd be honored to serve a second term as chair. I don't believe other faculty who would be qualified are interested. According to our governance documents, we need a vote when a chair's term ends. Peterson, can you please put a survey together?

CP: Sure.

CF: That link will go out later today.

CF: A late-breaking item: Ralph Wilcox is stepping down as Provost and CAS Dean Eric Eisenberg will be filling that role as interim the next academic year. This is good news for everyone in CAS because Eric is a strong leader who knows what's good for the college and what's good for each constituent department. The other implication is that campus dean Magali Michael will be acting dean of CAS for the upcoming academic year. This is also good for us. Dean Michael has been involved in all of our searches and knows what we want to do with our redefined faculty. No word yet on who will be new campus dean.

CP: Will Magali physically be in Tampa now?

CF: I imagine she will spend considerably more time there, yes.

CF: The other big thing happening in terms of leadership changes is the search for a new regional chancellor. I serve on that search committee and am optimistic about how things are developing. We interviewed nine candidates this past week, and there are four finalists who will be visiting Monday and Tuesday. Most of the finalists are new folks, but one finalist – Kanika Tomalin – is well known to us on campus. I recommend attending the town hall meetings. Ultimately, the search committee generates the finalist list and President Law will make the final decision. She will take into account the thoughts of the St. Petersburg campus above all. It's a challenging position to fill because of the balancing act of consolidation along with a distinct identity. The only other piece on this is our regional vice chancellor, and we may not have a permanent person in place there until we have a permanent provost, which won't happen until summer 2023.

MW: College of Marine Science is hiring someone for the new Center of Excellence. That would be the first dedicated staff member there. Also, we need to think about what our next steps are in terms of building the bridge between us and the Center.

CC: Last faculty meeting Deni brought up the idea of doing a documentary on the Center of Excellence. I've been talking to people at CMS after I did the Camp for Girls video. They're pleased with it. I talked to Howard yesterday. I am working on a pitch for the documentary project. It'd be a good way to get our foot in the door.

MW: It's a great idea. We need something soon in terms of a short promotional video about how people envision the documentary. Let's pour some energy into that to see what we can shake loose in terms of money.

CC: Good idea, if we're trying to get funding. When will the new hire for CMS start?

MW: I think in the fall. This ties into the idea of creating a course on science communication.

CF: One of the main themes I see emerging for the fall is curriculum planning and reflection. We have a lot of work to do to align the undergrad program with the STEM designation. The challenge is that we want to make tangible decisions in the fall once our full faculty have been onboarded. We can talk about ideas, but we don't want to box ourselves in without the benefit of full deliberation. What are the ways the themes of data journalism can be incorporated into our existing courses? For example, I'm sorting out the final teaching positions for the fall. We could have Stephen teach ethics and inject some data/science themes into the course. New courses, certificates and more are on the table long term.

CC: The short promo video would be for the entire Center of Excellence? Or our part in it?

CF: I'd lean toward something broader so we present ourselves as offering a service for the Center at large.

MW: The CMS should see it as much of an opportunity as we do.

CC: I get a sense that students are glad to be back and they're looking forward to the fall.

CF: When you look at our fall enrollment, we are in a position where there is a lot of interest in both our online and face to face classes. Other units are struggling on one of those two fronts. Both of our formats are resonating with students. Our fall schedule is “pre pandemic” in terms of the mix of online and face to face classes. Our students are engaged and excited.

CC: They definitely seemed to dislike the high flex model.

CF: Moving on, let’s talk about assessment. Early next week everyone teaching this semester will get an email requesting participation in our data collection efforts. We will continue to use the system we started last summer/fall. It will make it easier for us to complete the assessment forms, which are state-mandated and used in our accreditation self-study. We want to show the site team in February that we have a lot of assessment data. The big theme I want to tune into is one ACEJMC has always focused on – the concept of “closing the loop,” or making curricular decisions based on student performance. Thinking back to fall and spring, what did you do differently in your classes based on student performance in previous semesters, and what might you do differently going forward based on performance this year?

<<Custom Critical Assessment Website Demo>>

MW: I struggle with the authenticity of these reports. Years ago, I dropped the lowest quiz score and it totally changed the outcome. How do I truly make the data objective?

CC: It’s good that we have the creative freedom to teach how we like, but grading seems arbitrary.

CP: That’s the use of a rubric. This is a system better suited for some disciplines than others. There is more subjectivity in our grading.

CF: Mastery is how close our students are in terms of performance to what’s expected in the profession. We have an objective benchmark we can refer back to when we craft assessments. Does the assessment evaluate the professionalism of student work based on expectations in the field? Appraising student work and figuring out the calculations behind the grades are really two different things. I think we try to set up assessments in our courses in a way that students have a chance to practice and get better. Competency ability is only going to come from repeated exposure and practice. From assessment’s point of view, the question is when can we determine if a student has learned?

NY: We’re trying to quantify a qualitative education. This is the nature of the institution. I also assess students on process. Students come in at different starting points. Students who show growth in the process are good. To me, A students are those who show growth in critical thinking and journalistic writing fluency. I don’t know if that’s fair or not. I like to assess the whole process – not just the final exam.

MA: I remember us talking about this before and we had the same questions. We need to trust ourselves that we can fairly and objectively evaluate our students. It doesn’t matter that we are

quantifying a qualitative process. We can assess them fairly, on content or process. Rubrics are the essence of making it objective. Let's trust ourselves as evaluators.

MW: The assessment dashboard is great and gives us the opportunity to focus on the assessment rather than the process.

CF: There are aspects of this we need to do because they're required, like the quantitative part. But let's also reflect on the qualitative changes we make to our courses based on student performance.

CF: ACEJMC is reviewing reports from site teams. The first school that went up, questions were raised about assessment. It's a perennial issue that comes up. We will meet once more before the self-study report is submitted in the fall.

CF: Let's get into some particulars with our classes.

<<See attached Google Doc brainstorm session>>

CF: Assessment data due at end of May, so please do this by mid-month.

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## Regular Updates

CF: Re: undergrad program. I attended an ARC committee meeting earlier this week. Late add/drop process has changed. Students can go directly to instructors to be added to the class late. Instructors are in charge of determining whether the late add is appropriate. The concern is that instructors won't have tabs on whether a student has met all requirements, etc. If you hear from a student about this, please send along to Casey P and me and we will check with advising.

MW: We have a good crop of new DJD students – 7 entering in the fall and 6 in process. Not too much on faculty senate aside from potential raises.

NY: Only applies to full time tenure track at USF for two years.

CF: Congrats to Natacha on finishing her first academic year!

NY: I want to make sure NNB the project is a digital first, participatory platform. Students will work on a regular basis with members of the community. In terms of the classroom, I'm creating a curriculum that we may have the option of patenting.

CP: No real news on self-study.

MW: Having finished annual evaluations, we will have new criteria that assigns points to activities and publications, yes?

CF: Not necessarily. It depends on what we want to do as a department and what we ratify in our governance documents. We agreed to wait until our new faculty are aboard before we finalize that.

CP: Come celebrate our DJD students' success today at 1.