

Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC)

February 10, 2021

4:00 pm to 5:20 pm

Google Meets

Attendance: Alexa G, Andre C (DoS), Chanpreet S (ISA), Clint G, Crystal S, Everett H, Gavin P (ISS), Harikrishna R, Jane L (RO), Jessica H, Katherine Z (DoS), Leah H, Lindsay J (Libraries), Rashed A, Sarah W (DoS), Spencer B, Sridhar P (GSA), Teresa C, Tyler Z

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Standing Items

- a. Updates from the Vice Provost and Dean of Students

Covid Update

Covid emergency/remote learning challenges became a heated topic of discussion at General Faculties Council (GFC) in January. Everyone at the University is under strain. Positive outcomes were that the President made a statement that University will work towards addressing remote learning challenges, recognizing students are facing challenges that are of no fault of their own. A task force has been created to work on remote learning issues and has already met. Co-chairs are Associate Dean of Students, Helen Vallianatos and Vice-Provost, Learning Initiatives.

Budget Update

Considerable challenge for the UofA--greater challenge for the UofA than Covid right now due to magnitude of budget cuts.

Q from student member as to whether budget is greater challenge as a result of Covid being handled well. Andre commented on smooth transition of student services at start of pandemic as well as reasonably smooth transition of remote teaching delivery, but identified remote assessment to be an area where Covid has caused more significant challenges.

Q from student member as to whether Covid has increased or decreased budget costs. Andre responded that, overall, Covid has increased costs. Some costs lower (e.g., heating buildings), but lost revenue (Athletics, events, food services, residence, etc.).

- b. Experience with online delivery

Student member commented re instructor sharing info about Black History Month. First time this student heard a professor share something that wasn't directly related to the course. Student found this refreshing and suggested that professors sharing information in the classroom can be a more effective way to communicate than emails, given volume of emails. Another student member shared a similar experience.

Andre responded, acknowledging the value of these sorts of announcements but also raising the challenges professors face in staying focused on teaching. How can we help professors incorporate announcements/discussions that are not directly course-related but that have value to students and their learning experience?

Student member shared an example of a professor going to great lengths to help students have an experiential learning opportunity via Zoom. Used multiple devices. Professor went "above and beyond." Conversation about whether that is "above and beyond." Not necessarily "above and beyond," but it does require labour and time, especially when teaching in a new context (i.e., remote teaching). One issue that the University and larger academic community have not done a good enough job of during the pandemic is ensuring professors are supported in taking the time they need to adjust to remote teaching, i.e., acknowledging that professors should not be expected to maintain same level of research activity while adapting to new teaching methods. Incentive structure in University is first step, but professors also apply for grants nationally and internationally and will be compared against others who may not have been given the same message about shifting priorities.

3. Discussion Items

a. ACCESS Programming

Clint Galloway, ACCESS Director

Clint provided overview of ACCESS services. He joined the UofA as ACCESS Director in June 2020.

Seeking feedback on services ACCESS offers. High-level [inventory of services](#).

[Google form](#) shared to collect anonymous feedback on what services students prioritize and gaps that should be addressed.

Feedback will help guide programming. Other students will be consulted as well.

ACCESS will be renamed in a few months—DAC will be emailed to provide suggestions.

Q re ACCESS Outreach being disbanded and whether ACCESS team will continue to do outreach work.

Q re Heroes for Health grant project that couldn't be completed due to Covid.

Q re what ACCESS services may be rolled into the Student Services Centre. Clint identified navigation and triage support, i.e., helping students find the best supports, will be work done in the new SSC.

4. **Adjournment**

Next Meeting Currently Scheduled for February 24th, but will look at rescheduling to space out meetings—potentially March 3rd, 2021. Calendar invites will be updated soon.