

March 30, 2020 Student Advisory Committee

Attendees:

President Mark Ojakian

Dr. Jane Gates

Ben Barnes

Angelo Simoni

WSCU – Charla Beauvias, Myckland Cothias

ESCU – Elena Ruiz

SCSU – Brooke Mercaldi

ACC – Claudia Cupe, Sherry Paquette

HCC – Kelly? .... Daniels?

QVCC – Tyler Fitt

GWCC – Monica Maldonado

MXCC – Ethan Rossier

NWCC – Travis

Charter Oak – Teddy Wang

President Ojakian wants everyone to remain healthy and safe. In these unprecedented times we must remain vigilant and practice social distancing. He said that the system is working tirelessly toward the successful end of the semester. He is receiving many e-mails regarding students interesting and they are being heard.

The following questions/concerns were brought from SCSU:

- The concern about student workers being compensated – President Ojakian said that decision was made earlier that all student workers would continue to be payed.
- Financial aid timeline – students are unsure of the details and are working with administration
- What about labs and practicums and student teaching outside of classrooms? Nursing student's clinicals? Where local placements have been cancelled? Dr. Gates said that we are working on getting deadlines extended and looking into simulations where available. Looking into for STEM, Allied Health and EPP. President Ojakian said they are looking at ways to supplement hands-on requirements.
- Access to internet and lack of computers? President Ojakian said they are researching purchasing laptops to help with students who do not have them, and Angelo Simoni provided information about free internet and hot spots.
- The use of cameras during internet classroom discussions and the possible violation of privacy. She said that SCSU is working with their SGA.
- Pass/fail implementation – President Ojakian said they are trying to make it as easy as possible for students to finish the semester. Dr. Gates said that they are trying to empower students to make the most informed decisions without needing to withdraw. They are waiting for feedback regarding how lack of a letter grade will affect licensure and student teaching and are reaching out to accrediting and licensure bodies about possibly creating modifications.
- CEO search? Temporarily suspended for a short period of time. Interviews were completed and the next phase is to bring candidates to campus. Was to be by end of March but with campuses being closed and travel restrictions, they are looking into how this can be done. The plan is still to have them start before the start of the fall semester. There is a very strong pool of candidates.
- Students are requesting to be reimbursed for ink and paper they are having to purchase for home. Angelo Simoni will look into.

President Ojakian closed his remarks by saying that April 30 is the new date put in place and they do not anticipate getting back to normal prior. He understood the difficult decisions campus had to make regarding commencement. How that will look remains to be seen and each campus will have to make decisions, whether to hold virtual ceremonies in the spring or postpone to summer, fall or even winter. With social distancing, it would not be in the best interest to bring large groups of people together for an in-person ceremony.

- Students First – The first week to 10 days have been totally focused on pandemic but teams continue to work on responses and with NECHE. Does not believe that this impacts plans moving forward.
- Fine Arts such as Theatre and how this will look? Dr. Gates said that we do have the audio capabilities, but she does not know what the accommodations will look like. She will reach out to campuses academic teams and respond to Angelo.
- Refunds for clinical fees since students are not doing clinicals – Ben Barnes said they are giving campuses opportunities to provide all offerings at this time. Right now, room and board are the only refunds being issued. If we cancel a class, a refund will be issued but he wants to wait to make decisions until all campuses have had a chance to review. Faculty and academic leadership are working on this with the goal of every course to continue through as offered with modifications as necessary. Refunds will only be offered when we are unable to provide the service.

Withdrawals – they are trying to make sure students do not end up with a bill from Pell grants if they withdraw. The Cares Act, which may have been passed this weekend, provides provisions to students at CCs and universities. They are reviewing the moratorium and hope to have a resolution over the next week.

Mr. Barnes said they are deeply involved with Homeland Security and Emergency Response teams to provide overflow facilities and classrooms for training and onboarding for hospitals at CSCU facilities keeping in mind the safety of the returning students at the end of the pandemic.

Angelo Simoni had no additional comments and asked if there were any additional questions:

- A question was asked about students who were paying out-of-pocket and were on a payment plan. Some have lost their jobs and what happens if payments are not made on time. Students should contact the Bursar's office at their campus first as they have been asked to work with students and extend deadlines. If they are unable to resolve issues on their own, they should contact him.
- A question was asked about non-traditional students and their challenges working in an on-line format. Angelo said that we understand this can be challenging but they should work with faculty and staff. Zoom and WebEx as well as other formats are available at each campus and we need to work together to figure out ways to be successful and work towards their degree.

Next meeting is April 17 at 10:00 a.m. electronically unless something urgent comes up. Monica will send out the bylaws for reviews. Election of chair, vice chair and secretary need to take place. Final meeting will be in May.