

From: UCCS Faculty Assembly List <FA-I@lists.uccs.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 04, 2022 4:26 PM
To: FA-I <FA-I@lists.uccs.edu>
Subject: [FA-I]February Faculty Assembly President's Report

We began 2022 debating whether to start the spring semester in-person or remotely. Fortunately, **our decision to start in-person has worked out well. For the seven days ending February 3, the number of cases for UCCS faculty, staff and students was 90 per 100,000** (which equates to 12 positive cases among the 14,000+ students, faculty and staff). **We still do not have any confirmation of classroom transmission on campus.** Given the national and El Paso County experience for January, in which El Paso County peaked at around 1,800 cases per 100,000, **it appears that the precautions we were able to take were amazingly effective. Cases in El Paso County, and almost everywhere else, have dropped sharply over the last few weeks** (currently at just over 600/100k). **If these trends continue, as experience with omicron in other places suggests will happen, the threat of pandemic-related disruption will subside.** Meetings can return to in-person or **hybrid (as with Faculty Representative Assembly on February 11)**, campus events can recommence, and our confidence that our in-person classes will actually meet in person should be restored.

Of course, the business of the campus continued through all of this. Faculty and students returned to classes, academic departments continued to revise their annual merit criteria and processes, new programs in music and aerospace engineering progressed through the approval process, and faculty and staff pay increases were implemented. Faculty Assembly, too, has been busy. **David Weiss, the current past president (I know, but I couldn't resist), has become a faculty fellow in the provost's office working on policy development.** With the provost's support and David's efforts, **a number of policies faculty assembly has prioritized (including the IRC faculty promotion policy) will be moving to completion more quickly. The research workload taskforce survey was launched and completed.** The survey, and key ideas from the committee, **will be discussed at Faculty Representative Assembly next Friday. A resolution based on the December discussion on the evaluation of teaching,** focused on guidance to departments based on what we heard from faculty, **will also be considered at that meeting.** I am personally particularly **looking forward to seeing what the campus retention subcommittee will be asking us about starting February 14.** When I talked to them in January, it was clear they had a lot they wanted to know about faculty member's views on some of their ideas to improve student retention. **The results of the campus climate survey are expected to be released on campus the week of February 14** (after the report to the regents on the 11th). The four campus chancellors and provosts have been pushing for that release sooner, but were told to wait until after the regents meeting.

I'll be issuing a budget committee report next week, but **there are concerns that the increases in state funding so far proposed will be insufficient to cover the known cost increases for the next fiscal year. It's too early to know what the outcome will be,** but the task of higher education leaders to **persuade the legislature to keep pace with inflation, long-delayed salary increases and insurance costs** is clear.

We got a **report on the presidential search at Faculty Council.** Our own Mary Coussons-Read painted a positive picture so far. **The committee has adopted a decidedly non-partisan stance,** led by its regent co-chairs (one from each party). Current President Todd Saliman is a candidate (which almost everyone who has worked with him seems to agree is a good thing), but **the committee is determined to ensure a genuine search with as many strong candidates to present to the regents as possible.**

Be well,



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