

University Faculty Senate
Pandemic Committee
Genevieve Birren and Kathleen Powderly, Co-Chairs

Committee Charge

This committee will examine impacts of the pandemic on campuses, from student life to course delivery, from shared governance to accessibility, from research to communication. It is expected that resolutions may emerge that are narrowly focused, reports may emerge which are long-term projects, and interim information to be shared with the Senate.

Committee Members

Genevieve Birren, Cortland (Ethics, co-chair)
Kathleen Powderly, Downstate (Ethics, co-chair)
Alithia Alleyne, Downstate (Communications)
Sonya Alexander, Purchase (Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)
Anastasia Pratt, Empire State (Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity)
Trish Ralph, Brockport (Governance)
Frank Thornton, Oneonta (Governance)
Elizabeth Bradley, Empire State (Graduate)
Sergios-Orestis Kolokotronis, Downstate (Graduate)
Kabel Stanwicks, Albany (Operations)
Ken Fujiuchi, Buffalo (Operations)
Evelyn Benevides Clark, Oswego (Student Life)
Heather Maldonado, Buffalo (Student Life)
Caitlin Foley, Cobleskill (Undergraduate)
Wendy Gordon, Plattsburgh (Undergraduate)

Summary:

The committee met three times, once in the fall and twice in the spring. Due to committee size, it proved impossible to get all committee members at any one meeting. The committee discussed a wide variety of topics related to the pandemic and its affects on campuses. Three trends emerged from these conversations:

1. Many other UFS committees were discussing similar topics and introduced resolutions directly related to concerns of the Pandemic Committee.
2. We need data. It was difficult to consider drafting resolutions or making recommendations without more information.
3. That information is still being created. This committee is better suited to do a large portion of its work post hoc and thus, we recommend continuing the committee into the 2021-2022 academic year.

Issues discussed and action taken:

- A. SUNY Chancellor resignation, reappointment of the new SUNY Chancellor, and the vote of no confidence by the USF concerning the new Chancellor. How to mend relations and move on from this. *Action:* UFS Resolutions from Fall 2020 dealt with this and committee disposed of the issue.

- B. Equal access to education. Did not get into this but need to see what other committees are already doing in this area. Do not want to overlap. *Future actions:*
- a. Lessons learned from students having a difficult time accessing and attending the Fall semester across SUNY campuses.
 - b. Lack of resources in providing equitable service to students from all backgrounds.
 - c. Data collection from students (Survey?)
- C. Re-examine bylaws across campuses to make sure there is a way to function when the governing body is not in session (summers, winter breaks). Concerns raised included: Lack of administrative communication during times of crisis and decisions being made with little or no faculty input. *Action:* Two UFS Resolutions address some of these concerns. 187.01 from January 2021 addressed areas for consultation in shared governance and 186.05 from Fall 2020 directly asks the CGLs to review governance structures and practices, including meeting during non-semester times. To be determined if further action needs to be taken by the Pandemic Committee.
- D. Faculty and Staff Trauma: Discussion of how the focus on campuses has been on students, but little has been done to address the concerns about mental and health trauma for faculty and staff as well. Cortland passed a resolution in late Spring 2020 in this area that could be a good starting point for a UFS resolution. *Future action:* Data gathering and potential resolution.
- E. Return to campus. Concerns were raised, however these decisions have yet to be made. *Future action:* Data gathering of how return to campus went, perhaps Spring of 2022.
- F. Concerns about consequences for failure to enforce COVID guidelines. Also concerns about the Uniform Sanctioning Guidelines and the impact of that policy. *Action:* Draft a resolution demanding that SUNY Administration do a review of the consequences resulting from the Uniform Sanctioning Policy, including student demographics. Discussed drafting this in conjunction with Student Affairs.
- G. Looking at the COVID-19 Pandemic response as a broader Pandemic response planning for the future (or perhaps for emergencies more generally – an example would be the community college in Cali that had to close for two weeks due to a wildfire). Many of the details are unique to the COVID-19 virus, but that may not apply to the next pandemic situation. SUNY should collaborate to look at the lessons learned to develop a standard pandemic (and/or emergency) response procedure.
- a. Regional response plans.
 - b. Health screening standard (all campuses should have the same system).
 - c. Standard testing protocols and procedures.
 - d. Standardize communication protocols during pandemics.
 - e. The suggestion was a resolution asking all campuses (CGLS and Admin) to look at their existing disaster/emergency plans. However, providing a Best Practices document to go along with that resolution would be a good idea. That might be a project to work with the Operations Comm on. This is something to discuss more at a future meeting.

Action: Resolutions 188-03-1 and 188-04-1 passed in April 2021 addressed these issues. To be determined if further action needs to be taken by the Pandemic Committee.