



Faculty Senate Minutes

August 26, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

3:30 P.M. ET

President Dr. Felicia Jefferson, Presiding

I. Call to Order and Quorum Determination

1. Dr. Felicia Jefferson called the General Faculty Senate meeting to order at 3:38 PM via Zoom Meeting Link. Faculty members in attendance constituted a quorum.

II. Approval of Agenda

1. Dr. Clarence Riley moved to accept the agenda; it was properly seconded by Dr. Archie Williams

III. Review of Minutes..... Dr. Michelle Thomas Drew

1. Dr. Michelle read the minutes.
2. Dr. Michelle Drew moved to accept the minutes as printed with necessary corrections, it was properly seconded by Dr. Archie Williams.

FVSU Updates

President Paul Jones discussed the following:

1. Thank you for the invite and the work we are doing to keep FVSU moving forward during these challenging times, hoped to be further along in relation to COVID-19
2. There are COVID – 19 spikes on campus, which is a USG system wide spike.
3. FVSU campus continues to encourage students to continue to wear masks and get vaccinated.
4. COVID – 19 peak is expected between now and the next three weeks.
5. Faculty and staff will continue to support students that are asked to quarantine.
6. Enrollment is still strong, but it was impacted by loss of faculty.
7. The loss of faculty also increased the course load for current faculty. Thanks for all of your efforts.
8. A large number of students dropped in 8/25/2021 due to non-payment.
9. Funding secured with an anonymous gift that will be used to help junior/senior students that are still financially challenged.
10. The following comments were made in reference to the bachelorette program in nursing:
 - o Interviewing program director candidates;
 - o One year to receive approval from the Board of Nursing ;
 - o Funding from the Cares Act will be used to hire other faculty and order supplies.
 - o \$240,000 from Phoebe and Navicent Atrium has been received.
11. The following comments were made in reference to search for new Provost/VP of Academic Affairs
 - o Thank the senate for help to identify candidates for the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs;
 - o Co-Chairs, Dr. Cannon and Dr. Jefferson, will provide an update soon to the faculty;
 - o He looks forward to finalize this search and other searches as well soon.
12. The fall 2021 State of the University Address has been moved from Sep.2, 2021 to Sep. 16, 2021. The purpose of the State of the University Address to update the campus and share with the community the great accomplishments of their colleagues at FVSU.

13. President Jones departed at 3:55 PM

IV. President Report.....Dr. Felicia Jefferson, Faculty Senate President

1. State of Fort Valley Address moved to September 16, 2021.
2. Dr. Jefferson shared the following in reference to COVID-19
 - Students are sharing their concerns in reference to moving to blended synchronous learning.
 - Faculty should have received information from the Deans about blended synchronous learning.
 - Dr. Olufunke Fontenot, Interim Provost, will provide guidance of how to react to student concerns.
 - Mask mandates from University Council, strongly encouraged on most campuses within the USG.
 - Faculty can ask students to wear masks and have masks available to offer to students.
 - Dr. Jefferson encouraged faculty to get vaccinated.
3. Faculty Contracts
 - More information on increasing faculty salary will be addressed at the State of Fort Valley State University Address.
4. General Updates
 - There are four candidates for the Provost. They were interviewed via zoom. Four faculty members (1 from each college) served on the search committee.
 - College of Arts and Sciences – Dr. Fredrick McLaughlin
 - College of Education and Professional Studies – Dr. Rayton Sianjina
 - College of Agriculture – Dr. Ralph Noble
 - Eleven candidates were interviewed
 - September 14 – September 17, 2021 the final four candidates will visit and are planned to present in the Pettigrew Center at 10:00 am
 - Pettigrew at 10:00
 - Parking concerns – Increase on faculty complaints about parking. Tickets were given to students on 8/2/2021.
 - Senators - Due to retirement and resignations new senators will need to be selected. All senators were asked to place his/her year and term to Dr. Riley via chat.
 - USG Faculty Council was held in May 2021. The next meeting will be in October 2021.
 - Faculty - Faculty did not have adequate time for a break between summer and fall classes. Faculty start date usually begins on the date of Faculty and Staff Institute.

V. FVSU Updates.....Dr. Dr. Olufunke Fontenot, Interim Provost

1. Dr. Olufunke Fontenot joined at 4:04 PM
2. Dr. Fontenot shared that there has been a lot of correspondences to the Provost and through the Deans with various concerns from faculty. Dr. Fontenot stated she is here to respond to any questions we may have at this time.
3. Dr. Fontenot sent an email out to faculty in reference to COVID – 19 concerns. She shared the following in reference to the university’s response to COVID-19.
 - There is the risk of exposure in the classroom;
 - Students are communicating directly to the faculty about concerns and COVID-19 testing results;
 - Leadership has been meeting and want to communicate effectively;
 - The letter addresses specifies the protocol for faculty to follow;
 - One thing not addressed in the letter is that the university is restrained by the Board of Regents;
 - As a member of the University System of Georgia we must do the following:

- Meet face to face;
 - Highly encourage face covering;
 - We can't require face coverings
 - Faculty can ask students to put on a face covering;
 - If students refuse there can't be any retaliation against the students;
 - The university cannot make a requirement for vaccination as well.
4. Dr. Fontenot shared during spring 2021 FVSU was approved to give vaccinations on campus. FVSU has hired extra help this semester as a response to COVID-19 circumstances. We became an Open Port. This means that the university extended our vaccination site to the outside community.
 5. During fall 2020 the campus started early with surveillance testing every week. In the Wildcat Commons 20% were selected. The same was done randomly for faculty members. The COVID-19 dashboard displayed the weekly number of tests administered and the number of positive results. This information was published every Friday.
 6. There are few faculty members are getting tested. There are over 12,000 RAPID tests available on campus.
 7. To the extent that FVSU can address COVID issues there are other ways to mediate the risk factors:
 - Asking faculty to get tested every week at no cost
 - Planning to get additional nurses specifically for faculty. Faculty can avoid the lines.
 - Next week there will be a large scale of testing on campus
 8. Dr. Fontenot shared the difference between private schools such as Spelman, a private HBCU, can enforce different rules in reference to COVID-19. FVSU has to do our best to function on the restraints given by the Board of Regents. The administration will continue to address all concerns.
 - Dr. Jefferson asked - What are faculty to do in reference to face-to-face classes and COVID-19 concerns?
 - Dr. Fontenot responded by stating the following:
 - The first thing to do is get tested. The CDC stated spending 15 minutes or more bring a risk of exposure, and this is the case in the classroom.
 - If you have a positive test result, isolate yourself for the appropriate length of time.
 - Work with Human Resources, report your status, take time off, and follow the conditions to return. You must present a negative test to return to work.
 - If you want to continue to teach during quarantine there is the FLEX option (let your Dean's know), if you are sick you are not expected to teach.
 9. Dr. Fontenot shared the protocol for students that have tested positive for COVID -19. Academic Affairs will receive a list of student that have tested positive, Academic Affairs will send a list and will let faculty know through the Deans the dates of quarantine. Students must present a negative test to the Office of Student Affairs. Student Affairs will then inform Academic Affairs. Next, Academic Affairs will let the Deans know.
 - Since Friday, August 20, 2021 there are 72 students have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - She shared the correct term is now "isolation" and not "quarantine".
 - Dr. Riley offered an observation – He sent an email to Dr. Fontenot, Interim Provost, in reference to a student that tested positive with COVID-19. Dr. Riley asked, when this happens, should the faculty member send an email to all students in your class?
 - Dr. Fontenot responded by sharing that faculty should not send an email to the students. Contact tracing is being done in house at the university. The Student Emergency Management sends an email out to all those that may have been exposed.
 - Dr. Fontenot shared the university is seeking a contractor to do the contact tracing, to avoid faculty members having to inform students.

10. Dr. Riley shared a second concern – He went to the Hunt Wellness Center to get tested and shared the following concerns.
 - There were 20-30 students waiting to get tested in the small space;
 - Only two people are handling COVID-19 concerns;
 - There is no cleaning of pens/pencils used by individuals;
 - The university needs to do a better job in that center to follow COVID-19 safety protocols.
11. Dr. Fontenot responded by sharing the COVID-19 response team met today. The team invited Mark Smith and the Dean of Arts and Science to sit on the team to present a first-hand account from faculty. Dr. Fontenot also shared the following:
 - Faculty will be given precedence to go to the front of the line;
 - A different location on campus for faculty and staff to get test and/or vaccinated and it will be staffed by an outside agency;
 - FVSU needs to do better in reference to COVID-19 and hearing from faculty helps. Last semester FVSU had one of the lowest COVID-19 rates in the system. Due to the spike things are different and we are having to pivot. We are hoping to see improvement on how we respond.
 - Dr. Fontenot thanked Dr. Riley for sharing his observations.
 - Dr. Riley thanked Provost Fontenot and Dr. Jones for working diligently and keeping the student comfortable in knowing faculty members are being tested as well.
12. Dr. Xuanli Liu shared he has 15 students in a class and 3 tested positive. He raised the following question, Are the classrooms being cleaned/sanitized?
13. Dr. Fontenot responded by sharing the buildings are being fogged. Initially, this was done after a report of an effected person in a building. The decision was made that every classroom will be fogged every day. High traffic areas will be fogged more than once a day. If is not being done, it will be addressed.
14. Dr. Xuanli Liu asked the following questions: If more and more students continue to test positive, will students have the options to join online? How do we determine when to give students the option to join online?
15. Dr. Fontenot responded by sharing if a student test result is positive, the faculty member can accommodate that student. If more students isolate they can't spread COVID-19 and the blended synchronous model is still an option for students.
16. Dr. James Newton shared that faculty members are sending emails to him in reference to the blended synchronous model. He understands that the Deans, Provost Fontenot and President Jones stated that the blended synchronous model is still an option. Because of the number of cases, faculty can't enforce the blended synchronous model.
17. Dr. Fontenot emphasized that we are face-to-face and blended synchronous is now an option because of our circumstances. Deans have been diligent in advocating for faculty.
18. Provost Fontenot took the responsibility on the various questions and mixed messages. She ensured that the blended synchronous model is a back- up and not the primary mode of instruction.
19. Dr. Jefferson shared that there were two questions in that chat from Dr. Fancine Hollis and Dr. Grant. These questions were addressed previously in Dr. Fontenot's responses to the comments and questions.
20. Dr. James Newton – addressed the concern about faculty contracts. In August 2018 the dates on faculty contracts historically ran from the date of faculty and staff institute to the date that faculty turned in final grades. Currently, contracts have the date range from August 1 – May 31. He asked was these dates a clerical error that has not been resolved. Dr. Newton volunteered to provide Provost Fontenot with an example of contracts from previous years.
21. Dr. Fontenot shared that this is a deliberate change and was stated by the previous Provost, Dr. Ramon Stuart.

22. Dr. James Newton raised another concern in reference to Labor Day. Dr. Fontenot was asked to extend her academic powers, as Provost to suspend classes for Labor Day.
23. Dr. Fontenot asked for this request in writing. She provided clarification by sharing that during the pandemic the Human Resources Director at the time strived to improve the management of break between Christmas and New Year. Inadvertently, this affects faculty. If they are not taken they will be pushed back to the holidays.
24. Dr. Jefferson thanked Dr. Fontenot for her presence and addressing the questions and concerns from the faculty.

VI. Nominations and Elections

1. Dr. Felecia Jefferson announced that we must elect an Assistant Secretary and Parliamentarian.
2. Dr. Felecia Jefferson moved to accept Professor Jessica Jefferson as Assistant Secretary.
 - Dr. Riley properly seconded this motion.
 - Professor Jessica Jefferson accepted the role of Assistant Secretary.
3. Dr. Riley moved to accept Dr. Lui as Parliamentarian.
 - Dr. Newton properly seconded this motion.
 - Dr. Luix accepted the role as Parliamentarian.
4. Dr. Riley made the following comments regarding the eligibility to serve as a senator.
 - The requirement to be a faculty senator person is to be employed at the university for a period of two years.
 - Arts and Sciences have shared concerns about the number of representatives. Dr. Riley proposed to change “department” with “program and unit” in the description for the number of senators. This will allow one senator per program.
5. Dr. Jefferson raised the question, if it is five or more faculty members in a department will that department still be able to have two representatives?
6. Dr. Jefferson moved to change “department” with “program and unit”. This will allow one senator per program and we should be in line with SACS.
 - Dr. Newton properly seconded this motion.
 - The following discussion was made in reference to the motion:
 - Dr. Singh – What about programs will be over representation?
 - Dr. Newton response - Those programs will have one representative.
 - Dr. Butts shared examples for smaller programs and asked the following questions: Will this cripple the work of the senate based on adequate representation? Will a special meeting be called?
 - Dr. Newton proposed that we table this until further research can be completed.
 - Dr. Sianjina concurred with Dr. Newton for this topic to be table to give opportunities to think through this process. He does not see the need for a called meeting.
 - Dr. Newton retracted his second on the motion.
 - Dr. Jefferson rescinded her motion to change “department” with “program and unit”.
 - Dr. Riley thanked everyone for the discussion and the opportunity to address this issue.

VII. Miscellaneous

1. Dr. Newton asked senators to respond to the issue on Labor Day.
2. Dr. Butts shared, although she is not a senator, she feels that there needs to be a modification to the calendar because this was voted on as an exception due to COVID and during this time it was not addressed

3. Dr. Jefferson asked for anyone not in agreeance to voice concerns on the issue of Labor Day.
4. Professor Stacie Barrett provided a supporting detail to add to the issue on Labor Day. The RedTail Classic on that Sunday in Alabama faculty will want to attend to support the football team and it may be hindered if we are mandated to report on Labor Day.
5. Dr. Sianjina asked for clarification on the issue surrounding Labor Day.
6. Dr. Newton shared that the USG was exempt from the federal holiday.
7. Dr. Riley asked that Dr. Newton remind Dr. Fontenot that we are nine month faculty and not ten month faculty.
8. Dr. Newton stated we have a lot of work to do based on the administrative changes. He made the suggestion to add ad hoc members.
9. Dr. Singh asked for clarification regarding the blended synchronous model.
10. Dr. Jefferson responded with yes, it is an option according to the fall 2021 plan. Students can ask for blended synchronous model.

VII. Adjourn

Dr. Riley moved to adjourn the meeting; it was properly seconded by Dr. Newton at 5:03 PM