



October 21, 2021
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
3:30 P.M.
President Dr. Felicia Jefferson, Presiding

I. Call to Order and Quorum Determination

- The meeting was called to order at 3:34 PM by Dr. Riley, Vice President (Dr. Jefferson, President was having technical issues)
- A quorum was determined.

II. Approval of Agenda

- The motion was properly moved and seconded to accept the agenda as written

III. Review of Minutes..... Jessica Jefferson, Secretary

- Dr. Marie Anderson moved to accept the agenda
- The motion was properly seconded
- The motion carried with the noted changed from faculty

IV. Brief Remarks.....Dr. Paul Jones, President

- Call Center
 - President Jones shared that he is aware of certain issue with the Call Center. He also shared that the new Vice President will begin on Monday and he will be working with the company to make adjustments to make the Call Center more efficient. He asked for student responses.
 - Dr. Jefferson shared that faculty expressed issues that the call center information was coming from the website. The website information is not correct and this causes issues with the routing of calls from the Call Center.
 - Dr. Jefferson also shared that faculty were not aware of the Call Center although it was mentioned during Faculty and Staff Institute.
 - Dr. Jones shared that a company has been named to work with us to address the website. This process will take us into April. The company are working with Ms. McCrary and Communications and Marketing. He expressed that communication can improved as it was a rush implementation to get it in place by the summer. Now, it is a time to retrain and make necessary adjustments with the Call Center. A relaunch will be considered once changes have been made.
 - Professor Brown shared that the fix for the website is in an excel file. The assigned person may be able to make changes to this spreadsheet that is needed to make changes. She also shared her concern with outside individuals calling the university. She shared her experience with an eMajor student, USG and the Call Center. If we identify the person responsible for updating the excel sheet the problem with the Call Center may be fixed.

- President Jones shared that he is not clear on why this would be a manual process due to our onboarding and others that leave the system. He will look into making this an automated process.
- Dr. Jefferson thanked President Jones for his presence and his response to the call center.
- Dr. Jefferson welcomed Provost Fontenot to the floor and congratulated her on her new title as Provost.

V. Provost Report.....Dr. Olufunke Fontenot, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

- **Provost Fontenot shared**
- Board Policy Revisions, Tenure and Annual Review
 - Provost Fontenot shared that she wants input from the Faculty and she has shared the scope of where we are with the Faculty. She has drafted a letter that provides an overview shared the decision of USG made on October 12 – 13, 2021 and the work that we have ahead of us. She shared with the Faculty Senate executive board and will share with all faculty as well. This includes post tenure review changes and additions of a new Assessment Element of Student Affairs. A new area of Student Success has been added as a criterion for evaluation for tenure and promotion as well post tenure review. The question is how we can effectively do an evaluation and have clear metrics. A second part is to identify way to improve. All will be done with Faculty input. All changes came into in effect on October 13, 2021. Each campus will be responsible for an implementation plan. The goal is to identify a task force to begin working on this by the end of this semester.
- Faculty Handbook Revisions
 - We will also form a task force to revise the Faculty Handbook. The current is from 2015-2016. There has been two previous attempts to revise the handbook, but it did not go through the approval process. We will have parallel process: (1) tenure and promotion and (2) Faculty Handbook. Once the tenure and promotion process has been completed it will be added to the handbook. She referenced that she has requested feedback from the executive committee and not the full senate on how we should proceed. This will be a faculty led effort. This does not mean an exclusive faculty function, administration will be involved in the process.
- Dr. Fezi – Since the information is not actually aligned with other s=universities, can we have amendments on the existing handbook to address some of the deficiencies that are present.
- Provost Fontenot – We may want to make update to the handbook and not make amendments to address our unique circumstances and display best practices. That amendments may take as much time as addressing the entire handbook. She addressed specifically the workload and said it is consistent with the USG guidelines.
- Dr. Fezi shared that is has not seen an institution to practice the overload guidelines. Even if a school had furloughs, faculty still received partial payments even if they met the 360 policy.
- Provost Fontenot shared when will take it under advisement. She also share that this is not a new policy and it was in place under the previous Provost. She shared examples of faculty with small classes seeking overload policies and we would want to make the best of our resources as well as the needs of the faculty.
- Dr. Fezi – Question: Does Academic Affairs have a handbook that govern their policies to avoid cherry picking certain things from the Faculty Handbook that may be beneficial?
- Provost Fontenot – The Faculty Handbook gives guidelines for Academic Affairs. In the past the Faculty Handbook provided more information. The goal of the revision is to ensure that it meets the standard of best practices. We will also seek consults in the revisions as well. The Faculty Handbook serves as point of reference to guide everything and all decisions in Academic Affairs. It should be written in a way that is clear to all with little ambiguity as possible.

- Dr. Jefferson - Question: Will the committee be developed soon?
- Provost Fontenot shared that she asked the Faculty Senate Executive Board to share ways on how we would want to proceed. She asked for clarity on the question from Dr. Jefferson.
- Dr. Jefferson shared that she was asking will there be two separate task forces/committees.
- Dr. Fontenot shared that it will be two parallel task forces because of the specifics of the promotion and tenure policies. She has noticed that there may be some items in the Faculty Handbook that need revising and she will be working with task force. The lead will be driven by the task force.
- Dr. Jefferson - Question: Will the task force be in place by the end of the semester.
- Dr. Fontenot shared the task force will be appointed by the end of the month and the will be working until the spring 2022. There will be a tight deadline. She is asking the faculty senate and colleges to make recommendations. She will work with President Jones to make decisions on who will work on the task force.
- Dr. Chaptom shared a concern from a faculty mentor. When will faculty have notification of the new policies so they can have ample time to prepare for the next year?
- Provost Fontenot shared that when we have policy changes (she stated this with caution) current faculty can choose to be govern by the old policies. She quoted the USG... “ Every campus will need to take time to review crate their new policies, process and review standard.....it also provides flexibility around which faculty and the campus leadership can build review polices that work best for the institution.” It does emphasize that is should not, in any way, affect the post tenure and promotion applications that are currently under consideration. However, each institution will be expected to plan how they will decide to phase the new standards for those that are currently under the review cycle at various stages. That puts the ownership on the institution to address this issue. The issue at hand, the holistic revision, it is beyond what is stated in the policy. For example, fall of 2022 those that are in line for tenure and promotion will still have the option. We must into place the policy revision as soon as possible. Those going forward for promotion will have to show what they have done for Student Success as well. We will have to determine which metric we will require to reflect student success.
- Dr. Jefferson shared that this was a concern from many faculty that there is not clear guidance on what Student Success is at this time.
- Dr. Newton – Question: If a faculty member is teaching 20 hours, does that mean that that faculty member only has to teach four hours to next semester to meet the 24 hours for the academic year?
- Provost Fontenot – Is the person teaching 20 hours that consensual overload?
- Dr. Newton – The overload was not approved.
- Provost Fontenot – This will be addressed by the Deans. She shared that we have to think about equity and it depends on context. She thanked everyone for their patience and she will send out information about the task forces and will follow-up with the faculty.

VI. Faculty Senate President’s Report.....Dr. Felicia Jefferson, Faculty Senate President

- Federal Funds
 - America Rescue Plan
 - Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds
 - Dr. Jefferson asked what are the funds being used for and will this information be posted on the website?
 - Provost Fontenot stated that she will consult with Michelle Martin’s office as this office is over the funding. She will provide more information at the next meeting. She stated that the spending is aligned with the university’s strategic priorities.
- Required Faculty Attendance at Open House
 - Dr. Jefferson – Question: How can the faculty be sure of their safety at this event?

- Provost Fontenot – Question: Who sent out the information that faculty were required to attend open house.
 - This was shared amongst the faculty. The assumption was that all not faculty must attend. However some felt they were required to attend.
 - Provost Fontenot – The response is the same as teaching. Masks will be highly required. The Deans worked with the department to decide those that will attend. For the opening session there are no requirements to be there. Deans may ask for your presence depending on the role of individuals. This is not an Academic Affairs mandate. Please remember that recruitment is everybody’s business. Faculty are a big part of recruitment.
 - Dr. Chatmon – Everyone knows that it is not a requirement to come. A concern is not having a set agenda prior to making a commitment is the biggest issue.
 - Provost Fontenot – Please take that up with your Dean. She then provided an overview of the agenda. She will ask the Dean’s to share the agenda with faculty.
- Payments for eCore/eMajor and Overload
 - Dr. Jefferson – Shared general concerns from the faculty regarding payments. Question – When will these be payed? Why are there consistent delays with eCore and overload payments?
 - Dr. Fontenot – She will check with payroll and get back with the faculty.

VII. Faculty Welfare Chair Report.....Dr. James Newton, Faculty Welfare Chair

- Update on Contract Information (9 month to 10 month contracts)
 - Dr. Newton – The issue has been resolved. Contracts will go back to a nine month contract. The contracts will not state August 1 – May 31.
 - Provost Fontenot – She has been reviewing the faculty handbook and it stated clearly there are either 10 month appointments or 12 month appointments.
 - Provost Fontenot – The spring calendar has already been approved. Classes start on January 10. Faculty will return before January 10 because of the spring opening faculty meeting on January 11. This keeps us within the nine months.
 - Dr. Newton – There are 14 members and only two are faculty (one being junior faculty). Meigan Fields, Pat Marion, and Juone Brown have been recommended for this committee. We want to establish a balance with faculty and staff on this committee.
 - Provost Fontenot – Question: Does it matter if it a junior faculty member?
 - Dr. Newton – Junior faculty do not have a historical perspective. He will send the recommendations to Provost Fontenot.
 - Dr. Jefferson shared a question from the chat – Will the January 11 meeting be in person? (Dr. Grant) She shared that Provost Fontenot answered “yes” in the chat.

VIII. Website Updates and Redesign.....Mechell McCrary, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

- Dr. Jefferson shared the notes from Mechell MacCrary in her absence. She shared the following from Ms. McCrary. The two items are as follows:
 - Outline for the new faculty/staff directory web pages. (The word document was shared)
 1. The content in the word document includes the proposed items that should be included on the faculty/staff directory webpages.
 2. The website will move to a model where faculty/staff can update some of the info on their own pages
 - i. however, some key info will only be editable by a web administrator.
 - ii. faculty/staff will receive training on how to edit their bio on the site.
 3. Red asterisk in the document signifies required data information on the faculty pages (cannot be left blank)

4. *Items in italics* are core info that cannot be changed or edited by faculty or staff members – can only be changed by a web administrator Provost agrees with format outlined in the attached document
 5. Faculty pages will include a link to the colleges/programs in which the professor/instructor teaches or works.
 - We have recommended to remove the syllabus and course info from faculty bio web pages to avoid outdated info being on the website (the concern is faculty will forget to keep this content updated as course and syllabus info frequently changes).
 1. Provost Fontenot has reviewed this document and agrees with recommendation.
 2. Dr. Darryl Hancock of online learning represents faculty for the website redesign project and agrees here as well.
- **Academic Programs Matrix spreadsheet** (The spreadsheet matrix was shared)
 - This document organizes and defines the relationships between degrees, departments, and colleges.
 - The website redesign vendor has developed this document based on the content in the current website.
 - I am asking that this receive a careful review by faculty senate and that it be updated to correct any information that is inaccurate, incomplete, or out of date so that I can share the accurate info with the website redesign vendor

IX. Miscellaneous

- Dr. Liu – shared that the website is ok. We need to work on uploading the database and then focus on the website changes. He provided examples of information on the website that is incorrect.
- Dr. Jefferson concurred with his sentiments.
- Professor Brown – shared that President Jones covered this issue and he will be looking into the issues with the website.
- Dr. Mack – shared concerns with students attending class during homecoming. He shared personal experiences with his specific classes and past administration (Dean and Chair)
- Dr. Fontenot – Homecoming is time where we expect student to participate. Students ask is there something we can do to meet them half way, to be able to participate and still enjoy homecoming. Question: Faculty, what can we do to ensure that students enjoy homecoming and still meet requirements for their courses?
- Dr. Jefferson – A discussion on this topic was had at the previous faculty meeting. She invited Dr. Mac to speak with her offline, after the meeting. It was stated that Dr. Moss presented on this topic at the previous meeting.
- Dr. Fields - shared that homecoming may be a great time to have faculty development and make use of online feature for assignments. Perhaps Dr. Hancock can help in this regard.
- Dr. Anderson – shared she liked the idea.
- Dr. Naghedolfeizi – We need to think about the security of physical documents. Student workers have access to confidential information of faculty/staff.
- Dr. Barrett – Shared her concern with overload pay. She shared that she is concerned that she will not get overload paid because of the class sizes. With the FTE rules and the workload of faculty and the courses they teach impacts full-time faculty.
- Dr. Jefferson - Thanked her for sharing her concern and it will be moved to the chair and Dean.

X. Adjourn

- Dr. Fields moved to adjourn. It was properly seconded by Dr. Riley.
- The meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.