

Fairmont State Faculty Senate

Minutes, 12.10.24

Members Present: **Bob Niichel** (Executive Committee: President, Computer Science & Math), **Donna Long** (Exec Committee: Vice President, Humanities), **Dexter Simon** (SGA), **Jenna Fisher** (SGA), **Deb Hemler** (Academic Affairs), **Kelley Flaherty** (Natural Sciences), **Stephanie Jones** (CSM), **Jason Frazer** (CoBA), **J.L. Tomlin** (Social Sciences/Ex. Committee, Secretary), **Jason Bolyard** (ET), **Jamie Toland** (Nursing), **Kristi Kiefer** (COHHP), **James Long** (Math/CS), **Tabitha Lafferre** (ENG/Tech), **Nathan Myers** (Humanities), **April Townshend** (Nat Sci), **Jim Matthews** (Academic Affairs), **Todd Clark** (ACF), **Chris Moss** (Social Sciences), **Brian Selmeski** (President's Office), **Amanda Metcalf** (COEHHP)

Guests: **Susan Ross** (Interim Provost), **Tim Oxley**, **Valerie Morphew** (CTLI), **Mike Davis** (President of University)

1.-3. Approval of Agenda/Minutes. No objections with single amendment from Niichel. Announcement from Charlie Hively. Introduction of new Librarian Derek Newsom. He's a FSU graduate, with a Masters from U of Pittsburgh. Taking over position left from Ashley. Derek will be taking Charlie's position on Senate. Approval of minutes from November meeting. Move to approve no objections. Approved.

4. President Davis address: Audit likely to be approved by BOG. Excellent financial condition. Moody rating was A-2 (second highest rating possible). Plan for opening session for January 23rd (similar to Fall). EAB will come in and do a "state of the sector" session providing outlooks for the future. Breakfast to be included (8:30-10:30 tentatively). Search Finalists for General Council /CFO will be on campus soon. Interim CFO (John) will stay on through June 2026 after two leading candidates backed out of consideration. Provost Search will be listed during holiday break but application reviews will take place after return in the Spring (February). Open to questions. Falcon center will be open for most of the holiday break (announcement coming on exact days and times).

5. Old Business Major/Minor. None

6. New Business Major/Minor. Issue of new Academic Calendar. Academic leadership team has given guidance on potential changes, and now two are considered (around whether two holidays are dropped). Long says fall holiday is something Humanities wants to retain. Spring holiday seems more expendable. Niichel says on the committee he advocated to not lose two MWF classes. Preference for fall holiday on T/Th to minimize lost course time. Hemler points out that this, however, hurts the T/TH course schedules more than MWF courses. Question from April about how best to split the difference. Niichel reminds everyone that this is a 16 week instead of

15 week calendar. Call for motion to approve. Clark agrees with Long that the fall holiday is more important than retaining the spring holiday. Clark asks about moving fall holiday to previous Friday. Clark makes motion to keep Fall holiday with moved date and to drop the Spring holiday, Hemler seconds. Motion passes by voice vote.

Curriculum proposals. Motion from Long to consider both proposals for first reading. Seconded by Frazier. Two questions from Long about these proposals for Metcalf on item 24-25-02. Long satisfied with response. Approval 24-25-01, 02 carried by voice vote. Question from Niichel about speeding these up. Not today.

Minor items: Proposal to send an informal liaison from senate to staff council meetings. Spencer Flanagan agreed to an informal role. Request to include motion with nomination/volunteer. Frazier moves to have the position created, no suggestion on candidate. Seconded by Tomlin. Voice vote for informal liaison position carries. Call for volunteers. Suggestion from Long to hold off on candidates until January meeting for more information about staff council meeting schedule. Seconded by Frazier. Motion to table council liaison until January carries.

7. Provost Report- Ross reminds faculty about commencement schedule. Information about helping new faculty who do not have regalia for commencement. Professional development day is Wednesday the 18th (announcement on sessions went out last week). Deadline to RSVP is today. Faculty are not required on campus after the 18th, but request not to set “out of office” messages until the 21st for the event of student questions/administrative responses. Explanation of the HLEC process and FSU people involved with this process. Issue of course evaluations. Need for change, but they have not been changed yet. Dean Ross reached out to Metcalf to coordinate on the process of revising them. Metcalf introduces preliminary information: Course evals have not been changed since Fall 2019. 25 total questions, but formatting means there are actually 48 separate questions. This takes too long, and is too complicated for most students. Dean Ross asks whether senate wants a better tool. Wide consensus the evals need editing/revising. Townshend points out that many of the preset questions are irrelevant to the disciplines being studied in the evals. Comment from SGA (Simon) about reluctance to be critical with instructors in the evals. More personalized evals might be more precise and less generically negative. Hively also agrees students routinely complain about evaluation length, and insight that the feedback is thus less relevant. Niichel agrees relevance to both faculty and students is key. Long raises issues of how flawed evaluations are used in promotion and tenure issues. Hemler asks why course evaluations were not being imported into AFR materials for faculty. Ross agrees to inquire about this. Lafferre points out that this is true in a larger sense of other review/promotion materials that are not populating with evals, AFR, etc. Faculty are having to manually reenter these things. Lafferre points out personalization for programs is important, but getting more meaningful data on learning outcomes rather than impressions.

Assessment. Taskstream removal and replacement with Coursedog is reviewed and explained via timeline. Watermark did not actually fix issues but rather advised FSU how to fix issues. Courseleaf and Coursedog were the finalists (April 24) and Coursedog was selected by September. Nov-Dec 24 review of Coursedog was conducted, with very favorable impressions on integration, accessibility, performance, and utility. Next steps will be to plan transition (no movement in Spring). This rollout may look different for different programs, etc. Question from

Long about whether watermark is going away. Taskstream is leaving, but other components of Watermark for now are being retained pending review on those remaining components for utility and accessibility.

8. Reports

ACF-Clark. Committee met last week. Committee visited a variety of pressing issues. Politically, Legislative session is 60 days (running a month late due to new Governor). This changes the timeline to allow for more information gathering before the legislative agenda is going to be in the new session. Certain to be changes given new Republican supermajorities and new Governor's own priorities. Probably few changes on key committees (education, finance). Governor's educational priorities are K-12 rather than higher ed. No anticipated or pending bills that might affect policy. DEI, possibly, and Library censorship might surface again, after both items were shelved in the last legislative session. More information likely forthcoming over the next two weeks. ACF anticipates a budget deficit of \$30-40 million. Hope for more to report in January senate meeting. Selmeski adds that Gov. Elect visited FSU and reported a very favorable impression. Governor complimented FSU to media, and administration hopes to build on that. Legislative outreach will begin in January as well, to advocate (Feb. 13 is day at the Capital) on a variety of issues. Desire to compete better at this event especially with schools like WVU. Oxley will be in touch with more details closer to time. All of this has been designed to address those concerns about revenue declines and to ensure a good relationship with new administration at the state level. Clark adds that support for libraries is something to build off of with the new Governor's K-12 focus. Question from Lafferre about regulations affecting engineering, for instance, that may reduce selling points for certain programs. Clark says concern on this particularly didn't seem widespread on the Committee. Selmeski points out workforce development is a communication technique that is more effective with state government. FSU does anticipate a rollback of vaccination requirements. This will likely not affect residence halls, however, wider campus may be affected.

BOG-Fantasia. Not present. Frazier adds BOG is meeting next week.

SGA- Simon/Fisher. SGA is doing Xmas with the Falcons and is still taking donations. \$50 per child is a standard donation, although they will accept larger ones. Donations end this Friday (Dec 13). Request to remind people of the funding deadlines for student groups. ASAP, essentially.

9. Miscellaneous

- a) Ad hoc Treasury Committee: No new updates, but committee is meeting next week Dec. 18th.
- b) Ex Committee will be meeting with Faculty Chairs to discuss AFR issues, as well as T/P issues.

10. Open Forum:

Motion to adjourn from Tomlin at 4:04.