Faculty Senate Special Meeting Notes 8/19

Meeting started at 3:00 pm

Discussion of Faculty Handbook is the only agenda item. Dr. Tim Oxley was asked to be here today.

Dr. Fantasia – lack of redlining and unclear process prompted her to question the utility of an off-the-cuff discussion of making changes to the handbook. Believes thoughtful consideration is required for a meaningful vote to occur.

Dr. Oxley - Dr. Ross reviewed the handbook page by page and noted inconsistency with current policy. The Office of the Provost made edits according to that review.

Commented [ND1]: This was my interpretation at the time. Upon reflection, he may have been referring to the Faculty Handbook Committee.

Examples include:

- Academic Integrity policy language had not been updated, it now mirrors the student handbook.
- Curriculum proposal process – clarity of language was required.
- Student attendance policy was inconsistent with the student handbook.
- Faculty office hours inconsistency was realigned.

Other questions that arose from this process were policy questions, the Handbook Committee is not a policy body so that will be handled elsewhere. Getting the draft to Faculty Senate prior to the end of the spring semester did not occur due to various circumstances.

Timeline: the next edition will be available no later than the last senate meeting of the spring '26 semester.

Dr. Kiger – discusses the process of the handbook review in response to Dr. Fantasia. Some back and forth about senate concerns.

Dr. Long – Clarified that faculty in Humanities reviewed certain pages. pg. 50 Faculty Workload – The list of Faculty Responsibilities did not include parts of music faculty: directing ensembles, concerts for the FSU community, associated rehearsals, the direction of plays, technical directing, etc.

*The way the committee works – if a recommendation of a policy is made, it should be referred back to the proper committee or the office of the Provost. Is an item informational or a policy request. Faculty Senate is not a policy group.

Commented [ND2]: If you see an asterisk, that means I neglected to note who brought up the point.

Dr. Townsend – are we bringing up questions of wording in the handbook or policy?
Response: Yes!

*The handbook communicates policy to faculty, it is not a contract between faculty and the university.

Dr. Fantasia – the idea in the past was to create a committee so the provost was interacting with the discussion to help shape policy. Policy decisions would be informed by the concerns and decisions of the faculty.

Dr. Bedford – in addition to being a document that informs faculty, a coherent body of policy, it provides a way of identifying gaps. Dr. Bedford welcomes input from the committee to identify the gaps and misalignments.

*The Handbook Committee is not the place for policy discussions. The representative body of the general body, the Faculty Senate, should be the forum for these discussions. It's the appropriate avenue for shared governance decisions.

Dr. Townsend – update bookstore section to reflect current information. Commencement pg. 39 who approves excuses for missing commencement. Student Attendance pg. 44 faculty cannot require Dr. Notes for excused absences. Does not provide alternate options or explanation.

Dr. Todd Clark – Remote Teaching Policy

Dr. Frazer – pg. 38 in hard copy Student Athletes – no class time shall be missed for practice activity. Referred to Janet Floyd. Recurring concern for student athletes missing class.

*Does the student handbook address student athlete absences?

Dr. Hemler – noticed typos

Dr. Oxley – the document has lived through decades of iteration.

Dr. MacLennan – layout is nice and navigable. No mention in the Handbook of maintaining labs across campus.

*Pg. 41 proposals to add a new major, the date should be changed

*Paragraph on the LEAD Center – why is it in here? Math only through Trig may be inaccurate. They offer higher level mathematics tutoring.

Derek – Director of Library Services appears twice on pg. 9 under "Administrative Entities". May we add the "Father Jude Molnar Collection" under "University Archives" pg. 55

Dr. Long – Expectations for evals. of probationary faculty are absent from the handbook. Plagiarism policy – would need updated appropriately. Should it reflect language on AI usage? Pgs. 32 and 33. How does this responsibility extend to IT services that actively solicit AI use?

Dr. Niichel – spoke to Dr. Bedford about the handbook. Provost philosophy on the handbook is important. Three options for the fate of the Handbook today:

- Reject the handbook (unclear future from there)
- Approve today
- Approve it for first reading and take it up in the September meeting

Dr. Bedford – faculty handbook is important and a great concern to the Provost. Wants to collaborate with faculty around the connection faculty have to the University. The policy is that connection. He wants to engage with faculty in an honest shared governance process. Wants to address needs holistically and the policies are important. We have already begun the year. If there is concern about the language, it should be thought of in the 25-26 cycle, not retroactively. Invites continuing engaging discourse on the handbook and policies therein. Shared governance around the legal relationship between faculty and university goes up to the BoG. Provost has advisory role with BoG and is interested in maintaining an active role in the shared governance process.

Dr. Niichel calls for us to consider a motion.

Dr. Paul Reneau – AI policy cannot get organized and included in this iteration of the handbook. Because we are in the year, he **moves to accept the Faculty Handbook for this academic year. Seconded by Dr. Lisa Eades.**

Dr. MacLennan – clarification: this Handbook is being accepted for this cycle, and will be worked on throughout the year to include revisions and additions for the next cycle.

Dr. Fantasia – clarification: we are acknowledging that this handbook is the version that exists, with the understanding that it will be refined throughout the year and revised.

Dr. Long – is there anything in the current version that is going to result in death, destruction, bodily harm, etc. Dr. MacLennan – yes, the timing of October curriculum.

Dr. Niichel – Calls for Faculty Senate to vote: Accept version read today, with the understanding that the minor edits suggested be made before being published to the website. **Aye vote passed. Dr. Fantasia abstained.**

Next Faculty Senate is scheduled for September 9 at the Shaw House