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Faculty Senate Minutes
Georgia Southern University-Statesboro
May 22, 2018
4 - 6 p.m.
Nessmith-Lane Ballroom

Voting members in attendance: Cheryl Aasheim, Lucas Jensen for Mete Akcaoglu, Rocio Alba-Flores, Heidi Altman, Dragos Amarie, Dustin Anderson, Helen Bland, Ted Brimeyer, Gavin Colquitt, Robert Costomiris, Marc Cyr, Lisa Denmark, Meghan Dove, Alice Hall, Chuck Harter, Ming Fang He, Jonathan Hilpert, Bob Jackson, Drew Keane, Alissa Leckie, Lili Li, Li Li, Ron MacKinnon, Leticia McGrath, Marshall Ransom, Chasen Smith, Fred Smith, Janice Steirn, Marian Tabi, Meca Williams-Johnson, Hayden Wimmer

Robert Pirro, President of the Senate
Karen McCurdy, Parliamentarian

Voting members not in attendance: Sam Adeyeye, Evans Afriyie-Gyawu, Moya Alfonso, Kelly Berry, Adam Bossler, Christopher Brown, Finbarr Curtis, Anoop Desai, Mark Edwards, Michelle Haberland, Mujibur Khan, Barbara King, Jennifer Kowalewski, Hsiang-Jui King, Eric Landers, Yi Lin, Li Ma, Santanu Majumdar, Ed Mondor, Constantin Ogloblin, Peter Rogers, Ed Rushton, Hans Schanz, Jake Simons, Stephanie Sipe, Jorge Suazo, Linda Thompson, Mark Welford, Tharanga Wickramarachchi, Shijun Zheng

Administrators: Amy Ballagh, Chris Curtis, Amy Heaston, Georj Lewis

Visitors: Richard Cleveland, Candace Griffith, Christopher Cartright, Beth Durodoye, Delena Bell Gatch, Ashley Walker, Olga Amarie

Secretary's Note: The recording does not begin until the conclusion of the GECC report. The items ahead of that point – the agenda, minutes, Librarian's report, Undergraduate report, and GECC report – are available independently.

Further, prior to the meeting proper getting under way, Senate President Robert Pirro presented Ginger Malphrus with a cash gift from Senators in appreciation of all she does for the Senate.

1. Approval of the Agenda for the May 22, 2018 meeting.

Moved and Approved.

2. Approval of the April 4, 2018 minutes: Marc Cyr (CAH), Senate Secretary.

Moved and Approved.

3. Librarian's Reports for May 22, 2018: Mark Welford (COSM), Senate Librarian.

Moved and Approved.

a. Undergraduate Committee: Alisa Leckie (COE), Chair

Moved and Approved.

b. General Education and Core Curriculum Committee: Michelle Cawthorn (COSM), Chair

Moved and Approved.

c. Graduate Committee Report: Dustin Anderson (CAH), Chair:

There were two changes in curriculum, one course and one program, based on external accreditation changes. They also approved the graduate full-time exemption process drafted by Amy Ballagh and Ashley Walker. The report was Moved and Approved.

Senate President Rob Pirro noted that President Hebert was not present to make a report, and so moved on to the Provost.

4. Provost's Report : Diana Cone

Dr. Carl Rieber:

The incoming Provost was on campus for a couple of days to do his "inboarding" prior to his July 1 start date. At the time of this senate meeting, he was meeting with the deans and talking about the regional academic mission and some of the strategic planning that's going on behind the scenes.

IAB Building:

It is going well and it has a promised completion date for the start of classes.

Shelley Nickel:

Incoming Interim President Shelley Nickel was going to be on campus next day to meet with the President's Cabinet, and the day after in Savannah for more meetings.

Rob Pirro:

Provost Cone presented Senate President Rob Pirro with a mounted gavel to thank him for his year of service leading the senate.

Robert Costomiris (CAH) said he was disappointed in the departure of Dr. Hebert since he thought he had been a pretty good President, and because he thought it an odd time to make a transition like this while we are going through a tremendous transition already. He asked why he was leaving and why we were getting an interim President who is not a member of this institution.

Provost Cone said she knew little more than faculty did, but added that Dr. Hebert had told her and the Cabinet members that he had "some opportunities that came up that he felt were a better fit for him and for his family, and that he intends to pursue those. As far as the appointment of the interim, that is the Chancellor's prerogative" and she learned about it in the media just like faculty did.

Janice Steirn (CBSS) said, "This is not meant to sound as hostile as it probably will, but I kind of feel like we are being told to sit in our place and take whatever comes. There's no transparency. Things are just happening and nobody will explain anything to us, and we are being presented with an interim president who may be fine, but . . . everything feels sort of wrong and artificial, and I want to know if there is anything that we can do to convince the Board of Regents to at least let us know what's going on."

Provost Cone couldn't speak to that and didn't know what faculty could do. The USGFC (University System of Georgia Faculty Council) meets with the Chancellor and could share their thoughts, and she would share faculty concerns with Ms. Nickel that we would like a little more transparency, but she reiterated that most Cabinet members had learned this information the same way the faculty had, through the media.

Costomiris said, "In a University where we pursue knowledge, there seems to be a complete lack of knowledge about some very important issues that face us, and these issues are when people ask why is the faculty demoralized, I think we can just point to this as yet another reason why faculty feel completely cut out and you know just sick of the whole, you know, thing. Everything has been told to us, except some of the most crucial things. Do this, do this, do this, but we're not, don't ask us why. It gets a little weary. Knowledge is power. We have no power."

Provost Cone noted that the Chancellor said that he will be appointing a search committee to conduct a national search for a President of Georgia Southern; we will not get a direct appointment as some other institutions have. She thought this struck a good note.

Senate President Pirro noted that the news of President Hebert interviewing for other jobs broke just as the USGFC meeting was starting. Pirro asked our representative at that meeting to pull the Chancellor aside and suggest that a national search would be a better option for us than the Kennesaw option. The Chancellor said that he planned on holding a national search.

5. Senate Executive Committee Report: Robert Pirro (CBSS), Chair.

a. Recognition of Ron MacKinnon and Fred Smith for distinguished records of service to the Faculty Senate

Fred Smith and Ron MacKinnon were retiring. The list of their Senate service was three pages long. MacKinnon was on Senate within a year or two of coming to GSU, and Smith within three years. MacKinnon served 15 years on the Senate, four of those years on the Senate Executive Committee, and he served on the Graduate, Undergraduate, Faculty Welfare, and other committees as well. Smith had served over 21 years as a Senator, including stints on the Senate Executive Committee, the Gen Ed Committee, the Faculty Welfare Committee, and the Graduate Committee, with his service extending so far back that he was on committees that no longer exist. Pirro was reminded of a letter exchange between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams in which they were speculating about what the afterlife would be like, and Jefferson expressed the wish that the afterlife would be like the days of their service in the Continental Congress: "May we meet there again, in Congress, with our ancient colleagues, and receive with them the seal of approbation, 'Well done, good and faithful servants.'" Pirro did not know if either MacKinnon or Smith ever imagined the afterlife would be like a Georgia Southern Faculty Senate meeting, but he felt Jefferson's words were appropriate words of thanks from the Senate: "Well done, good and faithful servants."

David Allen

On a sadder note, Pirro noted the passing of a former Faculty Senate moderator, David Allen. He was a Sociology professor here and later moved to Temple University. He passed away June 8, 2017.

Marc Cyr (CAH) said he and Allen served on the SEC and that he had nominated Allen to be Moderator. One of Allen's accomplishments came because he found out that we were going to pave over huge chunks of the campus for parking, and he organized and led the movement of several bodies on the campus, including the Senate and the SGA, to stop that and get us the shuttle bus system that we now have. He noted that it was appropriate that this recognition of Allen came on this day because one of the items on the agenda was a discussion of more trees being cut down for parking. That conjunction might have him spinning in his grave, or debating with Adams and Jefferson about heavenly senates, but Allen was a strong moderator and Cyr had been sorry when he left GSU the following year.

Pirro recalled many late night dinners with Allen during which they discussed social theory, and called him “the purest intellectual that I ever met.”

b. Report on Faculty Senate elections

Pirro said it had been “quite a ride in terms of Faculty Senate elections.” Normally, we elect the next year’s Moderator in November at a physical meeting, but that election couldn’t be held with just the Faculty Senate of the Statesboro campus participating. In addition, there is a new office, the Faculty Senate President Elect, who will serve the entire year and be shadowing the President and participating in the Senate Executive Committee. So we had an electronic election that included Armstrong faculty who would be on senate next year – 25, as opposed to their current 40 senators. The election was held but there was a mix-up in terms of not the number of Armstrong’s Senators participating, but six of the Faculty Senators that participated weren’t supposed to be in the electorate. That started a back and forth between Statesboro and Armstrong representatives. One of the options was to hold the election again, another was to only hold a new election for the one Faculty Senate officer whose election was decided by less than 6, because three of the four elections had large margins. At a certain point, Drew Keane, who had been elected Faculty Senate Secretary, volunteered to withdraw and let his opponent win, and his opponent was a member of the Armstrong campus and he felt that it would be appropriate that among the officers of next year’s Senate, at least one person be from Armstrong campus, and that was agreed to by both sides, and that’s what’s going to happen.

Senate President next year will be Dustin Anderson; Helen Bland will be President-Elect; Meca Williams-Johnson will be the Senate Librarian; and Carol Jamison will be the Senate Secretary. One other election, for Parliamentarian, will take place at the first Fall meeting.

The other issue with the elections were elections to Senate committees. Some were held for positions that weren’t going to open up after this year. In other words, people were elected to committees, but the person that was supposed to be replaced doesn’t rotate off until after next year. Those people mistakenly elected have been notified that when the other people rotate off after next year, they can move into those positions. He noted that some of this trouble was due to CLASS being split and the software not working right as a result.

Jonathan Hilpert (COE) asked if part of the discussions had been to figure out ways to prevent these problems going forward.

Pirro said he had spoken with Ginger Malphrus, who in turn had spoken with the tech people about purchasing new software that will work with our new institutional set-up

Senate President-Elect Dustin Anderson (CAH) noted that he and Malphrus had spoken and decided to run a software test halfway through next year to make sure the system works.

c. Report on April 27, 2018 USG Faculty Council meeting

Twice a year, at the end of each semester, representatives from each Faculty Senate in the System go to a central location and meet with the Chancellor in both an informal setting, a dinner the night before, and then a kind of official Senate meeting that includes the Chancellor, the Assistant Chancellor, and the Chief Academic Officer of the System. Since we consolidated and since the Armstrong representative, Elizabeth Colas-Desnoyers, was going to be chairing that meeting, Pirro had thought that it would be appropriate for her to be our representative. Pirro had sent out to the Senate copies of the two resolutions that were passed at that meeting, one of them having to do with finding a way to make consistent the TRS program and the ORP program in terms of what happens to your unused sick leave when you retire. The Chancellor said that it would take a bill in the legislature to change or to somehow bring them into alignment, but the faculty council did want to make that resolution to urge the System to find a way to find the language they would need to then create a bill so that the legislature could pass it. The second resolution had to do with summer Senate operating procedures for summer faculty, trying to find ways to standardize the policies on how faculty are paid, how they are notified whether they have a class, and what happens if the class doesn't fill. He also noticed in the USGFC minutes that the issue of textbook costs was raised again. He found this notation from the Chancellor interesting: "He hopes to see students at USG institutions be able to earn a degree without having to buy a textbook." Pirro said he was sympathetic to that, trying himself to avoid textbooks when he can, but wasn't sure that professors in other fields could do so.

Janice Steirn (CBSS) said she wouldn't deal with the textbooks issue "because I'd like to see the Chancellor with an idea of what education is. But, besides that do you have any idea of a timeline when we might know whether the resolutions are going to be pursued or not pursued? And also do you know if there is anything further that we can do, especially if it's going to apparently take an act of the government to help move along the retirement" and summer issues.

Pirro had no information but said he's ask Colas-Desnoyers and pass anything he got along to the Senate.

Provost Cone said that new Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Denley, was encouraging us to use some of the free online textbooks. She thought the intent was not about not requiring textbooks, but using low-cost or free textbooks that might be available.

Fred Smith (LIB) asked what happens, in general, to USGFC resolutions.

Pirro's understanding was that they were like senate motions, that is, recommendations to the administration, so they don't have "the force of law." He noted, though, that the Council had pushed for and received more faculty representation on System level committees, so some concrete things came out of the USGFC.

Robert Costomiris (CAH) said that “sometimes people speak without knowing anything. And it sounds to me like the remarks regarding textbooks from the Chancellor and the Executive [Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs] . . . don’t take into account that faculty are responsible for their classes, faculty almost universally in my experience try to keep costs low for their students and buy used textbooks, editions that are out-of-print or things that could be bought more economically, so I think this is one of those moments where . . . it’s a good sound-bite that has absolutely no bearing, should have no bearing on what we do as professors.”

Marc Cyr (CAH) said that “the cost of education is phenomenally high for a lot of reasons. The cost of textbooks, I think, is probably a really minor one. The cost of textbooks is one that is to some extent imposed upon the students by faculty because we want them to, you know, now and then, read something, and that this is being made a big deal of whereas other areas of the high-cost of college education are not being made a big deal of in this body. It strikes me as just a little on the distracting side.”

Pirro said the USGFC minutes reflected that “the faculty representatives there on the Council [said] much of what you’re saying, with a little less edge.”

d. RFIs

Shooting Sports Education Center

Some pertained to the Shooting Sports Education Center. One re: why some foreign students here on visas and therefore barred by federal law from using the Center still are paying fees towards it will have to await Maura Copeland’s return to town from the System office.

Robert Costomiris (CAH) asked that present Senators who would still be on the Senate in Fall pay attention to that response so that the question doesn’t just go away over summer.

Changing T & P time clock

There were two on this subject of extending tenure and promotion time clocks, but Ted Brimeyer (CBSS), who had made the queries, thought it would be better to raise these questions with the new permanent Provost in the Fall.

Parking lot renovations

There were parking lot renovations taking place over by the Wildlife Center and Pirro himself had submitted this RFI asking whether the mature trees in that zone would be removed, and the answer was yes, to increase the number of parking spaces, and that two trees would be planted for every one lost. It seemed to Pirro that the University’s default position is that any lot renovation should increase the number of parking spaces, and he wondered if any studies had been done to see if there are lots on campus that are under-utilized. His own personal

observations suggested this was so, and he wondered if better utilization of existing spaces could forestall the removal of trees. VP Rob Whitaker was not present to respond.

Janice Steirn (CBSS) had been on the Parking Committee, and she had asked essentially the same thing. She had been told that, yes, there are some parking lots that nobody uses, such as by the practice baseball/softball fields, and they had made them free and would give them to students, and the students wouldn't take them. She had tried to point out to them some of the research that has been done in Psychology that shows that if an individual has to pay even a small amount for something, that something is worth more to them than if they get it free because when we get something for free, we consider it literally worthless. And they didn't want to hear that. She thought that by charging even a nominal fee for some of the under-utilized lots we'd get more takers. She noted that "although we are encouraged to do research, our university doesn't want to listen to much research."

Pirro thought a shuttle could be arranged for that lot so students wouldn't have to walk, but at any rate thought it would be useful to know how our parking lots are being used.

Dustin Anderson (CAH) asked Steirn to maybe forward that research on to Vice [Chancellor] Denley in regard to our textbooks as well, because if things that are free don't have value to our students that might make some sense to him.

Marshall Ransom (COSM) wondered how it worked that a tree is cut down to free up space for parking, but two new trees are planted and magically there is still space for parking. He asked what types of new trees and where they would be planted.

Pirro said that information wasn't provided, but in the RFI he had asked how long it would take for those trees to develop the same shade because he thought shade is what motivates people to walk and bike on campus, and these new trees would likely be immature.

Robert Costomiris (CAH) commented re: the tendency here to not use the resources that the university itself provides, that the parking decisions seem to be made without consulting any environmentalists who work on campus, like at the Center for Sustainability, about issues such as runoff. He noted that they can decide to cut down all the trees in a parking lot, and we find out about it five days before it happens rather than six months before. He also commented that they have a plan to destroy, but the plan to replant is vague and not finalized. He thought the planning system needed oversight.

6. Unfinished Business

None

7. New Business

None

8. Announcements: Vice Presidents

None

9. Announcements from the Floor

Dustin Anderson (CAH, Senate President-Elect) noted the presence of Armstrong faculty member Chris Cartwright and asked him to let those on the Savannah campus know that for the September Faculty Senate meeting, which will be a combined meeting of both campuses taking place on the Statesboro campus, VP Whitaker's office had arranged for shuttles from the Armstrong campus here for those members who want to take those. Anderson would send out more information towards the end of summer. He also noted that the parking folks had some options for faculty members commuting back and forth for Senate business.

Fred Smith (LIB) asked whether the promised new AV system for broadcasting and recording Senate meetings was actually in the works.

Anderson said there had been a number of new installations at the Armstrong campus for telecommunications, that Mr. Stalnaker's office had set aside resources for the system, and there was a plan in place for cross-campus meetings. More information would be forthcoming towards the end of the summer about the ways in which the Senate and standing Senate committees will utilize that technology to make sure that meetings are as efficient as possible, but also still in the spirit of a face-to-face in-person meeting.

Provost Cone said she had talked with CIO Stalnaker and Ashlea Anderson, who would, after this present meeting, "be overseeing the technology . . . to make sure that our microphones work, our tapes work, and we have what we need to make sure that we can conduct this in moving forward next year."

Ming Fang He (COE) noted she would be rotating off Senate and wanted to thank Senators past and present for all their work to better the university. Referring to the textbook issue, she urged Senators to keep a careful eye on threats to academic freedom.

10. Adjournment

Moved and Approved.

Submitted by Marc Cyr, Senate Secretary