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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern University

Faculty Senate “Assembly”

April 29, 2020 | 3:15-5:15pm
Zoom Meeting

Executive Summary:

Due to restrictions caused by Covid19, the April 2020 Senate Meeting took the form of an ‘Assembly’ using Zoom as the platform. The purpose of this meeting was to move forward important curricular issues.

Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. The Senate accepted the minutes of the March 11th, 2020 Senate meeting. The Librarian’s Report was approved. This report entailed a vote on ten items, all of which passed without discussion. Reports from the General Education Core Curriculum Committee, the Undergraduate Committee, and the Graduate Committee also passed.

The Senate brought forward one Request for Information on Improvements to Customer Service of Office on Research. There was no discussion of this RFI. The Senate agenda also included one Motion, which has been postponed until the August 20, 2020 Senate meeting.

President Marrero reported on the university’s successful transition to online learning as a result of Covid19. He noted ways that the university is supporting students, faculty, and the community during this difficult time. Dr. Marrero also addressed tentative plans for reopening the university, options for graduation, budget constraints, good news about enrollment, and options for reopening the university in the fall. He emphasized the university’s pillars and adherence to those values as we move forward.

Dr. Reiber then addressed the Senate, thanking faculty for their work in transitioning to online learning and in providing support and guidance to students. He explained that attendance verification through Folio will be available this summer. He also addressed core revision, noting that work will continue in the fall, and he announced new programs at GSU that have moved through the BOR.

Following Dr. Marrero’s and Dr. Reiber’s remarks, faculty were able to submit questions to them via Zoom chat. These questions were moderated by Helen Bland and Trish Holt.

The meeting concluding with remarks from Helen Bland. She thanked Senators for their service, and she thanked Dr. Marrero and Dr. Reiber for their leadership.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes

Officers in Attendance: Helen Bland (President) Trish Holt (President Elect) Carol Jamison (Secretary) Michelle Haberland (Librarian) Dustin Anderson (Past-President and Parliamentarian)

Senators in Attendance: Leticia McGrath (CAH) Robert Costomiris (CAH) Jennifer Kowalewski (CAH) Suazo (CAH Jorge) James Todesca (CAH) Chris Cartright (CAH) Tony Morris (CAH) Jack Simmons (CAH) Amanda Konkle (CAH) Lisa Abbott (CAH) Finbarr Curtis (CAH) Solomon K. Smith (CAH) Grant Gearhart (CAH) Heidi Altman (CBSS) Christopher Brown (CBSS) Kevin Jennings (CBSS) Nick Holtzman (CBSS) P. Cary Christian (CBSS) Addie Martindale (CBSS) Nancy McCarley (CBSS) Pidi Zhang (CBSS) Barbara King (CBSS) Delores Liston (COE) Nedra Cossa (COE) Fayth Parks (COE) Daniel Chapman (COE) Lucas Jensen (COE) Nancy Remler (COE) Ionut Emil Iacob (COSM) Justin Montemarano (COSM) Hans-Joerg Schanz (COSM) Sungkon Chang (COSM) Traci Ness (COSM) Donna Mullenax (COSM) Jennifer Zettler (COSM) Andrew Hansen (JPHCPH) Dzyiana Nazaruk Senator (JPHCPH) Barbara Ross (Liberty) Jessica Garner (LIB) Kristi Smith (LIB) Lori Gwinnett (LIB) Mark Hanna (PCB) Stephanie Sipe (PCB) Lowell Mooney (PCB) Bill Wells (PCB) Maliece Whatley (PCB) David Calamas (PCEC) Cheryl Aasheim (PCEC) Rami Haddad (PCEC) Chris Kadlec (PCEC) Anoop Desai (PCEC) Hayden Wimmer (PCEC) Jim Harris (PCEC) Wayne Johnson (PCEC) Li Li (WCHP) Marian Tabi (WCHP) Christy Moore (WCHP) TimMarie Williams (WCHP) Jan Bradshaw (WCHP) Chris Hanna (WCHP) Yi Lin (COSM) Jeffery Secrest (COSM) Marshall Ransom (COSM)

Senators Not in Attendance: Richard Flynn (CAH) Cathy MacGowan (COSM) Jake Simons (PCB) Gina Crabb (WCHP) Bill Yang (PCB) Susan Hendrex (WCHP) Jeffery Riley (CAH) Linda Ann McCall (COE) Abid Shaikh (COSM) Shijun Zheng (COSM) Chuck Harter (PCB) Katrina Embrey (WCHP)

Administrators in Attendance: Dr. Kyle Marrero (President), Dr. Carl Reiber (Provost)

I. CALL TO ORDER: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) called the meeting to order at 4:01. She began by reviewing the Zoom webinar format and explaining the parameters to participants. If we must resume Zoom meetings in the fall, the format will change to accommodate a larger capacity of active participants. She requested Senators to send feedback either to her or Trish Holt (COE) on today's meeting to help prepare for the fall semester.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) announced the agenda. There was no approval for this meeting as the purpose is to handle curricular matters.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) made the motion on behalf of Carol Jamison (CAH), Senate Secretary, to approve the minutes from the March 11th meeting. The motion was seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

IV. LIBRARIAN'S REPORT: Michelle Haberland (CAH), Senate Librarian, made a motion for approval of the Librarian's Report. The motion was seconded. There was no discussion. This report required a total of ten votes, nine on curriculum, all of which passed. The votes are as follows:

Graduate Committee General Education Curriculum Report: 2/21/2020, 3/13/2020, 4/10/2020

Undergraduate Committee Curriculum: 2/18/2020, 3/10/2020, 4/7/2020, 4/14/2020

Graduate Committee Curriculum: 3/12/2020, 4/9/2020, 4/16/2020

- A. General Education and Core Curriculum Committee: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) reported on behalf of Finbarr Curtis (CAH). At the April meeting, Core assessment reports were the main business of this committee. They reviewed 97 core assessment reports. Apart from a few changes, there are no new classes added or changed to the core structure pending core revisions. More discussions and town hall meetings will begin in the fall as we learn more about the new core and work on core design. The report serves as a motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.
- B. Undergraduate Committee: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) reported on behalf of Joanne Chopak-Foss (JPHCOPH). The Undergraduate Committee met in February and approved all items. In the March meeting, all items were approved except for one which needed additional vetting. In addition, the committee addressed a list of courses needing revision for CIM. They met twice in April to work with course revisions. The April 7 meeting including approval of catalog changes. All items were approved at both meetings. The report serves as a motion. There was no discussion about this report. The motion passed.
- C. Graduate Committee: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) reported on behalf of Jennifer Kowalewski (CAH). During the March meeting, the registrar's office discussed CIM templates and approved changes for the 2020-21. All Graduate Program SLOs were evaluated and ensured that they were in CIM for accreditation purposes. The report serves as a motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

V. SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT NEW BUSINESS

Request for Information – April 2020 (Pages 13-15)

- a. RFI on Improvements to Customer Service of Office on Research – Audit from Spring 2020 (Bland, JPH COPH) Pages
Response: Dr. Chris Curtis, April 20, 2020

Question: As an R2 institution, there is a higher expectation for faculty to seek external funding. However, the lack of support for this process is causing frustration among faculty. In January, an external firm was contracted to review processes and make recommendations to improve the external grant process. During sessions with faculty, we were informed that the report would be completed in 2-3 months. Faculty in focus groups and serving in this report all shared similar frustrations. Faculty are optimistic that recommendations will be implemented to improve the grant process. With that stated, we have 2 specific questions: When will faculty see this report (transparency)? What is the timeline for any recommendations be implemented?

Rationale: Due to the current status of the pandemic, faculty don't want to lose sight of re-igniting our research, external funding opportunities are still being released, and research collaborations are still being developed. Transparency on the process on what changes, if any, are to be implemented are appreciated and will allow faculty to be aware of any changes to procedures that are implemented. Maintaining research and writing for external funding, while rising to the challenge of higher course enrollment and increased loads can be challenging for all faculty (new and experienced), especially in this current environment. Now more than ever we need timely information in order to continue to conduct our scholarship.

Discussion: There was no discussion of this RFI. Response is available in Sharepoint. Any questions should be directed to Christopher Curtis (Director, IR).

Motion – March 2020 –This motion was moved to the August 20, 2020 meeting.

A. MOTION on Change the Wait Rime for Waitlist to 24 Hours (Mullenax, COSM)
Pages 16-18

Rationale: Students that are on a waitlist have 12 hours to respond to an opening in a class before losing their position on the waitlist. This seems unrealistic and can potentially hurt student success. Many of our students work off campus and/or have families. 1) Not every student is attached to the University through email 24/7. Faculty are not expected to be, so why do we expect students. 2) Additionally, students that work 12 hour shifts (medical, military, etc.) can easily miss the opportunity because they are working. We should not expect them to check their GSU email right before reporting to work and then right after work. 3) If a student has a question about the respective course or other changes that adding this course may cause, who will respond to their questions within 12 hours, especially in the evening or during the weekend? 4) For students that are involved in activities such as athletics, drama, etc, 12 hours could be while they are on the road, training, etc. A more realistic time would be 24 hours during regular business days. So if an opening occurs at 7:48 PM on a Friday, the student has until 7:48 PM on Monday at the minimum to respond.

Response: The response to this motion is available on Sharepoint.

VI. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Dr. Kyle Marrero, President

President Marrero greeted the faculty and acknowledged the unusual circumstances and workload imposed by our move to online learning. He began by thanking the faculty for making this transition so effectively. Enrollment updates show that students are wanting to engage in summer online learning. He thanked all of our partners, from IT to the Library, who have helped us engage with our students and who have worked diligently to answer our questions. The university moved students out of housing quickly and efficiently. We have about 178 students still in housing on our campuses. Dr. Marrero stated that we will provide them with essentials. Additionally, we have helped the community during this time of crisis by supplying ventilators from our nursing program and also by making three-dimensional face shields. We have been on the front lines. On the Armstrong campus, Second Harvest will host a food pantry. Food pantries for students and the community are available on both campuses.

Dr. Marrero reviewed the university’s response to state orders regarding Covid19. The governor’s orders came through first as shelter in place, and the public health emergency continues to May 13th. Although Phase One of reopening at the state level began last week, nothing changes where we are currently at the university. We will slowly work through a reopening and will provide guidelines and communications in the coming weeks that follow public health guidelines.

Dr. Marrero reported that summer enrollment is doing well. As of today, we are only running 1.66% down compared to last year. We require about 600 additional students to make this summer’s enrollment equal to last year’s. Credit hours are up compared to this time last year. The university has lowered base tuition and reduced fees.

He then addressed the CARES Act Emergency Grant Aid for students, recently passed by the Federal Government recently. This act includes emergency grant funding for our students who find themselves facing financial hardships as a result of Covid19. GSU received 22.7 million dollars as a result of this grant. Half of that goes directly to student emergency aid. We will work in a phase approach to implement these funds. A document will be shared to campus and students. The other 50% of this money remains undetermined, but Dr. Marrero hopes it can be used to pay ourselves back for student reimbursement. Additionally, the federal government may give direct aid to education. We have been able to keep student workers employed. The University refunded 44% of housing and dining to students who moved out, and also refunded fees.

Dr. Marrero spoke about virtual commencement, May 8 and 9. Each college will have a ceremony that can be watched live and will also be recorded. Each ceremony will have guests. The tentative date for a face-to-face graduation is July 24th for the Armstrong campus in the Savannah Convention Center, and for Statesboro, multiple ceremonies will be held in Tanners Field House on July 25th. This plan is tentative and will depend on social distancing. Final decisions will be made in May. If these face-to-face ceremonies cannot happen, students will be permitted to walk in December. Students will have all of the options we can offer.

The president then discussed plans for fall reopening of the university. He stated that we are focusing first on faculty and staff returning to campus. Safety is the utmost concern. Details will be worked out over the summer. The charge from the Chancellor is to find ways to reopen safely. If we open as fully face-to-face, we will have contact tracing, screening, and testing. Contingency two is to open with social distancing, also with screening and testing in place. Contingency three will be to continue online. Contingency four is that we toggle back and forth between face-to-face and online. A draft of our plan will be ready by May 25th and shared across campuses.

The next topic discussed was the budget. Dr. Marrero referred faculty to his recent email on this issue and reiterated that we currently have no definitive answers regarding budget. The legislative session reconvenes on June 11th, tentatively. We still have our list of priorities, but we are holding a pot of money so we can follow through as needed. FY21 will show a budget reduction. We don't know what this will look like. As the budget moves forward, Dr. Marrero assured Senators that the university will stick to our values, which are the people of this institution. We will be open and transparent as we go forward. Currently, there is no new budgetary information.

Dr. Marrero shared good news about enrollment. We are now able to admit more students because SAT / ACT scores were suspended. However, this doesn't mean that these students will actually enroll. He is looking at SOAR numbers, which look great, and housing reservations are in good shape. Dr. Marrero believes that we will have a strong freshman class in the fall.

VII. PROVOST'S REPORT – Dr. Carl Reiber (Provost, VPAA)

Dr. Reiber expressed his gratitude to faculty, staff, and students for successfully transitioning to online learning. The university was able to get devices to students and faculty who were in need. He stated that money will be prioritized to ensure that faculty have devices that they can use at home. The daily metrics on Folio showed the work faculty engaged in during this transition. Over 4,500 courses had to be shifted to online on various platforms. The university has also had fewer withdrawals this spring compared to last spring, indicating that students stayed engaged even with the extended deadline to withdraw. Dr. Reiber thanked faculty in advance for giving Incompletes to students who may need them.

He noted that both faculty and students had competition for bandwidth and time when working and learning from their homes. He has been monitoring social media and noted that student concerns were addressed. He then spoke about the move to summer as fully online. The university is working with faculty whose courses

were originally face-to-face. Shortly, a web page with modules for faculty who want assistance with online learning will be available. All newly-hired faculty will have mandatory training and must complete these modules. We want to ensure that they are comfortable with our Folio platform. Other faculty are not mandated to go through them, but it is recommended. All faculty are asked to be prepared for Folio learning.

Attendance verification this summer will be in the form of a quiz that is populated in Folio, so faculty will not have the burden of contacting students who have not attended their courses. We may do the same in the fall, but the format may change in the fall depending on how we are able to open. We will be conscious of the health and safety of our students and continue to be accommodating. He asked that senators please send emails with any questions to him as we work through these issues. Nursing will have to have some face-to-face work in small groups with safety precautions. Internships will be determined based on the safety of the situation. We cannot prevent students from graduating because of internship issues, so we will have to find ways to work with them. CTE will help faculty with online learning. The university has waived the online certification requirement through next spring.

Core revision will be addressed in the fall as we learn more from the system. Five new degrees were sent to the system from GSU. Three of these will be reviews at next BOR meeting. Two were to be pushed to August simply because of the number we had submitted.

Questions: Posted on Live Chat Feature of Zoom, Moderated by Trish Holt (COE) and Helen Bland (JPHCOPH)

Question: Will all campuses follow same model as we reopen?

Answer from Carl Reiber (Provost): This is the plan but it may change depending on uptick in virus cases in particular areas.

Question: What should we do about hiring interns for summer and fall?

Answer from Carl Reiber (Provost): We will move forward with those who have been hired. All grant-funded graduate and undergraduate internships will continue. We will have to look at individual department budgets as we move forward. If money was promised to students, we need to maintain that promise. Going into the fall, we will have budget reduction. Students are part of the core mission, and we will try to help them, but we don't yet have a budget.

Question: What role will 2020 course evaluations play? Will Covid19 affect these decisions?

Answer from Dr. Reiber (Provost): The USG says that every course above a certain enrollment number must have an evaluation. One semester evaluation should not make or break a faculty member. The spring evaluations should 'have a big asterisk.' We conducted evaluations because the feedback can be beneficial. Chairs must consider evaluations within a broader context, but we do need to see how our students are viewing our courses. We may get helpful suggestions if we are new to online teaching.

Question: Will faculty have any input in decision-making regarding budget cuts?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President): We will communicate with faculty at all levels, and we will follow shared governance. No decisions will be made until June or July when the

budget comes through.

Question: Is USG considering early retirement incentives?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President): This has not been discussed.

Question: Will there be a change to our strategic plan priorities due to Covid19?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President): The University's pillars will not change; our values will not change. However, as we look to a new normal, we will certainly need to adapt to a new environment. For instance, tele-counseling and telemedicine seem to be working, whereas we did not previously prioritize either. We are finding new ways to communicate, hire, and assign workloads. The university has been forced to looking into new ways to operate, and we will take this to future. We may adapt but will not change the values inherent in our strategic plan.

Question: Will furloughs be a possibility?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President): Dr. Marrero stated that the administration is trying not to get there, but there may be no other way if numbers fall. If we have to go that direction based on budget reduction for FY21, we will do so openly and with transparency. We want to protect our people. If a furlough were to occur, it would be a directive from the university system, a mandate, and not a decision of the president.

Question: Travel ability at present is diminished. We are experiencing hiring freezes, teaching overloads, and other challenges. However, our research requirements have not been reduced. Could these challenges be factored in so we can rise to challenge of increased teaching?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President) and Dr. Reiber (Provost): Dr. Marrero stated that yes, we have to change the criteria of what equates success if we have to change our modes of delivery. Dr. Reiber added that we passed a workload policy last year that now allows faculty to negotiate workload with their department chair. Workload can be codified on the record and toggled on and off year by year as needed.

Question: Current vacancies are being examined for budget reasons. Does this mean no new lines or current job searches will move forward?

Answer from Dr. Marrero (President) and Dr. Reiber (Provost): Dr. Marrero stated that the University is in a critical hiring phase and has been since December. As we look at end of year and budget reduction, we will look critically at positions and hold vacancies as needed during the budget reduction phase. We are not in a 'hiring freeze' but 'it's really cold.' We will move forward where we can. Dr. Reiber added that every position requested by deans was sent back with the request to be reexamine. He will go with what deans and search committees determine. The hiring process will slow this down until we know what the budget will be like. Dr. Marrero followed up by reiterating that changes are happening very rapidly right now because of Covid19, so be aware that sudden changes may happen.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Helen Bland (JPHCOPH) thanked the senators and alternates, noting that it was an unprecedented year. This is the highest service opportunity at the university level. She will be mailing back name plates to those whose terms have ended as a memento. She thanked Dr. Marrero and Dr. Reiber for their positive, effective leadership through a challenging time.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30.

**Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Carol Jamison, CAH (Senate Secretary)**

