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Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of March 10, 2022, Meeting

Members Present:

Christian Griggs (Senate President), Karren Bennett, Jacqueline Boals, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Molly Zhou (proxy for Omin Chandler), Cindy Davis, Cecile de Rocher, Carl Gabrini, Tom Gonzalez, Matt Hipps, Michael Hilgemann, Calley Hornbuckle, Elizabeth Hubbs, Mike Joseph, Clint Kinhead, Jon Littlefield, Luke Manget, Nancy Mason, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Travis McKie-Voerste, Hussein Mohamed, Jennifer Parker, Jennifer Randall, Tammy Rice, Patrick Ryle, Sharlonne Smith, Laura Tolliver, Caleb Watkins, Xinghai Zhao, Margaret Venable (*ex officio*), Bruno Hicks (*ex officio*), Jodi Johnson (guest), Nick Gewecke (guest), Barbara Tucker (guest), Mike D'Itri (guest), Stacie Kilgore (guest), Tammy Byron (guest), Vallarie Pratt (guest), Mary Nielsen (guest), Lori McCarty (guest), Marilyn Helms (guest), Forrest Blackburn (guest), Chuck Fink (guest), Heather Brumlow (guest), Gina Kertulis-Tartar (guest), Marina Smitherman (guest)

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Senate was convened remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty Senate President Christian Griggs called the meeting to order at 3:15pm and established that a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes from Last Senate Meeting (February 10, 2022)

Christian asked for approval of the minutes of the February 10, 2022, meeting; Carl Gabrini made the motion, and it was seconded by Hussein Mohamed. The motion was passed via online vote.

III. Reports from Officers

a. General Update from Christian Griggs

Christian wanted to talk briefly about what is going on with the legislature. He's kept in touch with Vallerie Pratt who has kept him and Hussein Mohamed (President-Elect) informed of what's happening. There's still a lot up in the air, but a couple of "divisive concept" bills were recently approved by both Houses. They have stripped the language that applied to higher education, which is good, because these bills are going to restrict what is able to be taught—certain divisive topics. Christian encouraged everyone to stay informed by checking the news about other things forthcoming from the legislature. For a bit of good news, the legislature has all but done the final approval for a \$5000 pay increase for all state employees for this academic year. We should see this reflected in upcoming paychecks. There are more steps involved in getting a \$5000 increase for next academic year as that would come from next year's budget.

IV. Reports from Committees

- a. Academic Conduct Committee. Nothing to report.
- b. Academic Programs Committee. Nothing to report.
- c. Assessment Committee. Nothing to report.
- d. Faculty Development Committee. Nothing to report.
- e. Faculty Evaluation Committee. Molly Zhou, as proxy for Omin Chandler, reported that since January, the committee has been meeting frequently to address USG initiatives on guidelines about the new annual evaluation policies. Their last meeting was on March 4th, and they looked at annual evaluations, the rubrics for the 5 areas that will now be evaluated for tenure-track positions. Discussions about the new area of Student Success is in progress as well, but they don't have a rubric for that yet. They are working on rubrics for professional development, service, and scholarly creativity. They are also drafting an overall annual evaluation rubric and performance remediation plans, as well as due process as related to annual evaluations. The committee is meeting again on March 21 and they will take a closer look at these rubrics.

Christian asked if the committee is trying to conclude this academic year, or will this work go into the next academic year? Molly responded that there are several due dates including in April, August, and September, so the work will likely continue into the fall, and that approval of these rubrics and policies is likely to come by December 2022.

- f. Faculty Resource Committee. Jennifer Randall reported that the committee is working with Melissa Whitesell on survey questions for the Faculty Resource survey, and they are hoping to get that out by mid-April.
- g. Faculty Welfare Committee. Nothing to report.
- h. Strategic Planning Monitoring Committee. Luke Manget reported that the committee has been working on the progress report for the action plans for the 2020-21 strategic plan, and that Nick Gewecke has completed the progress report.
- i. Student Success Committee. Nothing to report.
- j. Tenure and Promotion Committee. Nothing to report.
- k. Ad hoc Calendar Committee. Christian Griggs reported that he met with Jodi Johnson to discuss issues that have been brought up regarding the calendar. His goal is to meet with the committee after spring break to figure out the next steps, and he is hoping to have resolutions to pass in April's meeting.
- l. Ad hoc Student Success Activities Committee
Matt Higgs reported that the committee is voting on a definition of student success, and they are hoping to have that completed in the next week or so.

V. New Business

a. Presentation on the QEP—Barbara Tucker

Barbara was joined by Forrest Blackbourn who will be taking over as Director of QEP starting next academic year. She stressed that constituents and stakeholders should stay informed about the QEP process. She shared PowerPoint slides and walked through the why, what, and how of the QEP. The slides are attached, and if anyone is interested in learning more about what the QEP committee is doing, they are welcome to talk to Barbara or any of the other committee members. The QEP Planning Committee firmly

believes this work will address issues with student engagement and success many of us have been facing over the past two years.

b. Status of Student Success Committee

Christian recently learned we have four different committees on campus that are largely doing the same work for student success. This includes our own Senate committee (the Student Success Committee), the QEP Committee, a committee under the Strategic Enrollment Plan, and the Committee for Student Transitions. There is a lot of overlap on the work of these committees and even the membership of the committees. Therefore, it has been suggested that the Faculty Senate Student Success committee may be somewhat redundant. There are faculty representatives on the other committees that are engaged in the work of student success. The other issue is that the purpose of our Student Success Committee, when it was formed about 5 years ago, was not to approach student success from a holistic perspective, but rather to coordinate Senate support for the Office of Advising, the CETL, the Committee on International Education, and the Committee for Student Transitions. From what Christian understands, the Senate Student Success Committee has never functioned as a support for these programs as intended when it was created. The committee has certainly done some good work, but not in the context of its intended purpose. Thus, we need to address this discrepancy.

Carl Gabrini made a motion to revise the student success committee, and it was seconded by Pat Ryle. Matt Higgs mentioned that if there is another way to oversee support for the Office of Advising, CETL, the Committee on International Education, and the Committee for Student Transitions in a different way, then this committee would not be needed. Carl admitted that some of the tasks the committee completed were probably not in the purview of the committee, and Christian mentioned that another option would be to get rid of the committee as one of the standing committees of the Senate (which would require Dr. Venable's approval). This would help streamline the work of student success on campus by reducing the number of committees that focus on it and also reduce the number of Senate committees that we manage. The other

option would be to completely revamp the committee, including its membership, purpose, and duties. This would make it into a rather generic Student Success Committee. Christian's concern with this option is that the Faculty Senate does not have any authority over students specifically. That is why the committee was created as it now stands, to coordinate work with other committees that are involved with student success.

Carl offered that between now and the next faculty meeting, the committee could take a look at other schools and what they've done and see if we should make amendments to the committee or abolish it. Carl then removed his original motion and made a motion to send this issue back to the committee for consideration; it was seconded by Matt Hips and approved via electronic poll.

c. Resolution on Course Release for Faculty Senate President

Christian stated that many schools offer a course release for the Faculty Senate president because of the time commitment and extent of duties it involves, but we do not at Dalton State. Matt Hips mentioned that it's probably 70% or more of institutions that offer a course release. The resolution on a course release for the Faculty Senate President (attached) was presented to the Senate, and Tom Gonzalez made a motion to approve the resolution. It was seconded by Mike Joseph and approved via electronic poll. Christian mentioned that we will follow the guidelines outline in the bylaws and send this resolution to the full faculty and to Dr. Venable for a response. If approved, changes will be made to the bylaws by the end of the semester.

d. New Syllabus Statements from Faculty Resource Committee – Jennifer Randall

Jennifer Randall reminded the Senate that we have a new Virtual Reality lab, and it was suggested that we add policies regarding use of this lab in our syllabi so that it is more widely advertised to students. The same suggestion was made for adding the laptop checkout policy as well as information about software and technology students have access to because they are not always aware they have access to things like Microsoft Word and Adobe. A motion was made by Carl Gabrini and seconded by Nancy Mason.

Hussein Mohamed mentioned that some students have expressed concern about the computers not working properly, so we might want to check with the library about updates and making sure all laptops/computers are up-to-date.

Jon Littlefield asked whether we are talking about putting this in the centralized syllabus on the college's website that instructors then link to in their courses, and Christian affirmed that was correct. Jon then asked if there is a more effective way to communicate this information because the more information we add to the syllabus, the less effective it becomes.

Carl Gabrini mentioned that in the School of Business, they are working on putting information about technology access on their webpage as another avenue for students to find this information.

Christian acknowledged Jon's concern about putting too many statements in the syllabus, but he also noted that we can highlight these benefits to students by pointing them to the links/information on the first day of class.

The motion was approved via electronic poll, so Jennifer will contact Academic Affairs to get these policies included in the online syllabus statements that we can link to in our GeorgiaVIEW course pages for students.

VI. Announcements

- a. Next Faculty Senate meeting on Thursday, April 14 at 3:15pm

This will be an important meeting, as we will be discussing resolutions and changes to bylaws that were brought up during today's meeting. We will also be voting for the next executive committee during the meeting.

- b. Nominations for 2022-2024 Executive Committee will begin on Wednesday, March 23 and will remain open until Wednesday, April 6

Self-nominations are welcome and encouraged. You are also welcome to contact the current members of the Executive Committee if you have questions about a position.

President: Christian Griggs; President-Elect: Hussein Mohamed; Secretary: Alicia Briganti; Parliamentarian: Travis McKie-Voerste; and Webmaster: Amy Burger

- c. Bold Talks 2022: Transforming Student Success Boldly” – March 25, 2022
- d. Other announcements.

Matt Hipps notified the Faculty Senate that the USG Faculty Council have met a couple of times this semester and are meeting again tomorrow. There is a lot going on between the new bills mentioned earlier and the election of new USG Chancellor. He has a phone call with the new Chancellor Perdue in early April. Also, there is an annual meeting where the Council meets with various folks in USG administration and that is coming up; Matt will update us with the date once it is known. Matt urged faculty to be mindful of the ways in which we communicate our concerns. It can be quite challenging when the only conversations USG is having with faculty are when faculty are arguing with them. Matt emphasized that faculty are being heard by the Council, and they are working diligently on faculty's behalf.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Briganti
Senate Secretary