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Minutes of November 16, 2017 Meeting

Dalton State Faculty Senate

Members present: [Senate President] Sarah Mergel; [Education] Jacqueline Mesco (proxy), Andrea Ridley; [Health Professions] Cheryl Grayson, Gene Powers, Gail Ward; [Liberal Arts] Tammy Byron, Jenny Crisp, Cecile De Rocher, Christian Griggs, John Gullledge (proxy) Baogang

Guo, Kent Harrelson, Matt Hipps, Cathy Hunsicker, Travis McKie-Voerste, Sarah Min, Lydia Postell, Tami Tomasello [Library] Barbara Jones (proxy); [Science, Technology, and Math] Nick Gewecke, Jean Johnson, April Kay (proxy), Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Gene Mesco, Vince Postell, Chris Wozny; [Provost] Pat Chute

Guests present: Laura Alton, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Michael Hoff, Brian Lucas, Houston Lynn, Mary Nielsen, Barbara Tucker

Call to order and approval of minutes

Senate president Sarah Mergel called the meeting to order at 3:21 and established that a quorum was present. Ben Laughter moved to approve the minutes of the October 26 meeting; the motion was seconded and approved.

Honors Committee report

Dr. Barbara Tucker thanked the members of the committee for their work. She said that the committee has worked toward the creation of an honors program at the request of Dr. Venable, who is looking to appeal to high-achieving students. Barbara said that this will not be a reboot of the 2006 program; Dalton State is now a different institution, with different demographics.

The committee has conducted research on honors programs at other institutions and has surveyed over 900 students at Dalton State (please see the appendix for the informational handout provided by Dr. Tucker). Barbara emphasized the importance of the study abroad/ "away" component; it would constitute the program's main cost. She said that a goal would be to have the honors program funded independently by a donor, whose name would be attached to the program.

Michael Hoff asked for clarification of the numbers in the handout; Barbara said that 213 of the 900+ respondents expressed interest in participating in an honors program. Travis McKie-Voerste asked about the scale used on the survey. Barbara said that the response options were "yes," "no," and "maybe"; the figure of 213 was based on "yes" responses.

Dr. Chute stated that David Elrod was informed of the honors program and it was suggested that if the foundation supported the program that the students could be known as Dalton State Foundation Fellows. He was not averse to the idea but it will require more discussion and investigation regarding funding.

John Gullede asked whether the committee had discussed program content; Barbara said that they had not and that the question of content would be decided later. Gene Mesco asked whether Dr. Venable could waive the existing procedures and funding requirements to get the program started; Barbara said that she could and added that the college would want to encourage diversity among the honors students. Dr. Chute mentioned the possibility of setting up learning communities in the student residences.

Academic Calendar

Sarah Mergel stated that the system of asking faculty to vote on the calendar options was a new procedure this year. Annabelle McKie-Voerste said that Dr. Venable chooses who sets the academic calendar and who has input. Dr. Chute said that the survey gives faculty input into the calendar. Matt Higgs asked whether the options on the survey were generated by Jodi Johnson; Dr. Chute said that they were.

Annabelle said that a calendar problem in the past has been early grades for finals. She asked why the college doesn't print diplomas for all students who are scheduled to graduate and then pull those who don't pass the required classes. Dr. Chute said that she would follow up on the necessity for early grades for graduating students. Discussion followed.

Dr. Chute asked that anyone with a suggestion on handling final grades for graduating seniors email them to her. Ben Laughter mentioned that there had been some anger over this semester's fall break, which fell on a Thursday and Friday and effectively gave some people no break at all.

Committee reports

Faculty Development

Christian Griggs said that the committee is working toward a year-end showcase for presentations by faculty; there would be no conference fee but no keynote speaker either.

Annabelle McKie-Voerste said that she would miss having a keynote speaker and voices from other institutions; she added that when it comes to annual reports, “conference presentation” has a higher value than “showcase presentation.”

Dr. Chute said that the CAE charge this year focused on new faculty as Marina’s release time had been reduced in order to put her back into faculty due to the increased needs for Biology classes. The registration fee for the Teaching and Learning Conference has been mainly to pay for the keynote speaker, along with providing lunch. Annabelle said that in previous years there was a greater variety of breakout sessions at the fall faculty assembly, along with “lunch and learn” sessions during the semester. When the question arose of where and when the showcase would take place, Dr. Chute said that she wanted to spread the event out across campus.

Faculty Evaluation

Matt Hipps said that the committee has made progress on campus-wide agreement on evaluation standards; the committee will meet again after Thanksgiving.

Strategic Plan Monitoring

Jenny Crisp stated that all three Vice-Presidents attended the committee’s meeting and answered questions. There is less money available to implement the physical master plan than had been anticipated when the plan was developed; the campus “spine” is on hold but still planned.

Academic Conduct Committee

Tammy Byron said that the committee met twice; it is making progress and she expects to present results at the next senate meeting.

Dr. Chute added that she expects to update faculty on One USG and the Carl Vinson study, among others, at the next faculty meeting.

Statutes revision

Matt Hipps said that Dr. Venable had asked for open sessions for input on the statutes from staff, students, and faculty. Four town-hall sessions were held between Nov. 13 and Nov. 16. Concerns from students and staff included the lack of a clear definition of institutional governance in Section V, as well as “angst” regarding the faculty approving minutes of the SGA and the Staff Council. There was also concern that the current wording would give faculty control over student fees.

Matt mentioned that under Article V, Part 3, there was a request to change the word “policy” to “academic policy.” Matt felt that this would necessitate adding a statement that faculty will determine what is “academic.” He added that the process under which the proposed statutes were developed was dictated by the administration; the senate and its committees followed this process to the letter. He said that the faculty are being made to be the bad guys, and that the damage to relationships between faculty, staff, and students will take a long time to undo.

Michael Hoff asked whether any staff members were feeding information to students; Matt said that yes, misinformation had been conveyed to students by staff members. Chris Wozny added that the misinformation was never corrected by those who should have spoken on the faculty’s behalf.

Matt said that the senate has to make progress on the statutes; the senate will have to decide whether to take a stand or not. Making the wrong choice now will take a long time to undo. The town hall process has created new problems without curing the old ones.

Houston Lynn, an SGA senator, stated that in his opinion it would be good to have the faculty approve SGA minutes; he will work to convince others. Dr. Chute said that she had attended two of the four town-hall sessions and that Sarah and Matt went through a lot of stress this week caused by misdirected anger. She emphasized the importance of getting the statutes finished.

SGA senator Laura Alton thanked the members of the senate for the work they've done. She said that this has been a difficult time for the SGA.

Dr. Chute said that the email sent to faculty regarding course evaluations had been sent by SmartEvals, not by her, and that she did not endorse the email's suggestion that faculty reward students for completing their course evaluations.

Matt Hipps moved to go into executive session; the motion was seconded and approved at 4:40 pm.

[Executive session](#)

The executive session involved discussion of progress on the statutes, but no motions or other actions. Sarah said that she would be meeting with Dr. Venable and representatives of the staff and students; she wanted to get a sense of the senate's intentions about the statutes. The executive session ended at 5:15.

[Next meeting and adjournment](#)

The date for the January meeting was not set; Sarah will send a poll to see whether the senate prefers to meet in the first or second week in January. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:17.

Appendix: Honors Program information



PROPOSED HONORS PROGRAM

Why?

- It's in the Strategic Plan, 2016-2019
- To attract students with more academic and co-curricular interests/motivations; to serve students at the other end of the high-risk spectrum.
- To incorporate more high-impact practices to trickle down to all students

What It's Not: A reboot of previous honors program; we are a different institution now.

Research:

- Other programs at similar institutions
- Incoming student scores/GPAs
- Interest among students: Almost 900 students were surveyed.
- Issues: MOWR students come in with good scores but already many freshmen credits; incentivizing the program.

	Indicated interest currently and as freshmen	Expect Tuition help	Expect Help with other costs	Expect Field Trips	Expect Under-graduate conferences	Expect Study abroad	Expect Dedicated space	Expect Challenging courses
0-15	107	91	77	59	34	62	63	67
	89	68	48	42	28	46	34	39
36 or more	17	17	12	7	12	13	11	13
Totals	213	176	127	108	74	121	108	119

Recommendations:

- Hire a coordinator/advisor for program in January 2018.
- Select advisory committee with representation from each school and other units.
- Choose first cohort of 15 just-graduated freshmen in Fall 2018; 10 alternates; opportunity to recruit 5 transfer/current students for Spring 2019.
- Recruitment Day by March to encourage applications; first cohort drawn from existing bachelor's degree-seeking applicants.
- Application involve form, essay, two recommendation letters (professional/academic); short list is interviewed.
- Incoming test scores and GPAs not determined yet.
- Students must maintain 3.5, good conduct, attend monthly meetings, be involved in programing.

- Students earn 24 hours of honors courses to achieve status as honors graduate, some of which may be specific courses for them but most of which will be through extra project in the course, contracted with instructor, advisor/advisory committee.
- HNRS 4900 as Honors Colloquium class in senior year.
- Funded field trips and study abroad/travel experience (biggest cost). The main perk of program for students and a requirement of all.

Costs: Potentially about \$100,000 per cohort; first year, about \$15,000.

Future: Program will evolve and adapt. Mandate from Dr. Venable was not to try to do everything the first year.