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Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of April 14, 2022, Meeting

Members Present:

Christian Griggs (Senate President), Karren Bennett, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Omin Chandler, Cindy Davis, Cecile de Rocher, Carl Gabrini, Tom Gonzalez, Matt Hipps, Michael Hilgemann, Calley Hornbuckle, Elizabeth Hubbs, Mike Joseph, Clint Kinkead, Jon Littlefield, Luke Manget, Nancy Mason, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Travis McKie-Voerste, Hussein Mohamed, Jennifer Parker, Jennifer Randall, Tammy Rice, Gregory Smith, Sharlonne Smith, Laura Tolliver, Caleb Watkins, Xinghai Zhao, Bruno Hicks (*ex officio*), Jodi Johnson (guest), Nick Gewecke (guest), Mike D'Itri (guest), Stacie Kilgore (guest), Mary Nielsen (guest), Chuck Fink (guest), Gina Kertulis-Tartar (guest), Manal Abdelsamie (guest), Melissa Whitesell (guest), Jenny Crisp (guest), Catie Clinard (guest), Chris Wozny (guest), Sarita Gale (guest), Shanon Windom (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 (March 10, 2022)

Christian asked for approval of the minutes of the March 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 Committees

- a. Academic Conduct Committee. Nothing to report.

- b. Academic Programs Committee. Bruno Hicks reported that the committee had a good meeting on April 8th with a lot of new proposals. If anyone is interested in seeing what academic changes are being made in various departments on campus, they can refer to the minutes that were distributed via email on April 11th.
- c. Assessment Committee. Nothing to report.
- d. Faculty Development Committee. Nothing to report.
- e. Faculty Evaluation Committee. Omin Chandler reported that the committee met on April 4th. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, they revised the annual evaluation rubrics for Teaching, Research and Scholarship, Professional Growth/Development, and Professional Service to the Institution or Community. In these rubrics, they documented a description of the activities with examples of how to achieve each level. For example, to achieve the “exemplary” level for Teaching, one must achieve teaching evaluations that are above 4.0 with overwhelmingly positive comments, and an example of an activity is developing and teaching a new online or hybrid course for the first time. They have also developed an annual evaluation overall rubric which is based on a point system. For example, to achieve “exemplary” level, one must receive 23-25 points, and to achieve “exceeds expectations,” one must receive 19-22 points. This rubric is currently in the draft phase. The student success rubric is also in the draft phase. However, the committee will discuss and revise the student success rubric, the overall rubric, as well as the drafts for pre- and post-tenure tracks, eligibility requirements, and Portfolios at their next meeting on Monday, April 18, 2022.
- f. Faculty Resource Committee. Jennifer Randall reported that the committee worked on questions for the faculty survey that went out last week. Not many questions changed from last year, so it was mostly the same survey, but they are hoping for good response from faculty.
- g. Faculty Welfare Committee. Nothing to report.
- h. Strategic Planning Monitoring Committee. Luke Manget stated that there is nothing to report as the committee has not met since the last meeting, but they are continuing to figure out how to measure certain standards and are working behind the scenes.

- i. Student Success Committee. Carl Gabrini reminded everyone that last month the Faculty Senate talked about recommending ending this committee. Since then, he has looked at other schools' Faculty Senates to see if any had a committee similar to this one, and the answer is no. Since we already have other committees on campus doing the same work, he recommends disbanding the committee.
- j. Tenure and Promotion Committee. Nothing to report.

IV. New Business

- a. Approval of Student Success Definition and Activities from ad hoc Student Success Activities Committee. Chris Wozny, chair of the ad hoc committee, reported that the committee met several times and were responsible for two main tasks: to propose a definition of student success and to provide representative examples of what can be done for student success (note that this list is not meant to be restrictive or exhaustive). Chris acknowledged that Deb Richardson developed the list and deserves credit for it. Chris also noted that the Strategic Plan already had a definition of student success, but he noticed that it wasn't actually a definition of student success because it just states that student success is when students succeed. Much of the language of the first two mini paragraphs were suggested by Barbara Tucker; the remaining paragraphs are the exact same language from the strategic plan. It doesn't necessarily deal directly with the kinds of things we do as faculty, but if the goal is to help faculty figure out how we support student success and how to report it in evaluations, then those other paragraphs might give faculty some creative ideas as to areas to look in their professional service where we can say we are helping students succeed. A motion to approve by was made by Carl Gabrini, seconded by Nancy Mason, and approved via electronic vote. For clarification, the motion is to send the approved language to the welfare committee to add to the Faculty Evaluation Manual. Christian mentioned that this will ultimately be voted on again by the Faculty Senate and full faculty once it's added to the manual.
- b. Budget Cut Report – Bruno Hicks

In Fall 2021, Academic Affairs was required to make significant budget cuts due to reduced funding from the state, so Christian invited Dr. Hicks to give a report about how those budget cuts were met. Dr. Hicks stated that he is presenting this from an Academic Affairs point of view. To put this in context, the overall campus budget cut was around 1.3 million, and Academic Affairs makes up 63% of that, or around \$800,000. To provide some perspective, between 2020-2021 if we are looking at our head count, we lost about 259 students (220 FTE). Between 2018-2021, head count dropped about 583 students (545 FTE). We get our loss when students don't come because we see a loss in tuition, fees, etc. So then two years later, we have a reduction in our state allocation from the USG based on that amount. By Dr. Hicks's calculation, it comes out to roughly \$6000 per student. For this last cut, they've managed to not have to cut any faculty lines. They've done this by utilizing retirements and resignations and eliminating some lines that were half-time or unfilled. Every time a faculty member leaves, they look into whether DSC can live without that line or if it needs to be replaced. Dr. Hicks thanked the deans, chairs, and the faculty in general because it's a thorough conversation about each position and where is the best place to reinvest the money. They look to make sure they are putting the resources in the right places. Dr. Hicks wanted to again thank faculty because this has had some impact on them, as well as the chairs working with faculty. In some cases, this has meant increasing class sizes and putting more students into the classes or reducing the number of electives that are offered for students. One way to turn this around is through recruitment and retention of students. We've had some success on the recruitment side, and we've seen an increase in our freshman class. Retention from first to second year is around 69% compared to retention from second to third year which is about 49%. Elizabeth Hutchens is working on a team that will work on improving Sophomore to Junior retention. Current head count is 4,535 (3,839 FTE); if we can get that number to start increasing, we wouldn't have to deal with the double jeopardy of loss of revenue and loss of allocation. This is what our goal is.

Jon Littlefield asked Dr. Hicks if he has had a chance to assess the impact on DSC of the USG tuition decrease that was just announced. Dr. Hicks referred to Jodi Johnson, and she stated that if students are taking 5 hours or more, they will pay \$200 less per semester for the special institutional fee. If they are under that (4 hours or less), they are still saving \$100. This is a fee that every student pays, regardless of online or not, so every student benefits from this decrease. Jodi also mentioned that the state has made us whole; they've given us the funding to replace that fee for next year (what they estimate based on this year). Matt Hipps asked that, if the USG is making the college whole this year, what about the loss of revenue in future years? Jodi said they are committed to making us whole at our current head count. If we are successful in growing, for example, 5% next year, she doesn't think the increase will follow. Anyone who has additional questions can contact Dr. Hicks.

c. Resolution on Academic Calendar from ad hoc Calendar Committee

Christian started by thanking the committee who has been working on this since last fall. He also acknowledged that faculty input was very helpful, and Jodi Johnson was helpful in answering questions. Christian then read Resolution which is attached. To clarify the idea behind the 80-minute class schedule, faculty have been complaining for several years about the length of our semester, and there were several comments about it on the faculty poll that was sent out. The only option for shortening the semester is to lengthen class time by 5 minutes. This would require everyone to modify how they teach classes, but some programs would be more affected by this change than others. Pertaining to the part about ending the practice of handing out diplomas at graduation, Christian stated that students tend to oppose stopping this practice. Finally, Christian mentioned that Jodi Johnson has been coming to Faculty Senate for years to get input about the calendar even though it's currently not required. Thus, this part of the resolution is to make it a formal part of the process to get faculty input. For the reading day, we wanted to give it a try and if it doesn't work, we can always have it withdrawn later. Matt Hipps asked if this is a singular resolution such that if we vote one part down does the whole thing get voted down? Christian replied that it is, but we can amend it as

we go through. Carl Gabrini made a motion to approve the calendar resolution, and it was seconded by Matt Higgs. The following is a summary of the discussion that ensued. Mike Joseph mentioned that he teaches math where there are several skills that need to be mastered and content to be covered. It has already been a struggle to get through everything with the length of the current semester, so he does not think this change would benefit students from a learning perspective. He would find it difficult to cut two weeks of class content into 5-minute segments here and there, and students would have to do more work outside of class to make up for lost class time. He would, however, be in favor of having 80-minute class periods over the course of 29 instructional days which would amount to more total time in class but would not feel that way because it would be fewer days of coming to class than what it is currently. Xinghai Zhao asked two questions: is it possible to break this resolution into smaller pieces to vote individually, as that would be better than voting on it as a package? Is there any study that shows that this change to 80-minute classes benefits students, or are we just wanting to shorten the semester for our benefit? It would be better if we had some kind of precedent that this change would benefit students. Christian stated that studies pretty much say that after about 50-60 minutes, it becomes more challenging for students because that's about the maximum amount of time that students can be engaged effectively. From what he's found, though, 75 to 80 minutes didn't make a huge difference.

Tammy Rice acknowledged that she can't speak for all of Health Professors, but there would be unique challenges for social work if we shortened the semester. First, they have to stack classes on two days of the week because students are in the field or clinicals the other days rest of week. Because they already have students who are in classes all day (e.g., 9:30-5:15), it would be challenging to lengthen classes and extend the day even further. The students also have to be in the field for a certain number of hours and a certain number of weeks, so if we change the number of weeks in a semester, it will impact the ability of students to meet field requirements and for students to meet accreditation. Tammy also mentioned that it's a problem for them

there isn't the same number of days for Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday classes. Others from the School of Health Professions and Education voiced agreement on how this change could potentially negatively affect students. Christian said that, after he received an email from Tammy voicing these concerns, he looked up some information and thought it may be possible to submit a substantive change request to the accrediting bodies, but Tammy replied that there are no substantive change requests allowed for the number of hours they have to log. Substantive change means, for example, if they had to do something different during the COVID-19 pandemic or changing something from being hybrid to online.

Annabelle McKie-Voerste made a motion to split the resolution into 4 points so that they can be discussed and voted on separately. The motion was seconded by Carl Gabrini and approved via electronic vote.

Karren Bennett mentioned that the LPN program has a required number of class hours, skills lab time, and clinical time. Currently, the LPN program does not allow substitutions for these times unless clinical time is not allowed by facilities.

Annabelle McKie-Voerste requested that we look at other schools who have shorter semesters to see how they manage these issues brought up by faculty in the School of Health Professions.

Matt Hipps stated that we keep talking as though we're discussing shortening the calendar as if it's not a thing elsewhere; faculty have consistently complained that we start before everyone else and end after everyone else. Is it possible to create an ad hoc committee to explore how this could work? There are other schools who have shorter weeks who are also graduating nursing, social work, and other health profession majors. Christian clarified that these changes would not start until the 2023-2024 academic year, so there would be time to explore whether it could work or not. An ad hoc committee could be a way to go if the resolution gets approved.

Jon Littlefield said that Business faculty were largely favorable to implementing 80-minute classes, and Jennifer Randall said she sent a poll to English faculty and most of them were favorable as well.

On the topic of receiving diplomas at graduation, Mike Joseph stated that it's in our best interest to do what students overwhelmingly support, especially because we have first generation students, and it's a very special moment for him. Christian mentioned that he did a bit of research and could not find any other schools who gave out diplomas at graduation. At all of the schools he looked at, students received their actual diplomas sometime after graduation. Annabelle McKie-Voerste remarked that we actually don't really know what students want because of the low response rate to the student poll. She also pointed out that the poll was not very informative because it didn't explain what a graduation ceremony without diplomas would actually look like, so students don't have a clear picture of that. In addition, she stated that not handing out diplomas would allow students who finish in the summer to walk in the spring rather than waiting a full semester before being allowed to walk.

Matt Hipps made a motion to call the question; it was seconded by Greg Smith and passed via electronic vote. Christian reminded everyone that nothing would be approved right away because the resolution would still need to be reviewed by the full faculty and go to Dr. Venable for a response; thus, we can vote, see what happens, and go from there. All points of the resolution were passed, and the results of the voting are as follows:

Point #1 (implementation of an 80-minute class schedule): 17 ayes, 11 nays

Point #2 (develop plan for graduation without distribution of diplomas): 22 ayes; 3 nays

Point #3 (include Faculty Senate in formal calendar process): 23 ayes; 2 nays

Point #4 (consider faculty preferences for calendar): 25 ayes; 3 nays

d. Update to Faculty Senate Bylaws

Christian Griggs reminded everyone that the updates to the Bylaws were distributed via email. Carl made a motion to approve these updates, and it was seconded by Hussein Mohamed. Matt Hipps asked for clarification of Section 3 (Filling Vacancies). He wanted to know why it was necessary for the Faculty Senate President to appoint a person for an office, rather than conducting an emergency election for a new candidate.

Christian replied that because there was no process in place, this was the process that Executive Committee agreed to use this year. The word appoint was never used, and a vote of the Senate was still conducted. Speed and ease of this process is why it was chosen, but Christian acknowledged that Matt had a valid point.

Jon Littlefield wanted clarification of the last paragraph dealing with a Tenure and Promotion committee member recusing himself from the proceedings (“A committee member whose application for tenure or promotion is being reviewed by the committee must fully recuse himself or herself from the proceedings, having no contact with any member of the committee, either in person or online, while his or her application is being considered.”). Jon stated that the language should be clearer that the recusal is just for that particular discussion and not entire proceeding. A proposal was made to change “proceedings” to “portion of any meeting.” This proposal was accepted as a friendly amendment to the updates, and the motion passed via electronic poll.

e. Election of Officers for new Executive Committee

Before the election took place, Christian announced one change to the ballot as Jenny Crisp withdrew her candidacy as Webmaster in favor of Laura Tolliver. Each candidate then expressed thanks for being nominated, and the voting took place. Those running unopposed were voted into office by a vote of 22 ayes and 2 nays. The vote for Parliamentarian ended in a tie, after which Carl Gabrini volunteered to step aside to allow Tom Gonzalez to become Parliamentarian. The 2022-2024 Faculty Senate Executive Committee is as follows:

- Hussein Mohamed - President
- Jennifer Randall - President-Elect
- Kent Harrelson - Secretary
- Tom Gonzalez - Parliamentarian
- Laura Tolliver - Webmaster

V. Announcements

a. Reminder – No more Senate meetings but Senators serve until the first faculty meeting of Fall 2022, so Senate business may come up over the summer

b. Other announcements?

Matt Hipps notified everyone that he had a conversation with Chancellor Purdue, and he will be meeting again with him and a few others regarding who the new Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be. Matt will share this information with the Senate Executive Committee if he is able.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Briganti
Senate Secretary