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Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of October 10, 2019, Meeting

Members Present:

Matt Hipps (Senate President), Karen Bennett, Donna Blesdoe, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Susan Burran, Cindy Davis, Nick Gewecke, Tom Gonzalez, John Gullede, Bob Haverland, Mike Hilgemann, Calley Hornbuckle (proxy for Lorena Sins), Cathy Hunsicker, Jean Johnson, Ben Laughter, Victor Marshall, Travis McKie-Voerste (also proxy for Annabelle McKie-Voerste), Amy Mendes, Lydia Postell, Tammy Rice, Deb Richardson, Jeff Stanley, Tami Tomasello, Megan Vallowe, Logan Huggins (guest), Lori McCarty (guest), Marina Smitherman (guest)

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Senate president Matt Hipps called the meeting to order at 3:16 pm and established that a quorum was present. He asked for approval of the minutes of the September 12, 2019 meeting. Ben Laughter moved to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. Matt asked everyone to be sure to sign in in order to obtain an accurate record of attendance.

II. Committee Reports

a. Academic Conduct. Travis McKie-Voerste spoke for the committee. He reported that Matt Chenoweth had been elected chair of the committee. For this academic year, the committee wants to focus on making changes to the language in the code of student conduct. A draft of the updated language will be circulated to the Senate prior to a future meeting so it can

be approved. Also, the committee would like to communicate to faculty on how and when to use the Academic Conduct process. Cathy Hunsicker asked if CARE comes under the jurisdiction of this committee. Travis replied that it does not. It is a separate entity.

b. Advising, Academic Excellence, International Education, and Student Transitions. Alicia Briganti spoke for the committee. The committee met and discussed its purpose. They realized that the language in the by-laws including terms like Center and Director were obsolete and need to be updated. Some of the work they feel they need to do will have to wait until there is a new Provost/VPAA, presumably in January.

c. Assessment. Molly Zhou was elected chair of this committee. The committee discussed the scope of the committee's work. They discussed whether student retention is within their purview. They want to work on issues related to course assessment versus program assessment in the WEAVE assessment platform. Their next meeting will focus on reviewing the plan from last year.

d. Faculty Development. This committee has not yet met. Matt Hipps asked them to meet as soon as possible.

e. Faculty Evaluation. Matt Hipps spoke for the committee, which he also chairs. The committee discussed the role of the deans in the evaluation process. Is the role of the dean more formal or informal? Another topic of discussion was the process of setting goals. Do the faculty always have to set the value of the evaluation score at the beginning of the year? Is it possible to revise it up or down at the time of evaluation at the end of the year? Another important point is how chairs evaluate the faculty. Is there a way to train chairs how to consistently evaluate using faculty reports from across campus? Matt acknowledged that there is a concern among faculty that evaluation is not consistent from department to department. Deb Richardson also commented on the problem of determining what constitutes level 2, 3, or 4 commitments. Matt reminded everyone that the individual schools should be working on providing feedback on the evaluation process as it is being experienced by their faculty. The committee also wants to help teach faculty to be their own advocates in the evaluation process.

f. Faculty Resource. Amy Burger reported for the committee, which she also chairs. The committee is working on a survey on technology needs. Also, the committee needs to be involved in creating a process for promotion of librarians. Cathy Hunsicker asked why they need a special procedure. Amy replied that currently there is no procedure.

g. Faculty Welfare. Matt Hipps spoke for the committee. He reported that Annabelle McKie-Voerste had been elected chair of the committee. The first subject the committee discussed was the resolution related to administrative searches. The resolution as it applies to the current search for the new Provost/VPAA is essentially rendered moot because a subcommittee of the Senate will be given a chance to meet with all candidates during the on-campus visits. Lori McCarty will assist in this process. Also, two senators are on the search committee and will keep the Senate informed of how the search is progressing. However, the proposed resolution pertaining to future administrative searches will continue to be revised and will be presented to the Senate in a future Senate meeting, hopefully in November so that the full faculty can vote on it at the December faculty meeting.

The second topic of discussion involved the problem of committees. There are the established faculty Senate committees. There are a number of committees supposedly staffed by the Committee on Committees. Matt Hipps listed some of these committees. Any other committees would be considered *ad hoc* committees for special purposes. Dr. Epps expressed his concern that these committees have no particular end date and may continue operating without any oversight or reporting process. The problem is knowing what committees are really functioning and who is on them. When did they last meet? To whom do they report? Are they doing the same function as established committees and are therefore redundant? Unfortunately, there are many unanswered questions about this problem. Dr. Venable would like a complete list of committees so that some of these issues can be resolved.

The third issue was the problem of the policies and procedures manual. This document has still not been updated to reflect the many changes in the structure of the college, the existence of the Senate, and the changes in the faculty statutes. There are no policies and procedures even though these are referred to in the statutes and Senate by-laws. A subcommittee of the Welfare committee will be working on this problem.

h. Tenure and Promotion. Matt Hipps spoke for this committee. Molly Zhou was elected chair of this committee. The process for submitting a portfolio for promotion and/or tenure was changed in 2018-2019. The committee acknowledged that there is imprecise language in the new policy that will need to be updated. One of the most important changes involves instances when a person applying for tenure or promotion does not submit a complete portfolio. This impacts people applying for tenure most. The committee will work on changing the language. They will want to work with the new VPAA on this as the new person in this position will have to be making important decisions regarding tenure and promotion in the first few months on the job.

i. Committee on Committees. This is not a Senate committee, but it is a vital committee. As mentioned during the report by the Welfare committee, the Senate wants to know who is on this committee and when it meets.

j. Strategic Plan Monitoring. Nick Gewecke, who chairs this committee, reminded the Senate president of this committee. The committee met and discussed that the faculty need a shorter summary document from the full document that would address the topics that specifically impact the faculty. A new strategic plan is in the process of being formulated.

III. Old Business

a. Immediate Past President position. The proposal for a new position of Immediate Past President was introduced at the Sept. 12, 2019 Senate meeting. The immediate past president would be a one-year position, usually filled by the immediate past president. In the event the immediate past president cannot fulfill this role, another past president can take the position. Nick Gewecke and Amy Mendes made friendly amendments to the wording of the proposal. Cathy Hunsicker asked when this position would go into effect. Matt Hipps explained that the full faculty must first approve the proposal after the Senate approves it. That would take place at the December faculty meeting. There was some further discussion to clarify the name and tenure of the position, then the president called for the vote. The proposal was passed by voice vote.

b. Webmaster position. The proposal for a new position of Senate webmaster was introduced at the Sept 12, 2019 Senate meeting. The webmaster would coordinate with the Dalton State webmaster and OCIS to keep the Senate web pages up-to-date. Ben Laughter moved to accept the proposal. Discussion centered on whether the webmaster has to be a member of the Senate. The pool of qualified individuals in the Senate is small. However, Amy Burger, who has the necessary training, has agreed to be the provisional webmaster until the position is approved formally by the full faculty. Travis McKie-Voerste moved to restrict the position to someone in the Senate. This motion passed. The Senate voted on the proposal to create the new position and it was passed by voice vote. The proposal will be sent back to the Welfare committee for modification of the language before it is presented to the full faculty.

c. Online Education Committee. At the Sept 12, 2019 Senate meeting, Travis McKie-Voerste brought up the issue of the Testing Center and its new policies restricting when and how often students in hybrid and online classes can take exams in the Testing Center. Travis again raised the issue and the committee that oversees these policies. The Senate wants to know who is on the committee and to whom they report. Travis moved to make the online education committee a permanent Senate committee. During the discussion, senators questioned whether the Senate has the authority to acquire this committee. There is also a question of who is the chair. Most senators felt we needed to know the answers to these questions. Also, there was discussion about how we would integrate this committee. The president called for the vote and the motion was defeated. Matt Hipps said he would inquire of Barbara Tucker about this committee before the Senate takes any further steps.

IV. New Business

a. Matt Hipps spoke about meetings he has had with Staff Council Chair Katrina Autry and SGA President Ashley Langston. Matt explained how he had communicated the Senate's intention of working with the staff and students on issues of common interest. One example is the Carl Vinson study and how the information that came out of the study will continue to be applied over time. The Senate also wants better communication with SGA.

b. Executive Session. Matt Hipps addressed the issue of executive session. After the Sept 12, 2019 Senate meeting, Matt was made aware that in general executive session is not in accordance with Georgia's Open Meetings law. Matt said that the Board of Regents Ethics Office was notified. Matt apologized for how executive session was handled at the Sept 12, 2019 meeting and expressed his concern that anyone felt that the Senate was trying to exclude people from the discussions. He maintained that discussions that occur within the Senate sometimes need some level of confidentiality. However, this is never from motives of secrecy. Topics the Senate is discussing may need time to evolve, and senators must feel that they can speak freely without ramifications outside the Senate. Matt again stressed that everyone is welcome to come to the Senate meetings.

c. Mary Nielson spoke on behalf of Dr. Epps. There will be a number of meetings in the near future in which Dr. Epps will discuss the establishment of the Dalton State College "signature." Dr. Epps has already met with the college deans. He will meet with the Senate leadership and members of the faculty as well. Also, the professional advisors will be moving into their new location in Roberts Library in November or December. Ben Laughter asked if moving the advisors is a good idea. Some discussion followed. Some senators felt that the relocation of the advisors could be problematic for students and faculty. Others pointed to some research suggesting that a centralized location is better. Matt Hipps suggested that the Senate invite Elizabeth Hutchins or Dr. Epps to speak to the Senate about this issue.

V. Adjournment

The next Senate meeting is scheduled for Nov 14, 2019. The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean M Johnson, Senate secretary