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Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of November 12, 2020, Meeting

Members Present:

Christian Griggs (Senate President), Ali Akdenzi, Karren Bennett, Samantha Blair, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Omin Chandler, Cindy Davis, Cecile de Rocher, Carl Gabrini, Nick Gewecke, Tom Gonzalez, John Gulledge, Mike Hilgemann, Mike Joseph, Clint Kinhead, Victor Marshall, Nancy Mason, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Travis McKie-Voerste, Hussein Mohamed, Jennifer Parker, Jennifer Randall, Pat Ryle, Kristen Weiss Sanders, Sharlonne Smith, Jeff Stanley, Megan Vallowe, Kevin Yan, Margaret Venable (*ex officio*), Bruno Hicks (*ex officio*), Jodi Johnson (guest), Elizabeth Chadwick (guest), Katrina Autry (guest), Mary Nielsen (guest), Lori McCarty (guest), Sarita Gale (guest), Marilyn Helms (guest), Stacie Kilgore (guest), Mike D'Itri (guest), Vallarie Pratt (guest), Melissa Whitesell (guest), Gina Kertulis-Tartar (guest), Jodie Pack (guest), Lorraine Gardiner (guest), Molly Zhou (guest), Susan Eastman (guest), LeAnne (last name not provided, guest),

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting of the Senate was convened remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Senate President Christian Griggs called the meeting to order at 3:15pm and established that a quorum was present. He asked for approval of the minutes of the October 8, 2020, meeting; the motion was passed by electronic poll.

II. Reports from Officers

- a. General information and updates. Christian Griggs, Faculty Senate President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the following reminders:
 - We are following online meeting protocols, including keeping computers muted until called on to speak.
 - Guests would not have access to the chat, but Christian would read any comments made.
 - Guests could use the raise hand feature if needing/wanting to speak.
 - Travis is the Parliamentarian and will help us adhere to parliamentary policy.
 - Christian is working on setting up a class in GeorgiaVIEW for senators to post minutes of committee meetings, and he hopes to have it in place early in the spring semester.

III: Reports from Committees

- a. Academic Conduct. No report for this meeting.
- b. Assessment Committee. Megan Vallowe reported that the committee met the afternoon of November 12; one of their goals was to figure out if program and Weave coordinators across campus were aware of the new assessment manual that the Senate passed at the end of last semester and, if so, what steps were being taken to follow the process. The committee received several bits of feedback and were waiting for feedback from others; most were aware of the policies and had started making changes to align with the manual. The committee also discussed creating training and presentation sessions to clear up some things that became apparent in the feedback survey that had gone out. They also talked about getting a better handle on the committee's role in the SACS re-accreditation process.
- c. Faculty Development Committee. Kristen Sanders reported that the committee has met twice now. One of the things they discussed is that this committee is a 1-year term and currently only has one member who was active last year. Every year it's like restarting from scratch, so they proposed the idea of changing it to a 2-year commitment on a rotating basis. Christian will add that to the agenda for the February meeting. Bold talks

in March were canceled because of Covid-19, so the committee plans to hold a virtual Bold Talks in the spring on Friday, February 26th from 9:00am-12:00pm. The main topic is Student Engagement, and they are adding a round-table discussion, recognizing that faculty may need more time to get together and talk/connect with each other rather than solely attend presentations. They are going to invite presenters who were scheduled for last spring as well as solicit new proposals. They may also look for additional moderators for the roundtable.

- d. Faculty Evaluation Committee. Omin Chandler reported that the committee met October 21 and discussed a suggested proposal by the administration for the purpose of budget saving to revise Section 1.4.6 of the faculty evaluation manual (Weighting of Components for the Annual Review of Faculty). Prior to revising the policy, they sought faculty input, via survey, on their willingness to teach extra classes for no additional compensation in exchange for a reduction in expectations of service and professional development/research activities. Out of the 78 responses, only 19 said yes to this proposed change. Sarah Mergel, chair of the committee, discussed the results with Academic Affairs, and Dr. Nielsen provided feedback. At this time, a meeting is not scheduled to discuss any changes, but the committee will probably meet again next semester to further discuss this matter.
- e. Faculty Resource Committee. Jennifer Randall reported that the committee sent out documents for the laptop policy via email for the Senate to review. The library received a grant to buy laptops for students to check-out for the semester. The committee sent out surveys to assess student needs and worked on perfecting the questions, and they will send out more surveys in the future to further assess how they can best meet student needs. They are meeting again next week.
- f. Faculty Welfare Committee. Amy Burger reported that the committee met on October 23 and November 12. They are working on updating the Faculty Handbook, and they are on track to have a draft by the end of the calendar year. They hope to post a finalized version of the Faculty Handbook online by the beginning of the spring semester.

- g. Strategic Planning Monitoring Committee. There is no report this meeting, but Victor Marshall will report on progress at the next meeting.
- h. Student Success Committee. Carl Gabrini reported that the committee has not had their second meeting yet, but he is putting together items for discussion pertaining to student success.
- i. Tenure and Promotion Committee. John Gulledge reported that they met on November 2. Molly Zhou, as chair of the committee, provided the members with a candidate list and reviewer note pages. She also reminded the committee to maintain confidentiality with the candidates. The ePortfolios will be available for review starting on December 17, and the committee is likely to meet on the last Friday in January to discuss and make recommendations.
- j. Ad-hoc committee on class size policy. Travis McKie-Voerste reported that the committee has not met yet, but he created a Teams meeting that members should have received. He also requested that faculty investigate any informal policies on class size currently being followed within individual schools, and he invited anyone who wants to gather information to present at their first meeting to do so.

IV. New Business

a. Laptop Checkout Policy and Laptop Loan Agreement Form Approval – Faculty Resource Committee – Jennifer Randall

Before a motion was made to approve, Jennifer Randall mentioned that there was a minor change to the laptop policy: Lori McCarty requested to remove a termination phrase, so that was taken out of policy. Nancy Mason made the motion to approve the policy, and it was seconded by Mike Joseph. The floor was open for discussion, and Melissa Whitesell reminded the Faculty Senate that this policy is part of the CARES act, but that this will be an ongoing policy that will allow students to check out the laptops for up to a full semester. Students will have to fill out a request form, and it is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Students will receive two notices to return the laptop, and if not returned or if damaged, the student will be

responsible for replacement. John Gullledge asked how many laptops will be available, and Melissa answered that 150 will be available. The motion was approved via online poll.

b. Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Approval—Round 3

Mary Nielsen made all edits that were suggested by Senate, except one that created a grammar error. She also had to revise one statement because it did not match BOR policy; she and Lori McCarty rephrased it so that it was an accurate sentence. John made a motion to approve the revisions, and it was seconded by Vic Marshall. The motion passed via online poll.

c. Budget Update for 2021-2022 Academic Year – Bruno Hicks

Dr. Hicks stated that he is committed to keeping everyone in the loop regarding the budget. He clarified that any decisions regarding the budget reduction would be implemented for the next academic year. The need for budget reductions was caused by a 500-student decrease in enrollment which led to the current \$700,000 loss in tuition & fees from this year's budget. For next year there will be a reduction in USG's appropriations because we have so many fewer students, so \$700,000 + another \$700,000 adds to a \$1.4 million reduction on top of the 10% Covid-19 System cut (a roughly \$1.5 million cut for the campus). We could have further budget cuts if we do not improve our retention rate and increase student enrollment on campus. USG requires that we present a concrete budget on what those cuts would be. If we could offset revenue through increased enrollment/retention, we could revise some of this; each FTE student represents about \$8,000 in revenue. Academic Affairs represents about 63% of total campus budget (salaries for faculty and operational budgets for schools to run); this represents around \$680,000-700,000 of the total reductions (although Academic Affairs' total contribution is really around \$714,000). For next year, our plan is to avoid any program eliminations as well make every effort to avoid eliminating faculty positions. Since there is a hiring freeze, we will not be able to fill vacant positions without going through the critical hire process. Other plans include a reduction in travel, implementing a new summer pay scale (which would save about \$125,000), a \$10,000 reduction in the operating budgets across Academic Affairs, and reductions of about \$39,000 in stipends (this does not impact deans, assistant/associate deans, chairs, coordinator positions, or other administrative duties within schools that are necessary to function. Dr. Hicks asked us to consider not offering Perspective classes in the fall and using

those funds to offset adjunct/overload pay that will come from not rehiring faculty. He also supports us continuing to explore the option brought up by Omin Chandler (additional teaching with reduced expectations in professional development and service). Lastly, Dr. Hicks mentioned they are working to offer an associate's degree (Associate of General Studies) with two pathways (possibly marketing/advertising and ecotourism) at the Gilmer campus. The goal is to bring more income to the campus from Gilmer. Dr. Hicks also wanted to point out that reductions in travel, summer school, and stipends represent about \$190,000, which represents the salary of about 3 faculty members (depending on school), and this allows us to not have to consider any program eliminations.

Kristen Sanders asked if there would be enough people willing to take on a higher teaching load that others will not be forced into it? Dr. Hicks replied that in no way would they force anyone to alter contracts that faculty already agreed to, so no one would ever be forced into increasing their teaching load. In addition, it would probably be on a 3-year term, so anyone who opts in would be on a higher teaching load for 3 years and could then opt out after 3 years.

d. Teaching next semester with COVID-19 restrictions in place – recommendations?

Faculty have approached Christian with concerns about how we've been teaching this semester, especially related to attendance, so he is seeking feedback for any recommendations about things we'd like to change regarding teaching for this coming spring semester. Are there policies to put in place that would be helpful to meet the needs of both our students and ourselves? He asked for a motion to make recommendations to Academic Affairs.

Megan Vallowe asked a question for clarification (and potentially a motion): Given that the campus only reports the number of cases where students have been on campus within two days of having tested positive or shown symptoms, that doesn't really give us a good idea of how many people are in quarantine (e.g., because of being exposed to that student), including faculty, at any one time. Knowing this information might help us to understand why classrooms or hallways seem so empty at times. She wasn't sure if Dalton State is collecting that information, so she wasn't sure if she could make a motion to include that information in reporting. Christian doesn't know if that information is already being gathered, so he will look into it to find out.

Further discussion ensued but because a motion was not made, the discussion was ended and Christian will follow up with Dr. Hicks regarding COVID-19 restrictions and low attendance.

e. Policy to compensate faculty for teaching courses of other faculty members who are sick and unable to teach for extended period

This business item was brought to Christian's attention by a senator because they were concerned that there was not a substitution policy, and sometimes faculty were being asked to teach classes for other faculty when needing to be absent. Mary Nielsen let Christian know that we do have a policy, but it's not well known. Christian read the policies (there are actually two largely identical ones—one in the Academic Affairs Policies Manual and one in the Dalton State Policies and Procedures Manual). The policy in the AA manual reads as follows: "If substitute classroom teaching during the absence is approved by the dean, associate dean, assistant dean, or department chair, it is normally conducted by other members of the regular faculty with no additional compensation. However, if the absence exceeds two consecutive weeks of instruction, substitute teaching by qualified regular or temporary faculty may be compensated at a pro rata proportion of the appropriate temporary salary."

Nick Gewecke moved to recommend that the policy be amended to not require the two weeks be consecutive, and that it doesn't have to be substituting for just one professor (i.e., faculty should be compensated for any type of substitute teaching exceeding two non-consecutive weeks within a semester). The motion was seconded by Vic Marshall and discussion ensued. In response to questions, Mary Nielsen stated that the compensation is per credit hour, that faculty need to complete the overload form to be compensated, and that she believes the policy came from the presidential level.

Annabelle McKie-Voerste requested to amend the motion to make it policy that compensation is offered after exceeding *one week* of substitute teaching, and it was seconded by Travis McKie-Voerste. The motion that the policy is changed from "two weeks" to "one week" was passed via online poll (one week defined as the number of times the class meets in a typical week), and the motion that the policy be revised to non-consecutive weeks was approved via online poll.

f. Other business. None.

V. Announcements

- a. Next Faculty Senate meeting on Thursday, February 11, 2021, at 3:15pm via Teams
- b. Fall Faculty Meeting on Friday, November 20 at 9am via Teams
- c. Other announcements. There were no other announcements.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Briganti, Senate Secretary