

Faculty Senate Meeting
Tuesday, November 5, 2019

Minutes

Senators Present: M. Baarmand (PSS/3), M. Browning (Aero/3), K. Burke (SAC/2), P. Converse (Psych/3), H. Crawford (CS/3), I. Delgado Perez (COB/3), A. Dutta (COB/3), E. Guisbert (Bio/3), A. Huser (Lib/3), M. Kaya (BME/3), V. Kishore (CE/3), S. Kozaitis (Lib/3), B. Lail (ECE/3), D. Lelekis (SAC/3), G. Maul (OES/3), R. Mehta (Aero/3), A. Nag (PSS/2), H. Najafi (MCE/2), N. Nezamoddini-Kachouie (Math/1), J. Park (DEIS/3), B. Paulillo (Psych/2), P. Ray (OES/3), R. Reichard (OES/3), R. Rusovici (MAE/3), M. Silaghi (CS/3), E. Subasi (ES/3), N. Suksawang (MAE/3), T. Turgut (COA/3), N. Weatherly (SBA/1), D. Yuran (SAC/3)

Senators Absent: C. Harvey (SOBA/1), M. Lavooy (Psych/1), T. Nguyen (MCE), D. Platt (ESD), D. Sandall (COB/1), A. Walton (COB), A. Welters (Math/2), K. Winkelmann (Chem/2),

Proxies: D. Yuran for J. Ivey (SAC/2)

Other Attendees: Kastro Hamed (COES), Edward Kalajian (Emeritus), Nasri Nesnas (COES), Rodd Newcombe (ASC), Lisa Perdigao (Honors College), Ken Revay (BoT), Rudi Wehmschulte (Chem)

Call to Order

Pres. Lail called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. The minutes from the Oct. 1 (no. 148) meeting were approved.

Guest Speakers:

Julie Shankle, Vice President for Online Learning and Off Campus Education
Brian Ehrlich, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Process Improvement for online degree program administration: age requirement

When the Florida Tech Online undergraduate programs were launched in 2008, an age requirement of 21 was placed on applicants to those online programs that were also offered on campus. The policy has changed slightly over time but remains in place for applicants aged 18 or 19 applying to five of our AA degrees in business, the AA Liberal Arts, and seven BA programs in business. It offers no benefit to any Florida Tech programs or recruiting efforts. It does cause additional process complications for our service provider and campus staff. In an effort of continuous improvement of our administrative processes, we plan to remove this policy.

Currently the age restriction policy states:

Students under the age of 20 are not eligible to take online courses unless they are active duty military or spouses of active duty military. Prospective students who will turn 20 during their first term are permitted. This policy also applies to Florida Tech and Bisk employees.

It was explained that the policy was originally meant to mitigate competition with on-campus programs, but it turns out that the online and on-campus markets are completely separate. The age restriction creates administrative burden and extra work and impedes marketing. Sen. Yuran asked if there are any other concerns besides marketing, and Dr. Shankle explained that while there was initially a concern about younger students being able to handle the online structure, that is no longer an issue because the state of Florida requires high school students to take 2 online courses, our on-campus students take online classes in the summer, and some programs don't have the age restriction at all. Over 10 years ago this policy was not uncommon but now it doesn't really exist anymore at other universities. Sen. Baarmand asked about the maturity level of students in order to be successful in self-directed online courses, and Dr. Shankle reiterated that it is not age that is the determining factor for success online. Pres. Lail thanked the guests for bringing this to the Senate and agreed to return to this topic next month to vote to endorse or not endorse this proposal.

Old Business

Committee Reports:

1. Excellence: Sen. Baarmand had nothing new to report.
2. AFTC: Dr. Nesnas
Vote on proxies (see below)
3. Welfare: Sen. Dutta had nothing new to report
4. Administrative Policies: Sen. Rusovici is working on the admin survey.
5. Scholarship: Sen. Sandall was not in attendance and there was nothing new reported.
6. Academic Policies: Sen. Kishore asked for people interested in joining the committee to contact him.
7. TRI: Sen. Silaghi is holding a meeting next week. He announced that the U-drive is still moving soon and instructions for classroom technology are being printed to post in the classrooms.

8. Task Force for reallocating senators: Sen. Silaghi brought a summary of conclusions to distribute to senators and these will be discussed at the December Senate meeting.

President's Report

Pres. Lail reported on the Board of Trustees meeting from October. The number of tenured faculty approved from each college is as follows:

5 in COA

5 in COB

25 in COES

15 in CoPLA

Associate Professors are being reviewed now.

Under enrollment issues, a new application was introduced to simplify the enrollment process, and the foreign credit evaluation requirement is being removed.

There was a discussion of rankings pertaining to the recent US News & World Report. There were some changes made to the category that Florida Tech is in and 80 new schools entered that category with some of them being ranked ahead of us. Out of 10 categories we were at or above where we were before, but we dropped overall because of the new schools added ahead of us. Pres. Lail said that we could invite Jessica Ickes from Institutional Research & Effectiveness to a future Senate meeting to go over those areas where we improved or dropped.

A new Health Sciences Research Center was announced and ground-breaking will begin in the spring. Florida Tech refinanced bonds and was able to get an extra \$16 million to build the new building.

Under the implementation of Workday there will be a change in the fiscal year, and the current end date of April 30 is expected to move to June 30.

Florida Tech has established close connections with a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) medical school and there is great potential for the addition of a DO facility in Melbourne. Florida Tech can provide a pathway program into these DO schools.

Feedback that was given to the library on the grant support program was appreciated, and the program is now open.

An org chart is now available on the President's webpage that shows the top layers of administration.

Faculty Handbook Task Force, Report from Sen. Winkelmann

President McCay has asked the senate to take the lead for revising the Faculty Handbook. He and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee have agreed on a new policy for future revisions. This policy (FH 1.6) is now online

(<https://www.fit.edu/policies/faculty/policies/fh-16-faculty-handbook-revision-procedure/>) and we will follow it from now on. Its key points are:

- Any member of the faculty, staff, or administration can propose a revision (addition, change, removal) to a policy in the Faculty Handbook,
- A senate committee/task force will investigate the proposal and discuss it with the provost,
- The committee/task force will bring the proposal to the Senate for discussion,
- The senate can approve the proposal by majority vote,
- Both the senate and university president must approve to incorporate the proposal in the Faculty Handbook. (The handbook cannot be changed without the senate's approval.)
- There is a mechanism for emergency changes due to compliance with new laws and accreditation requirements.

We also have a new introduction to the Faculty Handbook (also approved by President McCay, <https://www.fit.edu/policies/faculty/introduction/>) that states that the Faculty Handbook supersedes any other university, college or department policies.

President Lail asked Sen. Winkelmann to lead a task force to review the Faculty Handbook and suggest further revisions. Lisa Perdigao, Brooke Wheeler, Suzanne Kozaitis and President Lail have agreed to join the task force. They are seeking a member from COB. They will bring in other faculty as needed based on their expertise when they consider different policy revisions. Sen. Winkelmann will regularly update the senate on their progress.

The task force is planning their first steps now. Sen. Winkelmann will be meeting with Provost Korhan Oyman next week.

Vote on Committee Chairs:

Faculty Excellence Committee

Ersoy Subasi

Administrative Policies Committee

Razvan Rusovici

Academic Policies Committee

Vipuil Kishore

Scholarship Committee

Ron Reichard and Nezamoddin Kachouie

A vote was taken by ballot and Sen. Kachouie won for the Scholarship Committee. All of the other candidates were elected to their committees listed above.

Discussion of updated resolutions for the University Committee on Faculty Promotion and Tenure (UCFPT) and the University Teaching-track Promotion Committee (UTPC)

Pres. Lail sent an email to Senators prior to the meeting summarizing the changes made to the draft of the resolutions. He opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Hamed asked if the university level committee will just be checking to see if the college committee followed the policies correctly since the main purpose is for procedural oversight. He confirmed that the people serving on the college level committee are the ones who should be doing the assessment heavy work.

Dr. Perdigao raised a question about what opportunity would be available for the university level committee to ask for more review if the college level committee did not approve the candidate but the university level committee thinks they should have.

Sen. Burke pointed out that the university committee has access to those same documents as the college level committee so they can see the justification of the decision made by the college level committee. They could point out that a candidate is being denied even though they did appear to meet the college's criteria. Pres. Lail said that the focus is on process and also uniformity to ensure that each candidate is being treated in the same way and being judged by the college's guidelines.

Sen. Turgut pointed out that the AFTC is the arbitrator to review cases if needed. The college level committee is focused and narrow in that it looks at the criteria for their college's tenure requirements and the university level committee is diverse (containing people from many disciplines) and they are meant to function as an oversight to catch cases of bias.

Sen. Baarmand echoed Sen. Burke's point that the university level committee will have access to all of the candidate's materials, including the Dean's letter. Dr. Nesnas asked if the university level committee votes on whether the procedure was followed or if they vote on whether the person should be getting tenure or not. Pres. Lail clarified that it is a vote on whether the process was followed or not. The university level committee serves as a check and balance.

A question was raised about the possibility of a candidate to go around the college level committee and request that their materials go to the university level committee even if they didn't get the endorsement of their college. It was pointed out that all tenure applications go through all stages starting with the college level committee, and Pres. Lail thinks that will be true of the regular promotion process too, meaning that someone can't pass by the college level committee without them seeing the materials first before going to the university level committee. You can no longer self-nominate yourself directly to the university level committee. Dr. Nesnas confirmed this statement. He also clarified that there is a distinction between people under the transition plan and newly hired tenure-track faculty. Current faculty will be advised either to go up for tenure, delay, or do the teaching track, but newly hired faculty will not have that option because they will have to go up for tenure.

Pres. Lail explained that it is important that the college level committee will be checked by the university level committee to make sure that procedure and uniformity were followed. Dr. Nesnas described the difference between the university level committee and the AFTC, which

only engages when there is an appeal. Pres. Lail emphasized that these discussions are important and he asked senators to take these issues back to their units to get faculty input so we can continue to discuss it until we are satisfied before there is a vote on the resolutions.

New Business

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (AFC): Proxy vote

Michael Gallo (COA) — withdrew from committee (A replacement for COA will be voted on separately at a later meeting)

Kunal Mitra (COES)

Jean-Paul Pinelli (COES)

Michael Slotkin (COB)

Patrick Converse (CoPLA)

A motion was made for a collective vote and seconded. A vote by show of hands was taken and all of the candidates were approved with no abstentions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Lelekis, Faculty Senate Secretary