

Faculty Senate Meeting
Date/Time: January 9, 2024, 3:30 pm
Location: In-person Board of Trustees Room, with ZOOM link:
<https://fit.zoom.us/j/98187817280>

Minutes

Senator Present:

Shawn Scott (Aeronautics), Jordan Poole (Aeronautics), Tolga Turgut (Aeronautics), Csaba Palotai(APSS), Donald Platt(APSS), Manasvi Lingam (APSS), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Kenia Nunes (BES), Abram Walton((Business), Charles Bryant (Business), Angel Otero (Business Online), Vipuil Kishore(CCE), Alan Brown(CCE), Nasheen Nur(EECS), Nakin Suksawang(MCE), Hamidreza Najafi(MCE), Joo Young Park(MSE), Nezamoddin Nezamoddini-Kachouie (MSE), Stanley Snelson (MSE), Pallav Ray(OEMS), Rob Van Woesik (OEMS), Angela Tenga (SAC), David Wilder(BA), Patrick Converse(Psy), Jessica Wildman(Psy), Marshall Jones(Psy), William Bowman(Library), Gary Zarillo (OEMS), Joe Montelione (SAC),

Senator Absent: Madhur Tiwari (APSS), Steven Rivet (Business), Sidhartha Bhattacharyya (EECS), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Kevin Burke (SAC), Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Wanfa Zhang (SAC)

Proxies: None

Other attendees: John Nicklow, Mark Archambault, John Harris, Roberto Peverati, Brian Lail, Julie Costopoulos, Kastro Hamed, Tim Crombie, Melissa Borgen, Souvik Das, Mary Bonhomme, Jason Griggs, Raymond Bonhomme, Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Marc Baarmann, Eliza Dopira, Luis Daniel Otero, Hamid Rassoul, Nick Daher, Penny Vassar, Rudolf Wehmschulte, Nasri Nesnas, Vicky Knerly

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes: No Minutes to be approved. Minutes from November and December meetings will be approved at the February meeting.
Recordings are posted on the Senate website.

Guest Speakers: President Nicklow;

Dr. Mark Archambault, Associate Provost for Accreditation
Topic: Faculty Handbook Updates for SACS;
Dr. John Harris, Dean of COES;
Topics: The Instructor Track and Tenure

President Nicklow shared the following points:

1. Strategic Plan Update
 - Highlighted the progress on the strategic plan, which has undergone four final drafts.

- Long-range planning committee of the board recommended endorsement, set for January 25th Board meeting.

- A living document will be launched via a website, evolving periodically, aligning with departmental college assessment plans.

2. Master Plan and Housing

- An RFP for a master plan and a housing partnership initiative are in progress.

- The goal is to secure external funding for housing construction through a public-private partnership.

- A campaign architect, Cassie Pericak, has been brought in to assess and fine-tune advancement operations.

3. Fundraising Campaign

- The goal is to align fundraising with the strategic plan and master plan.

- A detailed process involves a feasibility study for a campaign, focusing on alumni needs and priorities.

- The campaign aims for a silent phase by summer, heavily relying on fundraising.

4. Enrollment for Fall

- Preliminary data shows an increase in applications and admits for the fall semester.

- Common app usage is up nearly 10%, possibly indicating a trend of students applying to more schools.

5. Online Course Contracts

- The Bisk contract for online courses expires at the end of Spring.

- Discussions are ongoing with both Bisk and Academic Partnerships about future arrangements.

- Potential changes in the contract are expected, and details will be communicated as they develop.

6. Board Members Update

- Efforts to implement best practices for board members, including term limits.

- Current discussions with board members who are leaving and new candidates being considered.

- Emphasis on having academic representation on the board.

7. MLK Commemoration Event

- An MLK commemoration event is scheduled for tonight at 7:00, with a focus on monitoring the weather conditions.

8. Future Alumni Events

- Highlighted upcoming alumni events in various locations, part of preparations for the fundraising campaign.

- Faculty encouraged to inform former students and colleagues about these events.

9. Open the floor for Q & A

Sen. van Woelik asked about Provost Search, and President Nicklow stated that an announcement would be made by Tuesday. The outcome could be positive news with a confirmed candidate or the need to start the search process again.

President Nicklow provided an update on the ongoing discussions regarding online classes. Mentioning the end of the Bisk contract, President Nicklow shared the proposal to acquire the intellectual property (IP) of 250 online courses for \$3.6

million. AP has offered \$2 million in cash upfront and the remainder through an adjustment of the revenue share.

President Nicklow emphasized the positive signal from AP's offer, indicating confidence in the future of the university's programs. However, details are still being worked out, and legal considerations are underway.

Sen. Jones inquired about reinstating common support and logistical functions for online programs. President Nicklow explained the need for consolidation without recreating separate entities like extended studies and the office of online.

The discussion also touched upon the ongoing Provost negotiations. President Nicklow clarified that an offer has been made, negotiations are underway, and an announcement will be made on Tuesday. The sensitive nature of candidate positions at other institutions requires discretion.

Dr. Mark Archambault, Associate Provost for Accreditation, was introduced as the next guest speaker. Mark Archambault discussed the upcoming SACSCOC reaffirmation process and the need to update the faculty handbook to align with accreditation standards. He highlighted various outdated sections and requested the Senate's cooperation in reviewing and approving necessary changes. The on-site visit is scheduled for next spring, but the report is due this fall.

Mark Archambault highlighted the extensive work done in gathering information for the report, focusing on sections related to faculty. The Faculty Handbook contains crucial policy and procedural information, but Mark noted that much of it is outdated.

Mark Archambault also provided examples of the Handbook's shortcomings, including outdated titles, committees, and broken website addresses. Additionally, faculty qualifications, ranks, and appointment policies need urgent updates. The meeting participants were informed that many policies haven't been reviewed in over 10 years. Mark Archambault expressed the need for the Senate's assistance in reviewing and updating the Faculty Handbook and will present recommended changes after a meeting with Dr. Rassoul and Dr. Subasi, seeking expedited approval due to time constraints.

Several issues were highlighted, such as outdated language on faculty ranks and appointments, missing definitions for adjunct faculty and visiting professors, and the absence of a formal policy on academic freedom, duplicative policies conflicting with HR, and outdated contract length policies since the implementation of tenure, emphasizing the urgency of the situation, proposing an expedited review process and requesting cooperation from the Senate for timely completion of the necessary updates. A deadline for completion by the April meeting was suggested.

Mark Archambault requests the Senate's commitment to reviewing and approving the recommended changes promptly, so they can be incorporated into the SACS compliance report. A question is posed to the Administrative Policies Committee's readiness to handle the expedited review, considering the urgency of the situation. The committee expresses its willingness to prioritize the task and promises to work efficiently. A suggestion is made to establish a regular review procedure for

the Faculty Handbook. Concerns are raised about the tight timeline, and it is emphasized that the faculty should have an opportunity for input. The committee commits to doing its best and acknowledges the importance of faculty involvement.

Mark Archambault confirms the need for completion by April due to the Senate's summer recess and the September deadline for the compliance report. Concerns about the complexity of the task are acknowledged, and it is emphasized that some policies may require full reviews and even changes to the Constitution and bylaws. The Senate commits to expediting the process and collaborating with Mark Archambault's committee.

The next speaker, Dean John Harris, presented a proposal for an instructor track, addressing the need for a clear promotion path for faculty primarily focused on teaching. The proposal introduced titles such as instructional assistant professor, instructional associate professor, and instructional professor with two-year rolling contracts.

Sen. Turgut expressed concerns about the instructor track proposal, emphasizing potential confusion, the existing non-tenure track teaching-focused track, and the risk of further stratification among faculty. He questioned the need for additional tracks and titles, particularly in a smaller private STEM university.

John Harris responded to the concerns, emphasizing that the proposed instructor track aims to provide a dedicated path for faculty focused on teaching, addressing the current lack of promotion opportunities for such individuals.

Interim Provost Hamid Rassoul, speaking as a faculty member, expressed the need for a clear promotion path for instructors. He highlighted the existing model in the College of Aeronautics where instructors with terminal degrees have the opportunity to become assistant professors in either the teaching or tenure track. He emphasized the importance of maintaining simplicity and quality in teaching. Senator Jones acknowledged John Harris and thanked him for his insights. He questioned whether an instructor track limited to non-tenured master's level faculty could be considered in the College of Engineering and Science.

John Harris clarified that the College of Engineering and Science is focused on hiring terminal degree faculty and suggested titles like "Instructor 1, Instructor 2, Instructor 3" for those on the proposed track. He emphasized the distinction between the instructor track and the teaching track, stating that the former is aimed at providing a career with a promotion path.

Senator Turgut expressed concerns about the stability of short-term contracts, questioning if faculty with PhDs would be attracted to one or two-year contracts. He emphasized the importance of stability, pointing out potential challenges in relocating families for short-term positions.

Senator Turgut argued that the proposed track could lead to confusion and divisions among faculty, expressing worries about the impact on the quality of teaching due to

the introduction of various titles. For example, one of the biggest private University, Embry Riddle, They do not have the track we are proposing. They have just assistant, associate, full professors and they hired as instructors and then they can have them be promoted as well.

Senator Walton clarified the misconception about Embry Riddle, stating that private universities also have varied levels for instructors and lecturers. He highlighted the importance of investigating different models and emphasized that private universities.

Eliza Dopira provided her perspective, “as someone who's been a full-time instructor for 12 years, I would like to see some sort of for promotion of recognition in some way, I think I'm not alone. I won't call out people's names, but there are several instructors here as you mentioned at the beginning that have been here for many years and we're very dedicated to our positions and teaching”.

Senator Poole commented, I think it's down to the different colleges and what they view as appropriate where COES obviously thinking about it Ph.D. terminal degrees seem relevant to hire where college aeronautics like we have, we have a lot of faculty who are 30-year airline pilots and they're wondering, you know, do we have to get that terminal degree in order to have promotion. So in my opinion, I think that breaking it down by colleges and having the opportunity just like she said about different promotion possibilities would be something beneficial.

Senator Kaya mentioned, when we met as the Administrative Policies Committee, there was one thing that was brought up, the differentiation between the job description for the instructor track and teaching or non-tenure track. So it seems like there are different expectations from each college, for example, from COES, I think we decided that no scholarship is not expected or research is not expected from teaching track faculties.

John Harris clarified the points by saying, “we had this problem with the promotion system and basically no one could be promoted unless you had external letters for the research that you had done and no one could get past that hurdle because if you're a teaching track faculty and you're doing just a little bit of research, you don't compare to a tenure track faculty. Yet when we asked for those letters, the external people have no idea what the politics is. You don't tell them well; they only did 20% of their time on research. Don't compare them to the people that are doing 50%. And so we had this problem and we put a Band-Aid on our promotion path and said and said right now for promotion we're not going to include the scholarship component. I'm not very happy about that Band-Aid and we need to revamp that, that system in our college. But a clean instructor track that doesn't have any band-aids or scholarship requirements is, is, is something we could really use and not put band-aids on the teaching track”.

Senator Kaya commented, “I certainly understand the reason for the Band-Aid. I understand that, but I think they should be clarified and differentiated as they are the

difference between the instructor track and teaching track or the non-tenure track. That was the feedback from the committee is saying that, OK, they need to be more clear about this because it also changes from college to college, the expectation for the teaching track”.

Senator Kishore commented, “ This is just pertaining to the College of Engineering and Science. Does the college plan to continue to hire in the non-tenure track or the teaching track from here on or will we just be hiring? Is the new faculty coming in with the goal to only teach, will they be hired in this new instructional track?”

John Harris answers by saying,

“If this instructional track existed, we would hire faculty that only wanted to do instruction into that track because it's very clear the title matches what they're what they're doing. It's what other schools do. Like other universities, if someone really was a mixture and really wanted to do scholarship and all this, I hope that we can revamp our promotion criteria in our College in the teaching track to make a fair promotion procedure for them. You know, whatever percent time they're doing scholarship that we fairly evaluate them. I know some universities have three tracks, the research track, only research faculty, there's the tenure track, which is doing both. There is a similar to our teaching track, someone that is doing teaching and research and then there's the instructor track. I don't think it's too many to add this, it's less confusion because it's very clear someone's instructional track, I know exactly what they're what they're doing”.

Senator Kishore asks, “I do see some clarity in there because the Band-Aid that was applied in the previous promotion cycle for the non tenure track will no longer be needed if we have the instructional track in place, Is what I understand from this?”

John Harris answers by saying that the teaching track is completely different.

“It's very clear no one will be forced to move. I think one of the things that Sen. Turgut said is somehow that these would merge with the teaching track is not at all the case. We would write bold letters. No one is ever forced to move from one track to another, right? That's not the purpose of this, But, for the new hires, if you get them in the new hires, if they're instruction only they would be in the instructor track very clear. You know no confusion labeled as such. About the terminal degree, it's possible that we have it in our college. We're only looking at the terminal. It's possible someone from industry come comes back.

They worked at Intel for 30 years, and they come back and they want to be an instructor that they could be in there and promote it in the in that in that track there's some you know there's some limitations they can't teach graduate students and things like this, but I think that can be worked out and there are accreditation type issues of ABET that we'd have to talk to Doctor Archambault about the hurdles on our side for the engineering accreditation, but I think we could navigate those things, but the instructor track what Dr. Kishore was saying it the instructor track doesn't eliminate the Band-Aid for the teaching track because that's there for our existing faculty and we that's a separate discussion in our college. We need to fix that. We shouldn't be saying we have a Band-Aid. We need to fix that and make a proper

promotion procedure for all our faculty that are in the teaching track right now because it it's not that's not right.

It's a separate issue. We're going to fix that so that people can be doing scholarships as well as instruction and they can be 100% instruction.

That's completely fine. Some of them could even be doing much more research with buyout and things like that. So, the teaching track is a very flexible option, and we just need to bring the promotion process up to be flexible to handle these different cases that happen”.

Hamid Rassoul commented,

“The proposal is for instructor and as one of my our colleague the instructor point out less whatever modifications or additions Senate wants to add to that one. Let's create a path for our colleagues who do not have a terminal degree and have the title of instructor to be promoted.

The other thing is that if we want to have another non-tenure teaching track, we call it instructor for two years parallel to the non-tenure teaching track that currently we have.

If that's what we college a college wants to do or something like that, I think that would be a separate issue.

My recommendation is to focusing on a path for our colleague who are currently instructor to get these promotions and then go to the instructor 123 whatever you want to call it so they will we recognize their effort”.

Senator Turgut commented,

“The track that was discussed here, which is what we are calling now, most people are, I am not, but it's just teaching. The track is very short of describing the intention when we introduced the implementation of tenure. The discussion was about tenure and non-tenure tracks.

But at the last minute, there were a few faculty, not too many, on the research side. So, as a result, it ended up getting the label of teaching track. That is the wrong definition because there's three domains for the non-tenure, teaching, focus faculty. It is scholarship service and teaching, so we have to be careful of that, and as time goes on, you can see how the perception shifts via, you know, people mentioning it by wrong names.

The other thing is just correction about them. Embry-Riddle doesn't have lecturers. They have assistant professor, associate, and full professor, and they have it either tenured or non-tenured. They have instructor titles”.

Sen. Pres. Brown suggested senators hold that issue over until next month and called for an Excellence Awards report.

Reports

Sen. Pre. Brown had no report

Committee Report

1. Excellence Awards-Sen. Wildman (Kalajian Professorship)

Sen. Wildman reports,

We've been charged as Senate with forming a three-person selection committee that will serve to select the awardee for this five-year award.

Because we're at short on time, I won't say all the stuff that was in the document, but What we're looking for here is 3 volunteers from our COES specific senators, 2 engineering one, one other, if possible to serve as that selection committee.

2. Welfare-Sen. Suksawang (Faculty/Staff Picnic)

Sen. Suksawang reports that Welfare Committee met with Staff Council and clarified that the family policy staff committee does not vote and is a supporting, non-governing body. Sen, Suksawang discussed about a planned event on March 19th (or possibly March 22nd) to bring staff and faculty together.

3. Scholarships Committee:

Sen. Nezamoddini-Kachouie was not present [no report].

4. Administrative Policies Committee:

Sen. Kaya had no report.

5. Technology Resources and Infrastructure Committee:

Sen. Poole had no report.

Sen. Pres. Brown asked for a motion to vote on the resolution on "Office Hours".

Old Business

Resolution on Office Hours (Academic Policies Committee):

"Faculty need to be available for students on a routine basis. Faculty availability and expectations on how students can engage with faculty should be clearly stated on course syllabus. We believe ultimate determination on details rests with faculty, their departments, and colleges."

Sen. Jones calls for a vote.

[seconded by a senator]

[The motion passed, with the majority in favor].

Hamid Rassoul suggested that COES revise their promotion track for teaching track by not requiring outside reviewers or select reviewers from teaching institutions.

New Business

None

Discussion

None.

Senate Pres. Brown asks for a motion to adjourn.

Sen. Jones responds with a motion to adjourn.

Pre. Brown responds, Is there a second? [a senator seconded]

All in favor of adjournment.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joo young Park

Faculty Senate Secretary