Florida Tech Faculty Senate Meeting

September 6, 2016

Present: M. Baarmand (PSS), P. Bernhard (Sch. Of Computing), J. Brenner (Chem. Eng/Biomed. Eng), A. Huser (Lib), S. Jensen (COB), U. Jones (Aero), S. Kozaitis (Lib), B. Lail (ECE), T. Marcinkowski (DEIS), L. Perdigao (SAC), R. Phebus (BOT – Acad. Affairs Chair), C. Polson (Bio), P. Ray (DMES), D. Sandall (Business), M. Silaghi (Sch. Of Computing), N. Suksawany (CIV), B. Tenali (Math), R. Van Woesik (Bio), K. Winkelmann (Chem), F. Yumiceva (PSS).

President Sandall called the meeting to order at 3:32pm. He asked for a motion and second for approval of the minutes taken in the April senate meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved as written. He then asked for any new senators who should be acknowledged – a request was made to inform the senate secretary of new senators joining this year.

President Sandall’s report:

- President McCay has asked the senate president to serve on his cabinet, which meets every two weeks. The cabinet includes the following members:

Dr. Annie Becker, Ms. Cathy Wood, Mr. Frank Kinney, Dr. Gaby Hawat, Dr. Gary Hamme, Dr. Joni Oglesby, Ms. Mischka Maxwell, Dr. Monica Baloga, Ms. Becky Crook, Dr. Susan St. Onge, Mr. Wes Sumner, Mr. Bill Jurgens, & CAPT Winston Scott.

This allows for fuller participation by a representative of the faculty and more transparency.

- Ms. Wood (CFO) has also asked the senate president to serve as a member of the University Budget Committee. The main goal is to formulate the 2017-18 academic year budget by the end of February.

- The results of the faculty survey completed in May are very illuminating and will be posted on the senate website – several action items will be discussed with the relevant standing committees.

- Fall 2016 enrollment: international student enrollment and sophomore retention rates are good but new MS student enrollment is down.

- Compliance training in many areas including FERPA, Title 9, safety and regulatory compliance will be provided for all faculty.

- Space allocation: At one of the Cabinet meetings, Dr. Gaby Hawat reported that there is some confusion about space availability. With the exception of conference rooms controlled by the president (2) and deans (1 each), all other rooms can be booked for meetings and seminars by faculty via an online reservation system located at <http://events.fit.edu/virtualems/cas.aspx>

- For everyone’s information – the President McCay’s inauguration ceremony on September 9, 2016, is underwritten by donations. It is an opportunity to celebrate a new era and to further build up faculty-administration-community relations and a strong academic community through the academic ceremony.

- Starting this academic year there will be three commencements including one in July to allow students who complete their degree requirements after the spring semester to participate in commencement without having to wait until the following December.

- The Vision 20/20 task force has completed its work on the university pillars of excellence; the following areas, in no particular order, are identified: cyber security, aero/aviation/flight test, climate change and bioinformatics, space sciences and astronomy, and marine sciences.

- The administration is considering an honors program for the university; there are arguments for and against that need to be evaluated.

- President Sandall cautioned the senators to always be mindful of what they discuss with reporters regarding university affairs so it would not be misconstrued as an official university position or policy.

Next, President Sandall informed the senators of progress made with an initiative by President McCay to move from the current faculty lines to a faculty developed and faculty led multi-track system with teaching, research and traditional (dual-track) faculty tracks. A draft document is being prepared by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee describing the purpose and guiding principles, as well as the specifics of each track. The present timeline requires a complete document, vetted by faculty and administration, to be submitted to the president’s office by the year-end. While the Senate is working to meet this deadline, this might prove to be difficult to meet.

A discussion pursued; Senator Perdigao asked why such changes are necessary at this juncture? Dr. Sandall replied that the idea is to improve the quality of faculty lines as part of raising the quality and ranking of the institution to meet Dr. McCay’s goals and to prepare for the possible introduction of a tenured system in the future. Senator Yumiceva pointed out that the current system already has multi-track features. He also raised concerns about a teaching track could become prevalent and jeopardize research. Senator Van Woesik agreed. Senator Jensen then asked if budgetary issues have something to do with these changes. Dr. Sandall reported that at the strategic planning retreat in June that President McCay reiterated his position that no faculty cuts would result from the current budget situation. Senator Baarmand pointed out that the intent of the multi-track system is to improve and allow more flexibility for faculty – all along the real purpose that is to change the current system into a tenure track-like system in the current timeframe and position the system such that if tenure was approved by the Board of Trustees in the future that it would be easy to transition to such a system. He added that the faculty numbers in the two teaching and research tracks are intended to be small relative to the main traditional track; the three tracks are not meant to be equally populated.

Senator Marcinkowski commented that as an evaluation of the new system we should run example faculty and departments through the process and analyze the outcome. He also added that fluctuating enrollments and faculty grants could impact the faculty tracks and should be taken into account. Another point he mentioned was the reaction and support of the next university president and board of trustees would be critical. Senator Yumiceva commented that he had not heard from the administration a timeline for these changes and particularly regarding implementation of tenure. In response, President Sandall mentioned that the timeline of any potential future tenure track was not clear at this time and would require a Board of Trustees decision. Senator Winkelmann returning to the teaching track commented that teaching is not just instruction in classroom, much more to it! Mr. Phebus commenting on the multi-track system emphasized that alternatives should be considered if they could achieve the same goals.

President Sandall in closing this discussion stated that senators should wait to see the document, which clarifies many of these issues. He added that appropriate committees would scrutinize each track and there would be full discussions in the coming meetings.

President Sandall then called for committee reports. Senator Tenali, Chair of the Academic Policies Committee, had no report but stated the committee charge and listed the members: Andrew Cudmore (COB), Jignya Patel (COB), Brian Lail (COE), Marius Silaghi (COE) and Bhaskar Tenali (Chair) (COS). Senator Brenner announced that Senator Rusovici would chair the Administrative Policies Committee starting this year; the other member is Dr. Yahya Sharaf-Eldeen but more members are needed to address the current issues including the multi-track faculty system and the annual administrator survey. Senator Brenner will chair the Faculty Senate Scholarship Committee.

Senator Baarmand, Chair of the Faculty Excellence Committee, had no report but announced that an effort had begun to name the excellence award in research. The other two awards are already named (the Kerry Bruce Clark Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Andrew W. Revay Jr. Award for Excellence in Service). He is working with the senior administrators and the Development Office to find an excellent candidate for this honor. The current members of this committee are: William Arrasmith (COE), Marc Baarmand – Chair (COS), Steve Cusick (COA), Ashley Huser (Library), Sherry Jensen (COB) and Lisa Perdigao (COPLA).

Senator Cudmore, Chair of the Welfare Committee, mentioned that their committee is working with the Human Resources Office to clearly define a more detailed process of facilitating the Family Sick Leave. They are also working with administration to have a formal policy for faculty regarding the complaint handling process for students. It would essentially mirror the one in the student handbook but written from the perspective and needs of the faculty for the faculty handbook. The current members of this committee are: Suzanne Kozaitis (Lib), Troy Glassman (COB-Online), Amitabh Dutta (COB), Ada Harvey (Psychology), Cecilia Knoll (Math) and YJ Sohn (Communications).

Senator Arrasmith, Chair of the newly established Technology, Resources, and Infrastructure (TRI) Committee, was away on travel but submitted the following: Thanks for your support in establishing the TRI committee as a standing committee in the faculty senate. If you recall, towards the end of last year, we worked with IT and the CIO to establish some much needed Model-Based Systems Engineering (MBSE) tools for the Engineering Systems department. Over the summer, we were able to get a core set of these tools installed (Dynamic Object Oriented Requirements System (DOORS), Rhapsody (implements SYSML), Magic Draw (SYSML-based enterprise architecture tool), COMSOL (multi-physics modeling tool) and the Department of Engineering Systems is already incorporating these tools in their curriculum. Currently the following folks have graciously volunteered to sit on this committee (Mary Barker (TRI Committee Secretary, library), Jared Campbell (Instructional Technologist), Marco Carvalho (Exec Director of the Harris Institute for Assured Information), Eric Donath (Instructional Programmer Analyst), Eric Kledzik (Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer), Marius Silaghi (Computer Science), Barry Webster (CoE, TRI Representative to the ACITC), Francisco Yumiceva (CoS). I would also like to get representation from CoA, CoB and COPLA to make sure all of our faculty have a voice. Some immediate administrative actions are for us to have our representation to the ACITC formalized as well as Dr. Arrasmith's participation on the Information Technology Executive Committee (ITEC). We are not going to duplicate any of the work that is being done by other committees like ACITC, ITEC, sustainability/energy groups, and other committees but will focus on other Technology, Resources, and Infrastructure needs to enable us to conduct research, advance our pedagogy, and move forward and advance our institutional capabilities to the next level. We welcome your input, participation, and support. Please send Dr. Arrasmith an e-mail if you would like to participate.

After the committee reports, Senator Perdigao raised a point about term limits for committee members and chairs; this should be discussed in upcoming meetings. Senator Polson brought up a troubling issue with an admission requirement for international students, namely the WES transcript validation. He pointed out that this requirement could be an obstacle for timely admission into our MS programs, causing the decrease in the MS student rate reported before. Senator Baarmand mentioned that many international students could not afford the $250 fee required and would just drop their applications. A possible remedy might be some kind of waiver if warranted. It was decided that the Academic Policy Committee should look into this. Senator Marcinkowski expressed his dismay with administration taking decisions without sufficient faculty consultation; another example being the Registrar allowing students to register without faculty approval!

There were no items under new business. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was closed at 4:53pm.

Prepared by Senator Baarmand