**Florida Tech Faculty Senate**

September 5, 2017

**Minutes**

**Senators Present:** W. Arrasmith (DES), M. Baarmand (PSS), P. Bernhard (CS), J. Brenner (CE), K. Burke (SAC), P. Converse (Psych), C. Harvey (SBA), A. Huser (Lib), S. Jensen (COB), K. Johnson (OES), U. Jones (Aero), M. Kaya (BME), S. Kozaitis (Lib), B. Lail (ECE), D. Lelekis (SAC), T. Marcinkowski (DEIS), B. Morkos (MAE), S. Murshid (ECE), L. Perdigao (SAC), C. Polson (Bio), R. Rusovici (MAE), P. Sahoo (OES), D. Sandall (COB), M. Silaghi (CS), N. Suksawang (CCM), R. van Woesik (Bio), A. Walton (COB), N. Weatherly (SBA), R. Wehmschulte (Chem), A. Welters (Math), B. Wheeler (Aero), K. Winkelmann (Chem), D. Yuran (SAC), Z. Zhou (Psych)

**Senators Absent:** O. Doule (HCDIA)**,** R. Menezes (CS), A. Nag (PSS), A. Nnolim (ExSt), B. Paulillo (Psych), G. Tenali (Math)

**Other Attendees:** Allyn Deming (Lib), Jose Martinez-Diaz (SBA), Nasri Nesnas (Chem), Chelsea Stripling (Lib), Ken Revay (BOT)

**Call to Order**

President Baarmand called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April’s meeting; a motion was made by Senator Marcinkowski and seconded by Senator Sandall.

The April Minutes were approved by unanimous vote of voice minus one abstention.

Sen. Burke reported on updates to the senate roster and circulated a list of senators to each unit for any further revisions. The new senator roster reflects the results of the faculty census conducted last spring.

**President’s Report**

President Baarmand welcomed everyone to the first Senate Meeting of the 2017-2018 school year, reminding everyone the importance of attendance. He asked senators to send a proxy if a meeting is to be missed and that he would try to end all meetings by 4:50 pm.

President Baarmand then reported updates to the leadership organization. There are four panels: Executive (chaired by President McCay), Academic (chaired by Provost Baloga), Financial Affairs (chaired by CFO Wood), and Advancement (chaired by Vice President Kinney). President Baarmand will attend meetings of the Academic and Financial Affairs panels.

President McCay has schedule a seminar series for leadership. The first seminar will be on September 26 **[rescheduled to October 25 because of Hurricane Irma]** to discuss the University Vision and Strategic Goals and two additional seminars will be scheduled in the future to cover Financial Affairs and Marketing. The purpose of the seminars is to keep everyone informed of leadership decisions.

Dr. Jose Martinez-Diaz inquired about the purpose and makeup of the Academic Panel.

President Baarmand responded that the panel had so far discussed steps to enhance graduate programs and create an honors program or honors college. The panel will also conduct evaluations of academic programs to determine future viability. Membership in the panel is from the upper administration, with President Baarmand being the only representative from the faculty.

President Baarmand then reported on the administrative retreat that occurred June 21-23. The retreat was in a different format than done in past and remained local at the Eau Gallie Yacht Club. Rather than having a series of presentations from leaders of each unit, there were only a few short presentations from the top administrators. The other two days were reserved for small breakout groups to brainstorm ideas on several topics which were then presented and discussed by the entire group. The format was facilitated by an outside organization.

President Baarmand shared highlights from the presentations given by President McCay, Provost Baloga, and CFO Wood skipping over presentations by Wes Sumner, Gary Hamme, Randy Alford, and Bill Jurgens in the interest of time.

President McCay feels that the Florida Tech product is well recognized. Graduates are well placed and valued and we shouldn’t lose sight of that. President McCay also emphasized that the retreat goal was not just what we should do but what we should no longer do.

Provost Baloga reported that the College of Engineering [and Computing] had grown to 110 faculty and over 3330 students, making it the largest college at the university. Emphasis will be placed on Florida Tech being an Engineering University. Provost Baloga also shared comments on open contracts and expenditures as well as the Academic Affairs Office’s main initiatives: the Teaching Council, the Student Success Committee, which President Baarmand attends, the Deans list, faculty assignments, Summer Graduation Ceremony, other restructuring of academic units.

CFO Wood shared that Florida Tech’s revenues have fallen over the past two years by about 8%, which is a mismatch for trends in budgetary spending. Florida Tech depends on student tuition and fees as major source of revenue, which has now risen to 72%. The administration wants to remedy the financial mismatch by operating within the resources we have and by diversifying revenue sources to find alternate ways to raise money.

President Baarmand concluded the report by summarizing topics and ideas shared in the breakout groups at the retreat. The Florida Tech Culture group discussed ways to improve communication lines from leadership to the campus community. The “Right-Sizing” group brainstormed strategies for how to realign faculty, staff, and units to enact President McCay’s vision that Florida Tech be a top Engineering and Computing institution by 2023. The Media Branding group reflected on Florida Tech’s message and considered ideas for emphasizing outstanding faculty, high quality teaching and research, and graduation and employment rates. Finally, the Why or Why Not FIT? group reviewed the decisions students and faculty make to join and stay at Florida Tech. At the retreat follow up on July 24, President McCay announced an action item to develop a new Strategic Plan by December 2017.

**\*\*[[At the conclusion of President Baarmand’s report, President McCay entered the meeting to address the Senate and answer questions.]]\*\***

President McCay clarified that the new strategic plan will be succinct [3 pages] and identify Florida Tech’s core values, key strategies, and the thrusts in research and the academic field. It will be a guideline of what we are about. The plan will be published for the Board of Trustees meeting in January and a draft will come to Senate before then, probably in December. The September Leadership seminar will focus on the vision statement and consider the core values and the short- and longterm goals. The strategic plan will include details about how Florida Tech will accomplish these goals.

President McCay invited questions from the Senate.

Senator Marcinkowski asked if the September Seminar was open to the faculty.

President McCay responded that ideas would be discussed among senior colleagues before coming to Senate.

President Baarmand asked if there were any items for the October BOT meeting to report.

President McCay responded that the October BOT meeting will be about setting tuition and fees, which he hopes will not increase, and keeping the budget balanced. The administration is working to restructure the meetings into a format that will increase input and interaction from the board members.

President McCay is excited for the fall semester. After lower summer enrollments, the fall enrollments are good. He would like to poll incoming students to see if they like their classes and professors so far.

President Baarmand asked if anything could be shared regarding 403b contributions.

President McCay indicated that reinstating 403b contributions was his number one priority for the new budget, but he will not have a good number on the incoming class until September 21. COLA and Merit raises are also priorities, but it will depend on how much revenue comes in over the budget. Reinstating 403b will cost 2.5 million, COLA will cost 900k, and Merit Pool will cost 3 million. The administration and BOT will also be considering investments in infrastructure that are needed. Additionally, the effects of Hurricane Irma may come into play. A team is currently meeting to prepare for the storm and Florida Tech will err on the side of safety. We will have three shelters set up and the coaches will drive busses, as was done last year for Hurricane Matthew. The hurricane is the biggest issue for the University at this moment.

President Baarmand thanked President McCay for his time and commented how the visit is a positive sign of the administration’s efforts to improve communication from the leadership.

President McCay expressed his intent to stop by every Senate meeting he can to answer a few questions.

**Committee Reports**

There was no **Academic Policies Committee** report.

Sen. Brenner spoke on behalf of the **Administrative Policies Committee.** The results of the Administrators Evaluations were sent to those administrators in April. The process is now complete for another year and half. The committee will now turn to making revisions to the Faculty Handbook.

There was no **Scholarship committee** report.

There was no **Faculty Excellence Committee** report.

There was no **Wellfare Committee** report.

Sen. Arrasmith, **TRI Committee** chair, reported on the Computer Refresh program. A system is now set up for staff and administrators and some computer labs have begun the cycle. Departments wanting to refresh labs need to contact Eric Kledzik. A central program for refreshing faculty computers is next. Sen. Arrasmith invited faculty to contact him regarding anything that needed to be addressed.

Sen. Brenner invited input from any senator or faculty member on behalf of the **Faculty Handbook** ad hoc committee. This will be the first look at the handbook in 10 years. Revisions to promotion guidelines will be among the many topics updated.

There was no **Tenure Exploration Committee** report.

**Guest Speakers**

**Dr. Mary Bonhomme, University Professor, eEducation**

**TOPIC: QEP-2**

Dr. Bonhomme gave an overview of QEP-2, called Cross-Cultural Competence, which is a program required by the accrediting agency SACS. The original plan was to create a minor, but funding limitations has shifted the plan to a non credit certificate program. Dr. Bonhomme is tasked with implementation and is working with representatives from Student Government, Evans Library, First Year Experience, International Student Services, and Cross Cultural Management. She made a presentation to the deans, is now talking with the Faculty Senate, and then will present to Academic Affairs and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The website includes information regarding courses. It is being marketed to freshman and 85 students took part in the pilot program last year by doing a cross cultural workshop as part of their first year experience. Jason Griggs created a course site for students in this program. Dr. Bonhomme asked faculty to familiarize themselves with the program and share events on campus and in the community that could be added to the informational materials. Faculty teaching the listed courses are encouraged to help market the program. Florida Tech will need to report on the progress of the program to SACS in 3-4 years.

**Mr. Eric Kledzik, Vice President for Information Technology**

**Mr. Eric Donath, Instructional Programmer/Analyst**

**TOPIC: Evaluation Kit**

Mr. Kledzik introduced the presentation, indicating that there was a spring pilot of Evaluation Kit at the Melbourne Campus and a summer pilot at the Extended Studies campus.

Mr. Donath gave a detailed report of the pilot program. Students were blocked from accessing courses until completing Evaluation Kit. Some students attempted to opt out of the evaluation, but could not do so. Several techniques were employed to drive response rate, including an information campaign sent out by software to both students and instructors and regular reminders every 2 days. Faculty participating in the pilot program did not receive results until after grades were finalized. The response rate of the spring pilot program was 73%. Once reports were available, faculty could access results directly from an email, which is a quicker turnaround than Scantron. There are many customizable settings to track and rank faculty from the raw data and results can be split by college or unit. The biggest obstacle was understanding the lines of reporting among the academic units.

President Baarmand asked who had access to the results at this time?

Mr. Donath replied that for the pilot program only the deans and Provost Baloga received the results. Participating faculty, of course, received their own results. He added that the time lag in paper reports hindered response to results and hopes the quick reporting will help departments act on the results and put them into practice more effectively.

Mr. Kledzik clarified that faculty to monitor the response rate even if the results were held until grades were finalized. Tactics to drive response rate can be taken away or put back in.

Mr Donath commented in more detail about the drivers of students response. QR codes are given to students at the completion of the survey which can be sent into Canvas for an assignment or extra credit. The code doesn’t show the results, just that the student has completed the survey. The regular email reports to instructors includes a box that displays the current response rate. FIT followed Evaluation Kit’s suggestions regarding the volume of automated messages sent to instructors and students, but it is possible to be more assertive by hiding student grades until completed. Mr. Donath believes an 80% response rate is possible with the more assertive tools.

President Baarmand shared concern voiced by faculty regarding the perception of pestering that could influence student responses.

Mr. Kledzik responded that the process can be adjusted if evidence suggests it is becoming too annoying for students.

Dr. Nasri Nesnas reflected on his experience with the pilot program, citing the advantage of overcoming student absences in class with the online format.

Sen. Arrasmith added that Evaluation Kit could be done during class time and students could bring their own device to complete the survey.

Sen. Yuran suggested tracking the relationship between student evaluations and the response rate tools to see if frustrations over the survey and motivators were a factor.

Sen. Walton cited that the decrease in evaluation scores at Purdue University’s rollout of Evaluation Kit was statistically significant. The literature shows this correlation as well.

Sen. Winkelmann voiced concern that student evaluations are the only official judgement of faculty teaching. It is critical that administrators understand the impact Evaluation Kit may have on student responses and recalibrate standards that play into promotion and raises. The transition needs to be smooth, as faculty jobs are at stake.

Mr. Donath indicated that the pilot and report to the Faculty Senate will help everyone work through these issues for a smooth transition. There is an option to “save for later” that could be implemented to mitigate the annoyance factor.

President Baarmand recommended that faculty work with ITS to identify weakness and improve the system. We are no longer at the stage of deciding if paper evaluations will be replaced, so attention should be given to making the Evaluation Kit experience better.

Dr. Nesnas asked if questions should be tailored to fit the new evaluation environment rather than just transferred from the paper survey.

President Baarmand cited the flexibility is in the system to change questions, but advised that there be agreement with the academic administration.

Dr. Bonhomme asked that the Teaching Council be involved in any revisions to the questions and suggested that students would be encouraged by efforts to revise these surveys that would reflect in their feedback.

Sen. Kaya asked if the survey could be stopped and restarted.

Sen. Johnson asked for clarification regarding students’ ability to enter Canvas until the survey was completed.

Mr. Donath responded that answers couldn’t be saved and that students would have to close the window to enter Canvas. Canvas, however, does not have to be open to work on the survey.

President Baarmand recommended that the Senate add to a future agenda, under New Business, to look at the questions that are being asked in the evaluations. We need to understand who has the final word on the questions and how the deans and administration are involved in the decision.

Sen. Winkelmann recalled that the Academic Policy Committee had chosen an existing survey from another school for the questions that are currently asked. The committee made the recommendation with the Senate’s approval.

President Baarmand asked faculty to provide feedback to Mr. Donath and to the Senate officers, emphasizing the urgency of revising the tool with the imminent adoption.

Sen. Brenner asked how long it would take to change the questions, to which Mr. Donath replied 3-4 days.

Dr. Nesnas asked if there was comparative data with paper surveys that was collected. A comparison should be done to see the impact and to recalibrate the assessment of faculty teaching.

President Baarmand recommended that the faculty who conducted both the paper and online survey in the pilot to look for any correlation and to report it to the Senate.

**From the Floor**

Sen. Perdigao asked that the changes to faculty pay and enrollment requirements for summer courses be discussed at a future meeting. Sen. Arrasmith agreed, inquiring if the changes had any impact on revenue this summer.

President Baarmand assured that Provost Baloga would be able to answer questions regarding summer courses at the October meeting.

**Adjournment**

President Baarmand asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, so made by Sen. Huser and seconded by Sen. Brenner, and with a unanimous vote adjourned the meeting at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin R. Burke, Secretary