

Florida Tech Faculty Senate
November 1, 2016

Minutes

Senators Present: W. Arrasmith (DES), M. Baarmand (PSS), P. Bernhard (Sch. of Computing), J. Brenner (Chem. Eng./Biomed. Eng.), K. Burke (SAC), P. Converse (CoPLA), A. Cudmore (COB), H. Edwards (SAC), M. Fenn (BME), A. Huser (Lib), U. Jones (Aero), S. Kozaitis (Lib), B. Lail (ECE), T. Marcinkowski (DEIS), L. Perdigao (SAC), C. Polson (Bio), P. Ray (DMES), R. Rusovici (MAE), D. Sandall (COB), M. Silaghi (Sch. of Computing), G. Tenali (Math), R. van Woesik (Bio), R. Wehmschulte (Chem), B. Wheeler (Aero), K. Winkelmann (Chem), F. Yumiceva (PSS)

Other Attendees: Ms. Karen Gathercole, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Robert L. Phebus, Board of Trustees – Academic Affairs Chair; Nasri Nesnas (Chem); Richard Turner (BIO); Chao Wang (Lib)

Call to Order

President Sandall called the meeting to order at 3:29 p.m. and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October's meeting; a motion was made by Sen. van Woesik, seconded by Sen. Brenner, and approved unanimously by vote of voice.

Guest Speaker

Ms. Karen Gathercole, Director of Human Resources

Topic: The Impact of New Federal Guidelines on the University and other Human Resources Topics

Ms. Gathercole reported on HR's process of updating the university's compliance with new guidelines for exempt and non-exempt wage and labor division in higher education institutions, which is part of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). She prepared stats of staffing changes within each college as a response to questions regarding postdocs:

- College of Aeronautics, no changes
- Bisk College of Business, no changes
- College of Engineering, two changes of exempt to non exempt
- College of Psychology and Liberal Arts, changes for one research staff member and three interns

-College of Science, ten changes that impact a blend of research professors, post masters and research assistants

Only 16 of 800 staff in total were impacted by the regulation change, including one person holding the title of postdoctoral fellow. The minimum salary for exempt employees is \$47,476, but a new minimum of \$51,000 is scheduled in the near future. Ms. Gathercole urged faculty to keep this in mind for future grants, so the university does not need to go through the process again. Florida is not one of the states that have filed a lawsuit to block these labor changes and the injunction in Texas is not expected to halt the compliance timetable. Florida Tech is ready for the December 1 deadline. HR began working in June and created new job descriptions when necessary. Everyone impacted by the change has been notified.

Sen. Edwards asked if instructors are subject to these guidelines.

Ms. Gathercole specified that any employee with a primary role of instruction is exempt from the guidelines. The Dept. of Labor specifically addressed the non-instructional role of research assistants in regard to the guidelines. Ms. Gathercole went on to respond to a question about library faculty, stating that a faculty title exempts those library staff members from the guidelines. Coaches are also exempt, as the Dept. of Labor will recognize their role in teaching the sport to students. HR looked into the situation of adjuncts who are exempt in the instructional role, but if the adjunct is also a staff member then the instructional hours create issues of overtime. The upper administration is allowing individual units to decide if they want to pay overtime for staff who also work as adjuncts, but most staff in this situation have advanced degrees, are salaried, and thus are exempt.

Sen. Perdigao asked about adjuncts who are not staff.

Sen. Baarmand inquired about the overtime rate and if it applied just to hours in the evenings and on weekends.

Sen. Fenn questioned the distinction between research assistants and research associates.

Ms. Gathercole clarified that adjuncts are exempt because their primary role is instruction and that graduate student assistants (GSAs) are also exempt because they have a different employee class and contract than the professional research assistants. The overtime rate is time plus 1/2 and applies to any additional hours during the week beyond 40 hours, no matter when they're scheduled. The employee's schedule is determined by the unit.

The presentation then turned to other topics from the HR office. Ms. Gathercole first answered a question from Sen. Perdigao regarding new procedures for timesheet reporting: certain faculty on 9-month contracts might be asked by their department heads to submit their time sheet on PAWS each pay period, but faculty only need to report exceptions, such as sick time.

These timesheets are currently designed to cover multiple types of employees. There is only one system for everyone and the verbiage cannot be changed for staff and for faculty. For example, HR does not have a good way to report time and effort for grants, so the Office of Research can use these timesheets as a way to report time and effort for grants with time stamping. The Office of Research is also developing other systems in partnership with HR to report time and effort on funded grants.

Ms. Gathercole concluded the presentation with benefits information. Upon approval from the ICUBA Board Members, HR hopes to offer a second healthcare plan in response to feedback regarding co-pay plans. No increases in premiums are planned for employee-only plans and HSA accounts will be balanced for families. Health insurance options are also available for adjuncts and other part-time employees through a private plan on the national exchange, which can be accessed online. There is also consideration of new concierge benefits, including light car repair, oil changes, dry cleaning, travel agencies, and a Christmas savings plan, which can be brought to campus for individuals who want them at no additional cost to the university.

Pres. Sandall asked if the concierge benefits were a la carte and if there were any discounts for local gyms.

Dr. Nasri Nesnas asked which health insurance plan HR was adding and if the old plan would be kept.

Ms. Gathercole indicated that HR will put individuals wanting certain concierge benefits in touch with the vendors and will consider bringing additional services that FIT employees want. Life Fitness gym memberships are available for \$20 through the medical insurance plan. The current preferred PPO plan will be kept and the second one will be a new type of plan.

[[*Following the meeting, Ms. Gathercole provided steps for finding the gym discounts. These deals can be accessed through our single-sign on feature with ICUBABenefits.org. Once a person logs-in, they should go to the BCBS website, and then to the Health and Wellness Tab.]]

President's Report

President Sandall did not have much to report. He announced Brooke Wheeler as a new senator from the College of Aeronautics, and Sen. Fenn announced that he was serving as a substitute. Pres. Sandall reminded senators to send any corrections and updates for the senators representing their academic units.

The Board of Trustees met toward the end of October and had a good discussion, which resulted in setting rates for tuition and housing. The Budget Committee has begun meeting and is now prepared to build the budget based on the new tuition rate. This process will be ongoing over the next couple of months until the committee is ready to present a budget to Dr. McCay. Pres. Sandall is pleased that a faculty member is on this committee, especially to advocate for faculty merit raises if there will be a surplus.

Finally, Pres. Sandall provided an update on the Multi-Track Faculty Proposal, which has already received supportive feedback from Dr. McCay and Dr. Baloga. Their suggestions were minor and are reflected in the version currently under review by the college deans. Dr. Baloga will convene with the deans to go through the proposal and the executive committee will make additional revisions after this meeting. At that time, the proposal and Powerpoint will go to faculty senators to present to their individual units in order to gather feedback from all faculty. The discussion will continue in the January meeting, scheduled for January 10, and a motion to approve the proposal may not take place until February. Dr. McCay and Dr. Baloga do not believe the proposal needs approval from the Board of Trustees, as a change in the contract system, so the plan could be put into place when contracts are issued for the next academic year, which is what Dr. McCay wants. This timetable will depend on the response from the faculty. Pres. Sandall assured senators that they will have copies of the proposal before the next senate meeting, unless something egregious happens. The executive committee wanted to take the time to ensure that there would be no deal breakers for Dr. McCay, Dr. Baloga, and the deans.

Sen. Baarmand announced that Dr. Baloga is now Provost of FIT.

Dr. Nesnas asked if there were changes to contract lengths in the proposal, if there was a default track, and if faculty had to be in a specific track.

Pres. Sandall answered that faculty would have a choice and that contracts lengths would be the same or better than in the current system, as the proposal is currently written. He reminded senators that faculty are more involved in big decisions and planning under the new administration. Sen. Baarmand, President-Elect of the Faculty Senate, is sitting on the Student Success committee.

Committee Reports

Senator Tenali, **Academic Policies Committee** chair, plans to meet with the registrar's office sometime in the next month to see if there are any difficulties in aligning FIT's spring break with the local school system.

Sen. Marcinkowski followed up on the last meeting's report, inquiring if Dr. Baloga had provided a copy of the WES report. Sen. Tenali had not received it, but Pres. Sandall received a copy and will pass it along to the Academic Policies Committee.

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

There was no **Scholarship Committee** report.

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

Senator Kozaitis, a member of the **Wellness Committee**, reported that there had been a lot of activity the past month and that a large group on campus had formed and begun gathering materials. Later in the meeting, Sen. Cudmore, chair of the **Wellness Committee**, added that the group was embracing technology and had invited Ms. Gathercole (HR) and some other campus directors such as Rod Newcomb and Kevin Graham to join. Troy Gassman created a Canvas page to connect the group through technology. The committee will be drafting a process for handling complaints, which is specified in the student handbook but not in the faculty handbook. Procedures and policies for maternity/paternity leave and for parking are again under discussion.

Senator Arrasmith, **Technology, Resources, and Infrastructure Committee** chair, reported that the new Faculty Senate webpage is done, but still in a staging area. Features include a pull-down menu to display the function of the senate and its officers and committees and a polling feature that will be open to everyone. Since anyone can respond to the polling feature, the committee has also requested a second polling function requiring faculty login but recording anonymous responses. Future polling functions may include additional sub groups. The website also includes links to past survey results, the academic calendar, committee pages with information about the chair and members, the senate constitution, by-laws, and more can be added. A central email address for the Faculty Senate was created and the recipients of those emails need to be determined. The website will go live as soon as a few remaining details are completed.

Sen. Arrasmith would also like feedback regarding PAWS timing out after 30 minutes, which can be frustrating when dealing with student records over a long period of time. A request was put in, but without a response. Sen. Arrasmith was curious if other faculty had experienced similar issues with tech requests, particularly in the classroom.

Sen. Rusovici and Sen. Cudmore both reported a positive experience with recent tech requests.

Sen. Arrasmith concluded by soliciting additional members for the committee, which does not have representation from the College of Business and the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts. The committee is large, so attempts are being made to meet virtually using tools like Doodle.

Sen. Baarmand recommended that the past recipients of faculty excellence awards should be displayed on the webpage, since requests for that information are made and he is the only one with access to that information.

Sen. Marcinkowski pointed out that faculty are not always sure who is responsible for making those selections and recommended putting that information on the main webpage, not just on the committee pages.

Sen. Brenner and Sen. Rusovici agreed to join Sen. Baarmand in compiling the recipient lists.

New Business

President Sandall requested a motion to elect a permanent secretary for the remainder of the academic year and opened the floor for any nominations in addition to Sen. Burke, who is serving as interim secretary. Seeing none, Sen. Marcinkowski moved to close nominations and Sen. Edwards seconded that motion. Sen. Burke was elected secretary by unanimous vote of voice.

Adjournment

President Sandall adjourned the meeting at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin R. Burke, Secretary