Faculty Senate Meeting

December 5, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
In-person in the 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), Charles Bryant(Business), Steven Rivet (Business), Donald Platt(APSS), Csaba Palotai(APSS), 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), Rob van Woesik (OEMS), Pallav Ray(OEMS), Gary Zarillo (OEMS), Kevin Burke (SAC), Angela Tenga (SAC), Joe Montelione (SAC), Wanfa Zhang (SAC), David Wilder(BA), Patrick Converse(PSY), Jessica Wildman(PSY), Marshall Jones(PSY), William Bowman(Library)

Senator Absent: Manasvi Lingam (APSS), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Abram Walton((Business), Angel Otero (Business Online), Kenia Nunes (BES), Sidhartha Bhattacharyya(EECS), Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Chiradeep Sen (MCE)

Proxies: Don Warren (Proxy for Csaba Palotai(APSS))

Other attendees: Nasri Nesnas, Melissa Borgen, Mary Bonhomme, Anushka Boyd, Tristan Fiedler, Suzanne Kozaitis, Ray Bonhomme, Nancy Garmer, Rudolf Wehmschulte, Nick Daher, Penny Vassar, Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Gary Burns, Kevin Burke

Call to Order
Senate Pres. Brown called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. The minutes from October 3, 2023, are approved.

Note on Proxies:
Proxies must be communicated to the Senate President beforehand, in writing; each proxy must be carried by a non-Senator, and no one may have more than one proxy (“one person, one vote”).

Faculty Senate Officer Election:
Nominee for President-Elect: Dr. Nakin Suksawang

Pres. Brown moves on to the election of the Faculty Senate President-Elect, Senator Nakin Suksawang, who is running unopposed. Senator Suksawang says a few words: Sen. Suksawang says it’s a good time in the sense that many changes have happened
in the university. I hope that we, collectively at the faculty senate, can make some meaningful changes with the new administration that's just coming in.

I'm hoping that everybody will bring their voices. Let's discuss some of the things we need. Let's try to make this meeting as effective as possible to help the faculty move forward. That's all I have to say.

Pres. Suksawang thanked him and launched the poll, noting that as only one person was running, the options of that Zoom poll would be yes, no, or abstain.

The Voting Results: The poll results from Zoom Poll and Ballots (in-person) 22/24 (Yes), 1 (No), 2 (abstain):
13 Senators voted via the Zoom poll:
11 (Yes), zero (No), and 2 (Abstains);
11 senators voted via Ballots:
11 (Yes), 1 (No), and zero (Abstain) (only Senators voted and Anusika has confirmed their votes all via the Zoom report)
The results of the Faculty Senate vote for Faculty Senate President-elect for the 2024 and 2025 term is Dr. Nakin Suksawang: Congratulations President-elect, Dr. Suksawang

Reports
Sen. Pres. Brown gives the president’s report:

President Nicklow will not attend the Senate this month; he's in Atlanta for SACS. Two provostial finalists have interviewed on campus; a third will be here Thursday, concluding this group of finalists. The Search Committee has been told our task is done, but it isn't quite: we are one of the groups meeting with finalists. I urge everyone who meets with or hears finalists to answer the surveys about them. The next stage of the search will be a decision by the President (possibly with others) either to make an offer to one of these finalists or to “go back to the well.”

I have met once with the Interim Provost and the President, and once with the Provost separately. The meeting with the President and Provost on the 15th was mostly preparation for the strategic planning meeting on the 17th. At that meeting, a draft strategic plan was unveiled; the planning committee was asked not to disclose the plan because it's still a draft. I think the final plan will be presented to a Trustee committee this week for adoption by the full Board in January, followed by disclosure to the campus. The Senate’s R1/R2 discussion was input to the strategic plan; that we didn’t take a position on it meant that no “Voice of the full Faculty” was incorporated. We may have gotten lucky, but I don't know. My meeting with the Provost alone was on the 20th, and we mostly discussed possible adjustments to tenure implementation. This issue ties into some others: I'll have more to say in the Discussion. The Inauguration Committee continues to meet every week or two, and planning is going forward. I attended a meeting of the university Patents Committee, which considered two proposals.
Committee Report:

1. Academic Policies Committee:
   Sen. Kishore says, Apart from that statement which we discussed, that we would bring it up on the floor for a resolution. There’s nothing more than that for me to report now.
   We’ve got a statement from that committee about office hours. Statement on Office Hours:

   "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 the course syllabus. We believe ultimate determination on details rests with faculty, their departments, and colleges."

   [The statement is to become a resolution (as a new business)]

2. Administrative Policies Committee: Sen. Kaya was not present.
   [John Harris will be present about the instructor track at the January meeting]

3. Excellence Awards Committee:
   Sen. Wildman says the official announcement for the awards went out and is due on February 9th.

4. Scholarships Committee:
   Sen. Nezamoddini-Kachouie had no report

5. Technology Resources and Infrastructure Committee:

   Sen. Poole says that as everyone has noticed our HIS compliance training, the Timing of that is a little all over the place. We’re going to look into possibly getting that consolidated at the beginning of the semester when it is not summer, as many of us are nine-month faculty. Another item is that Canvas is running out of quota resources for faculty members, so if you have a lot of data. Has anyone had any issues with that? Two faculty members brought that to my attention. The last item is about IT updates on the issue of slow WiFi on campus.

6. Welfare Committee:
   Sen. Suksawang says the Resolution (revised one) was sent to the Staff advisory board, and they support the resolution (The staff advisory committee does not vote on it)
   I know that some senators raised a concern that we should include the language of staff in there. Now, the staff advisory committee does support the idea and thinks it would be beneficial for all employees. Whether that resolution needs to come from both the staff advisory committee and the senator is a question. We need to figure out if there is a procedure for the staff advisory committee to figure out this. Another
item is faculty salary equity. We have data but need to look into that. I could share these with the subcommittee first.

**Old Business**

No Old Business to discuss.

**New business**

The statement on Office Hours was brought from the Academic Policies Committee.

The statement reads as follows:

"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 the course syllabus. We believe ultimate determination on details rests with faculty, their departments, and colleges."

Sen. Pre. Brown asks if there is any discussion on this statement for resolution.

Sen. Turgut suggests that we put this in the resolution format and take it to our constituents and vote on it next month.


Sen. Kishore comments that the statements you read were drafted based on the feedback from the Senate floor a few months back. This was already brought on the Senate floor at that time.

Sen. Pres. Brown suggests bringing that back for a constituent discussion and placing it as Old Business for next month.

Se. Jones' comments, the Department and Program chair should be the ones enforcing and forcing it to do. It's not our business to say exactly what that description should be.

Sen. Turgut says I remember I said that it's up to the department. A resolution will be sent from the faculty senate telling the administrators in colleges what to do and taking their flexibility away. It never became a strong statement as read in today's agenda.

Sen. Kishore comments that the discussion was when several faculty spoke up about it and that it should not be as guidance from the Senate as to how each department should handle their office hours. It should be at the purview of the department level. We drafted those three sentences based on feedback from the Senate floor.

Sen. Jones comments that we’re codifying something that, by practice, should be happening. But in the confusion of whether or not faculty were or were not being made available to students, the assumption was that they weren’t. The Dean of students brought it to us for guidance. Our guidance is, yes, there should be office hours, but it should be left to the departments to determine what that prescription should be.
Sen. Kishore says it didn't come from the dean of students. It came from the provost's office. Pres. Brown brought it up to us. And so we were requested to discuss providing specific guidance amongst ourselves and then with the Senate. Based on the feedback that we received, we concluded, and that's what the resolution is on, that the Senate cannot provide any specific guidance as it is one size fits all, and it has to be at the purview of the department with some specifics about including into the syllabus like I think that's been the practice even now. But that's how much we could get from the Senate floor. And we drafted those three lines based on that feedback.

Sen. Turgut comments that is correct. It came from the provost only. And you brought it to the executive committee like that.

Sen. Kishore confirms again that that is correct. Two issues were brought up: One was on verified absence, and the second was on disruptive behavior, for which he requested feedback directly from the Senate floor. I think both of them have been cleared. Suppose any feedback should've been submitted or corresponded directly with the dean of students. But, this one on office, our guidance was not from the dean of students but instead from the Provost's office, as Pres. Brown brought it to us in the executive committee meeting. And then we discussed it here in the Senate. What's the next step here? Do we need to draft any resolution, or would the one we gave you be sufficient? And that can be circulated to the Senate senators to be shared with their constituencies and then voted on next time?

Sen. Pre. Brown says that the statement can be circulated to be shared with constituents.

**Discussion**

Sen. Pre. Brown begins the discussion section.

Sen. Turgut asks,

I asked this in the executive committee meeting as well about the settlement with the rowing team and Title IX, which is a good thing. Is it possible to get some information about its impact on the budget?

What kind of a settlement it was because when it came out, it was a major issue by interim President King. It happened over the summer when the Rowing team sent a very long and detailed email protesting the decision. The board of trustees had to reverse. And then there was some litigation going on. And despite that, our interim president was an attorney. Unfortunately, we had to settle. The other question I have is, what is the next step in selecting the provost, and how is the survey sent out about the finalists used and utilized? Those surveys are very general, going to alumni, students, and faculty. And are they sorted out per the views of faculty, alumni, and students before they're presented to the final decision maker(s)?
Sen. Pres. Brown says, If you have taken, you know, there’s a bunch of categories listed of respondents. I understand the different categories are being tabulated separately, but I'm unsure.

Sen. Turgut’s comments: My question is whether they are broken down. According to the survey takers, whether it's a faculty because, at the end of the day, the faculty’s views will differ for a chief academic officer than a student. I mean, I don't think students should weigh the same way as the faculty point of view or the alumni. And I'm also an alumnus of this university, by the way.

Sen. Pre. Brown says, my understanding of the answer to your question is yes. But I believe they are being split out. Who holds more weight is up to the decision-makers.

Sen. Turgut asks, Is it possible, as the faculty Senate president representing all the 300 plus faculty, that you can ask this president? As the immediate past president. I know that some questions are hard, but that's why we run for these posts.


Sen. Kachouie: I would like to bring this to the floor about hiring the Provost. I would like to see what the feedback from the faculty Senate is. As part of the executive committee, we asked the candidates questions, but it didn't seem that they were prepared or they had relevant answers. They do not have the experience since none of them have been provosts at the rank of the universities, which is not impressive. One of them is coming from a university ranked 332. The other one is 216, and of course, it is a promotion for them. But I don't know how they can address or resolve the issues that we have. That is my opinion. But the questions that we asked that we didn't receive proper answers to or any let's say, potential plan to promote Florida Tech. Other groups have met them, too. So I would like to see other people’s opinions about this. And it's better to say and give feedback before you face it than to have one of them as your provost.

Sen. Pres. Brown asks if there are further comments about the previous two finalists.

Sen. Nesnas asks, can you clarify if you're talking about questions and answers that the executive committee was addressing with the previous candidates, or was it at the recent meeting that he addressed to the entire campus community? Many of us are not on the executive committee, so you could elaborate because we're not aware. I only attended the campus-wide one.

Sen. Kachouie says, it was the private meeting that the executive committee had with the candidates. All the different responsibilities that come with being a proper provost concerning the teaching and research of financial problems, tenure track, and all of those things since they are deans, not necessarily that they have been dealing with all of those issues. That is specifically for a provost.

So the question is, are we able to bring in somebody who has been for such a small university or who has been exposed and has relevant experience? All three candidates
audience are deans in different universities, two of them public universities. That third one is from a private university. They have different problems but different issues to deal with.

Sen. Wildman’s comments: I was going to say that an entire committee was involved in the selection process up until now. There were many applications reviewed very thoroughly. What I wouldn't want to do is assume my small amount of exposure to these three candidates or deem the top candidates somehow. A better view of them holistically than what's been done up until this point. If we don't like these three, do we have an alternative, or is this what we get to choose from? And if so, then I think we need to judge the three that we have because that's where we're at.

Sen. van Woesik says,

I can weigh on this because I spent two months on the committee deciding who would come to campus, and I signed a document saying I couldn't disclose anything, so I'm not going to disclose anything. But I'll tell you what we did do. There were 76 candidates and some exceptional people there, as some people had previous experience. We got the best people we could find out of those 76 nationwide. And we had some international people as well. That's all I can say about those who happened to be deans, but they happened to be exceptional deans.

Sen. Turgut comments,

To add on, as I was a president search committee member. So, I can’t discuss details about what happened there as well, but the question that I brought up is something that came up for me due to the service. And I did ask that question to all the board of trustees. We need to sort out which samples and surveys are coming from the faculty, which are coming from the alumni, and which are from the students. It didn't make me the most popular person in the room, but that's the job of the faculty Senate presidency. And sometimes you got to go against the grain. Six board of trustees considered my comments and thought that was the right way. So we have to respect the process until this point because the committee worked, and they brought this finalist, who came to campus. My question is only about what happens next. I mean, is there a single decision-maker? Because there was a committee for the president, the executive committee of the board of trustees decided whether it was just the president. Which may be the case. We don't know that. We need clarity on that. How does he approach these surveys if he’s the single decision-maker? I'm sorry, but my input or anyone in this room should not weigh the same way as an alumnus’s or student’s input. You know, the same goes with the R1 or R2 survey sent out, which I also brought up. We have to be careful with this, you know, surveying, and it could go either way. And we all want the best interest of our institution.

Sen. Pres. Brown asked if there was further discussion.

Sen. Kachouie says,
There is no doubt that the committee has done a good job, perhaps selecting based on whatever they have. But the question is that whatever they had to do, that was good enough.

Sen. Jones says, would it be fair to say that it's as good as we're going to get?

Sen. van Woesik's comments, I'd like to backtrack on that a little bit to think. Ten years ago, we wouldn't have had 76 people nationwide applying for this job. I was surprised and thrilled that we got many people with that exceptional qualification pool. I think we should if he decides to start again. Then we'll start again. And we can we can do that. You know, it's a lot more work, but. I can't make that judgment call. I think it's just going to be one person deciding.

Don Warren asks. My understanding is that we used an agency to help find these candidates. So if we do not like these candidates, we can restart with a different agency. If the final three candidates are so odious, nobody likes them.

Sen. van Woesik comments, it's the agencies and, you know, an amazing group of people. One of the committee members is the president of two universities in this country and a provost. So I would not go and say, let's scrap the agency. It's not the agency's fault. We had an advertisement out there and the agency helped us get extra people in our pool. So, I don't think it would be a sensible option to go for a different agency.

Sen. Kachouie says, I'm comparing it with that other hiring position that I was involved in was that search committee for the Dean of College of Engineering and Science. And we didn't involve any agency, but we had very good candidates. You were on that committee, too. The question is whether they could bring Dr. Harris from the University of Florida, the best Ranked University in the state of Florida; for this we had two more candidates pretty much at the top level, at the same level. I would say that if we were able to do that for the search for Dean, why are we, not able to do that and bring well and high-qualified people similar to what we did for the dean of COES here as well? No agency was involved, and many people applied.

Sen. van Woesik comments,

I chaired that committee; just to remind you, you probably remember that it was a lot of work as well. But remember, John Harris was the chair of the computer sciences who stepped into the role of the dean. He wasn't a dean that went to a dean. So, I don't see a reason you have to be in a position to assume the role when you have an exceptional candidate with lots of experience. They had 16 years of experience as the head of the Department of Computer Sciences, and he was ready to step into the role of Dean. And that's the rationale for the search committee: they thought these people were ready to take up that role.

Sen. Kachouie says, right from the department chair, he went to be dean, but the department shared a rank of 28 to add to the dean of the University rank of 202. Now,
we are hiring a dean of the rank of 332 or 216. That is a difference. I believe the ranking of the university where you're working plays a big role. I cannot compare that to somebody who is coming from UF with the rank of top ten of the university, with somebody who is coming from a top 300 university.

Sen. van Woesik comments that many other things are at stake. And we took into consideration, without disclosing anything, the ranking of the universities from where they came. And a lot of those people were dismissed from that top list. And maybe I'm saying too much else,

Sen. Turgut says,

I would like to add something because the research firm used here is the same search firm that the committee that I was a member of selected President Search Committee selected this search firm, AGB. And as a result, we got four or five finalists here on campus prior to that stage. I can't go into much detail, but there were 12 semifinalists that nobody saw, and then we went through over 100 folders. And you need to do a national search looking for a president and provost. From what I've seen, you need a search firm to help you do the preliminary screening. Then, there were a few that were already in their semifinalists.

I called a few things related to ethical issues that cannot be discussed. They do screening with their social media, everything. And then when it comes down to the finalist, you look at how many direct reports the size of the university, because we had a current sitting dean coming here as a president search finalist, you as well, University of North Carolina. But the college he was the head of had more students and faculty than here. So it's, you know, not just one dimension. There are many other perspectives that are going into this.

Sen. Jones says that our rankings have dropped, and I'm not sure that we're the brightest star on the list of potential promos to look at. And we're also digging ourselves out of the hole a little bit.

Sen. Wildman says, I've also just like to say that I think you all are great faculty, and you're at a university whose rankings just dropped, and I don't think that drop has anything to do with your skill set.


Sen. Pres. Brown says,

This was a topic the provost brought up for discussion, basically for brainstorming. We were told last month that we were supposed to. I believe we were given an interpretation last month that any changes in the Tenure system had to be initiated with the AFTC. So I met with Gary, who disagreed with the word initiate. The discussion should include both bodies. Today, I got the same result with Sen. van Woesik on the
phone. What I was thinking of doing. The parliamentary way to do this is to go around the room and see what ideas anybody had.

Sen. van Woesik asks for clarifications about what the provost told you and why you wanted to initiate this conversation or why he wanted to initiate this conversation in the first place. To say, brainstorm. I don't see the problem unless you specify it to us.

Sen. Pres. Brown comments, I believe his thought was that some people had not been tenured who should have been. And there is that feeling in certain quarters. And you pointed out to me today that those people had the option to appeal to AFTC, which I didn't know. We’re supposed to do a review of the tenure system every so often. And this is sliding into that. Three other things happened when I invited John Harris to come here to talk about the instructor track. He said he also wanted to talk about tenure because the “system is a mess.” Now, what exactly he meant by that? I do not know. He didn't say.

Another item, I had an email from Mark Archambault, who wants the Senate to review Faculty Handbook 2.5, which is the policy on periods of faculty appointments.

According to Mark, this policy has yet to be updated since 2011.

Given the implementation of tenure, I would request that the faculty Senate review this policy and pass a resolution that updates it, incorporating information on the appointments of tenured faculty, research, faculty, teaching, and track faculty, all at every rank whether you call it teaching track or not, instructors and adjunct faculty.

This is important for SACS, he says, and it cannot be delayed.

And he says he's happy to discuss, but I am unsure if he’s volunteering to come to the Senate. Why this is leading to a fairly big discussion is that one of the Provost candidates, Dr. Kiss, mentioned that he had been involved in a massive review of the tenure policy at his institution. It took them a couple of years, he said.

Don Warren asks, you say 2.5 in the policies. I'm looking around, and I need help finding the policy 2.5. Now, it's possible that I'm not looking in the right place.

Sen. Wildman: When I just Googled 2.5 in our search bar, I missed this.

Sen. Park says, on the website, there is Faculty Handbook 2.5 Policy on Periods of Faculty Appointments, with an effective date of July 4, 2011.

Sen. Pres. Brown confirms, I am looking over the secretary's shoulder and there it is.

Sen. Turgut says,

Can I add something to the discussion? Because I think people are lost in too much information. What happened with the AFTC charter in the past, and the timeline of it? The AFTC charter was originally passed in the Senate in 2019, by the way, and 2018, and then the implementation began in 2019 and the review.
It came with the tenure system, and it was borne out of the Senate, just like most universities do as a charter. After practicing the original charter, there was a need from the AFTC members, all of them unanimously to revise it. And as a result, the process began per their charter. The original charter also said that they are the ones to review it, revise it as well, and oversee it. I, as the immediate past Senate President, communicated with the AFTC and brought it to the Senate. There were three months of discussion. And as a result, there was a very transparent vote by tally and by roll call. You can see the revised version and the original version on our faculty Senate Web page, and there is even a breakdown of the votes. The AFTC charter is very new. It hasn't even been through one cycle yet. I don't think we should be hung up with a single word who initiates it. Of course, we can make suggestions, but do we want to prematurely waste mine month after month? Do we want to waste months discussing, you know? What is being just reviewed, coordinated, approved, and endorsed by the Senate after only ten months? That is the question.

Sen. Snelson comments on that subject, I can say, as someone who's currently going up for tenure, that I agree with Dean Harris that the process is a mess. But one of the biggest problems, from my perspective, is that things keep changing. So every time someone tells us that such a process will happen, it never happens exactly like that. So, I think if there are serious issues, they should be changed. But we need to be thoughtful about not being very deliberate and not making changes that will be reversed next year because, somehow, this is the main problem; I'm not the only one who feels this way. I've heard there's much feeling out there that you never know exactly what will be expected of you. That is my perspective.

Sen. Pres. Brown says, I can say I've talked to a couple of teaching track colleagues of mine who say they don't mind what the rules are as long as they don't change.

Sen. Wildman says, A quick point of clarification for me. Two things are happening right now. A question of whether the Senate should systematically discuss or not discuss changes or potential changes to tenure. And this policy, 2.5 changes in wording, are those two different things?

Sen. Pres. Brown says we’re talking about the general revision of the tenure policy.

Sen. Turgut: Well, per the agenda, we discussed possible modifications in implementing tenure. The FH 2.5, I think, came out with Dr. Brown's suggestion from Dr. Archambault. That was a separate issue. It wasn't a discussion item on the agenda.

Sen. Jones says, given the importance of Dr. Archambault about this issue, that would be helpful for the Senate if he'd come next month and explain exactly what it is he's concerned with. And this is some guidance.

Sen. van Woesik says, we need to take Dr. Stanley's comment seriously because, you know, think about what's happened over the last three or four years and how many changes have been going on. It's almost predictable that there's going to be change. Right. And that's what we don't want in a university system. We need that stability for people like, you know, to move forward if we start messing around with that again, We're asking for much trouble, especially with that new tenure track faculty that are coming in and expecting six years of stability because their job is to get grants and publish and teach classes and the rules keep changing on them. And it's not fair. Thanks for that comment.

Sen. Jones comments, Can I offer an agreeing counterpoint? I agree with you. There’s been a lot of change, and we want stability. But I can tell you, the perception from some of the STEM, non-STEM faculty is that our previous provost had little consideration for the non-STEM people, and it got more convoluted and messy in our colleges, and some of the discussion and frustration have been that those changes weren't necessarily considered all colleges. That was the nicest way I could say that.

Sen. Pres. Brown says, I agree with Senator Jones' good point. The instructor track proposal is also coming up next month. Is there further discussion of anything?

Sen. Wildman says, I was going to say that I would encourage everyone to come to the next meeting with specific points about those things if we have particular complaints about college or university-level tenure or a particular topic.

And I know I already brought the instructor tracks stuff back to our constituents once, but we can do it again.

Gary Burns says, I just wanted to comment that, you know, if anyone does have concerns about the promotion and tenure process, please send those to the AFTC. We welcome anything from the Faculty Senate and would encourage it to come from this body. However, individual faculty can reach out to us as well. In addition to myself, it's Dr. Dutta from the College of Business, Dr. Oyman from the College of Aeronautics, and Dr. Gu and Zhang from COES.

Sen. Turgut comments, to add some last points about the colleges having the freedom to revise their promotion guidelines. I think we should leave it at the college level because the tenure system is a university-wide issue. So if we try to bring the individual college issues prematurely here, we will get nowhere. Like AFTC, they practiced the original charter for four or five years. They felt the need. They revised it last year. The colleges can do the same.

Senate Pres. Brown asks for a motion to adjourn.

Sen. Jones responds with a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Joo young Park, Faculty Senate Secretary