

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

**Minutes**

**Senators Present:** M. Baarmand (PSS/4), M. Browning (Aero/4), K. Burke (SAC/3), P. Converse (Psych/4), H. Crawford (CS/4), I. Delgado Perez (COB/4), A. Dutta (COB/4), E. Guisbert (Bio/4), C. Harvey (SOBA/2), A. Huser (Lib/4), J. Ivey (SAC/3), M. Kaya (BME/4), S. Kozaitis (Lib/4), B. Lail (ECE/4), M. Lavooy (Psych/2), D. Lelekis (SAC/4), R. Mehta (Aero/4), A. Nag (PSS/3), H. Najafi (MCE/3), N. Nezamodini-Kachouie (Math/2), J. Park (DEIS/4), B. Paulillo (Psych/3), P. Ray (OES/4), M. Silaghi (CS/4), E. Subasi (ES/4), N. Suksawang (MAE/4), T. Turgut (COA/4), A. Welters (Math/3), D. Yuran (SAC/4)

**Senators Absent:** V. Kishore (CE/3), G. Maul (OES/3), T. Nguyen (MCE), D. Platt (ESD), R. Reichard (OES/3), R. Rusovici (MAE/3), D. Sandall (COB/1), A. Walton (COB), N. Weatherly (SBA/1)

**Proxies:** N. Nesnas for K. Winkelmann (Chem/3)

**Other Attendees:** Heidi Edwards (SAC), Tristan Fiedler (BCES), Kastro Hamed (COES), Jessica Ickes, Julie Shankle, Ryan Stansifer (COES)

**Call to Order**

Pres. Lail called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. The minutes from the Nov. 5 (no. 149) meeting were approved.

**Guest Speaker:**

Jessica Ickes, Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, spoke about the recent undergraduate rankings. She shared a Powerpoint presentation, which is available on the Senate website at <https://www.fit.edu/faculty-senate>.

One of the areas she pointed out was the grad retention rate, which makes up 35% of the overall ranking. The peer assessment score is also an important factor. Although Florida Tech's ranking fell overall from 177 to 202, we did show improvement in many areas. Notably, 14 of 18 metrics saw improvement and those make up 82% of the weighting. For Student Excellence we are ranked 113, which is our strongest area.

The drop in rank was mostly driven by changes to the Carnegie classification (from 226 ranked institutions up to 281 now). Some of the institutions that were added are now ranked above FIT. How often do such changes occur? According to Ms. Ickes, it had been every 10 years, but that

has now moved to every 3 years. However, universities don't know about these changes until the last minute.

Included in the Powerpoint is a data points chart that shows where we fall on each item. To review this information in detail, please visit the Senate website. Overall, the weak areas include: graduation and retention rates, peer assessment, faculty compensation, and financial resources. FIT's strength is student selectivity.

A question about retention was asked in regards to how transfer students factor in, and Ms. Ickes explained that transfers are not included. This applies to first-time students only.

Florida Tech has the opportunity to improve student retention and graduation rates, and this would have a long-term positive outcome for students and the university. Challenges include how unpredictable the changes are in the ranking criteria and how out of our control they are. Ickes was asked if there was a prediction of where we would be if those new schools were not added, and she responded that FIT probably would have gone up 10-15 spots. Dr. Nesnas asked how we did compared to our own retention rate in past years, and Ms. Ickes said that there was not a big change.

Ms. Ickes shared that there is an Academic Panel that has been meeting to discuss strategies that impact graduation and retention rates, including:

1. Academic success in the first semester (especially the first 8 weeks)
2. High school GPA has been a better predictor than SAT score
3. Male students are struggling more; female students are graduating at higher rates.

We have more male students here so that impacts us more than other universities.

Dr. Hamed asked if online students are included in these metrics, and Ms. Ickes responded that no, it is only face-to-face students. Sen. Mehta asked if it hurts our ranking if students transfer to another university, and Ms. Ickes answered that yes, they have to graduate here to count. In regards to this, a question was raised about whether or not we are asking students why they are transferring. Sen. Mehta suggested that the reason is probably cost, not the quality of FIT's education. Ms. Ickes said that she is working on a new exit survey.

Dr. Nesnas asked if we have looked at the correlation between more expensive tuition and retention rates. It was suggested that the more expensive a university, the better the retention typically because the student's family has more money to pay and has prepared their students better. Ms. Ickes contended that our data suggests that we would improve but we can't predict what other institutions will do.

Pres. Lail thanked Ms. Ickes and explained that the senate will continue to collect other questions to pass on to her, which can then be put on the senate website.

## **Old Business**

### *Committee Reports:*

1. Excellence: Sen. Subasi had nothing new to report.
2. Welfare: Sen. Dutta had nothing new to report
3. Administrative Policies: Sen. Rusovici is working on the admin survey.
4. Scholarship: Sen. Kachouie will meet with Sen. Sandall next week.
5. Academic Policies: Sen. Kishore has 2 new members for the committee, but he would like at least two more outside of COES. The committee will have a meeting soon.
6. TRI: Sen. Silaghi announced that the U-drive is still moving (within 6 months to a year) and there are potential alternatives. He will make a comparative table to help us select one.
7. Task Force for reallocating senators: Discussion below under New Business

### *President's Report*

There will be a national search for the Provost position. As explained in a recent email from Dr. McCay, there will also be a search for the position of Executive Vice Pres for Operations. Internal candidates will be considered for the position.

### *Vote on removing age restriction for online degree programs*

Ms. Shankle reminded us about the age restriction from 2008 which has now been largely abandoned by other universities. Online programs market to adult learners and they are not competing with on-campus coursework.

There was a vote by show of hands. 27 voted to endorse the removal of the restriction, 1 abstained, and none voted against.

### *Vote on updated resolutions for the University Committee on Faculty Promotion and Tenure (UCFPT) and the University Teaching-Track Promotion Committee (UTPC)*

Pres. Lail reviewed the details of the resolution that have been discussed at previous meetings. For the UCFPT committee, there will be 2 representatives for each college, except COES, which will have 4 reps. For the UTPC committee, it will be the same but there will also be 2 representatives for the library.

Pres. Lail emailed senators last week with the new sentence that was added to the resolutions:

**In the absence of committee members (examples include recusal and illness) the Provost and the Faculty Senate president will identify alternate members**

Dr. Nesnas clarified that there will not be a proxy pool like we have for AFTC. The alternates for the above committees will be on a need basis. There are not enough faculty available to have another proxy pool.

There was a vote by ballots with the following results:

26 voted to **endorse** the UCFPT and 27 voted to **endorse** the UTPC.

5 voted not to endorse the UCFPT and 4 voted not to endorse the UTPC.

There were no votes to abstain.

### **New Business**

#### *Faculty Handbook Task Force*

Sen. Winkelmann provided the following updates. The task force includes two senators from COES (Brian Lail and Kurt Winkelmann) and one senator from COA (Brooke Wheeler), COPLA (Lisa Perdigao) and Evans Library (Suzanne Kozaitis). They are waiting to hear from COB about their representative. The task force met on Nov 15 for the first time. At that meeting, it was agreed that the first task was to review the handbook for grammar, typos, and style without making any changes to the content. They are also considering alternative ways to organize the sections. Currently, policies for teaching, research, service, etc. are mixed together. They hope to present a “clean” version of the handbook to the senate for consideration at the January meeting.

The taskforce will also assist the senate and administration as they consider new policy proposals. For instance, the senate is currently discussing the creation of new university-level tenure and promotion committees. The task force will work with the senate and administration to reach an agreement on this proposal and any others that arise.

The task force noted that the old promotion criteria remain in the current handbook. Since the senate and President McCay must both agree on any changes to the handbook, the task force wondered how the 2018 criteria would be added. Brian Lail and Kurt Winkelmann met with Dean Carvalho about this issue and he agreed that the senate should approve new COES criteria. He supported the formation of senate task forces (one for tenure-track and one for teaching-track criteria) that will consider recommendations for changes to the 2018 COES criteria.

Sen. Winkelmann is scheduled to meet with Provost Oyman every two weeks, and has already met with him once. He supported the task force’s initial efforts to clean up the existing handbook. He encouraged Sen. Winkelmann to meet directly with the deans to discuss handbook revisions as needed next semester. Provost Oyman is very supportive of faculty being involved

in revising the handbook. He also supports the current version of the tenure and promotion committee proposals (i.e., COES w/ 2 members, other colleges with 1 member).

*AAUP recommendation regarding Institutional Conflicts of Interests and Donors*

This issue was raised in regards to donations made with restrictions and the potential for conflict of interest. Senators are asked to read up on this so there can be a discussion at a future meeting and potentially a resolution can be drafted. It was also suggested that Gary Grant in Development could be invited to come speak about the issue at a future meeting.

*Task Force for reallocating senators: Sen. Silaghi has three cases that will be discussed*

Sen. Silaghi sent an email before the meeting with a report from the task force. See his emailed document for the 3 proposals and the arguments for each, including their impacts. Senators should discuss these proposals with their units and bring back points for discussion at a future meeting. The senate could accept one of these or make modifications.

The floor was then opened up for other questions or comments. Sen. Yuran suggested that when we return in January we should discuss the Clery report issue. Can the Senate get some information on that missing info? Pres. Lail said that he brought this issue up with Dr. McCay earlier in the day to get a status update and he was told that there were reporting errors that weren't recognized but they are now. Dr. McCay could potentially come speak to the senate about this at the January meeting. Comments have been made about the issue online on posts by the Crimson, a Florida Today reporter was present at the recent student protest, and students have been writing about it on the white boards in the library. Pres. Lail agreed to convey these concerns to Dr. McCay.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debbie Lelekis, Faculty Senate Secretary