

Faculty Senate Meeting

March 4, 2025

Senator Present:

Alan Brown(CCE), Gary Zarillo (OEMS), Jordan Poole (Aeronautics), Tolga Turgut(Aeronautics), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Tom Eskridge (EECS), Patrick Converse(PSY). Yakov Berechenko-Kogan (MSE), David Wilder(BA), William Bowman(Library), Jessica Wildman(PSY), Nakin Suksawang (MCE), Marcus Hohlmann (APSS), Wanfa Zhang (SAC), Anna Muenchrath (SAC), Robert Weaver (OEMS), Pallav Ray(OEMS), Robert Deacon (SAC), Shawn Scott (Aeronautics), William Arrasmith (MSE), Sidhartha Bhattacharyya (EECS), Hamidreza Najafi(MCE), Vipuil Kishore(CCE), Charles Bryant (Business),

Proxies: None

Senator Absent: Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Madhur Tiwari (APSS), Shibo Liu(MSE), Donald Platt (APSS), Melissa Borgen (BES), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Angel Otero (Business Online), Joe Montelione (SAC), Marshall Jones(PSY), Csaba Palotai (APSS), Abram Walton (Business)

Other attendees: John Nicklow, John Kiss, Munevver Subasis, Jessica Vinson. Amanda Moske, Nikki Souris, Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Penny Vassar, Rian Mehta, Kaylee Erdos, Scott Gustafson, Rudi Wehmshulte, Brooke Wheeler, Jessica Smeltz, Bhaskar Tenali, Troy Nguyen, Nancy Garmer, Suzanne Kozaitis,, Lisa Steelman, Raymond Bonhomme, Nick Daher, Jason Martin, Ted Richardson, John Harris, Rick Addante

Meeting began at 3:30 pm

President Nicklow's Address to the Faculty

- Dr. Nicklow thanks all who came for the staff and faculty picnic last month.
- **QEP** – He emphasizes that the faculty should know their QEP – Dr. Mark Archenbault sent message about this.
- **SACS COC** – Accreditation representatives will be coming for an onsite visit in early April. Florida Tech had lowest number of items cited than any other schools. Dr. Nicklow congratulate Dr. Archenbault for doing a great job.
- **Budget** – He is currently working on next year's budget and hopes to include a salary increase across the board. While he wants to implement a merit-based raises, he believes that a well-established and consistent performance review metric across colleges is still lacking. Dr. Nicklow is also asking units to spend the money that they requested for their budgets; currently we have a surplus for this year and need to spend it.

- **Executive Order on Overhead** – Executive order to reduce overhead to 15% for NIH has been blocked. He has written our congressman about this to try and stop it. If indirect cost dropped to 15%, we would lose about \$400,000.
- **Executive Order on DEI** – Dr. Nicklow message to all is that we are following the law, but we are preserving our values. Florida Tech does not discriminate - this message is important.

Question - Are federal grants frozen?

No but payment on them is slowed. Dr. Kiss added that his concern is that NIH panels are not meeting when they are supposed to meet. The President said federal funding situation is fluid.

Dr. Nikki Souris (Faculty Athletics Representative) – Dr. Souris went over the new course attendance & absence policy that applies to all faculty. The purpose is to highlight absences; injury is an excuse for absence from class but practice is not an excuse. Burden is on the student to make up the work. The student has 72 hours (or longer if this can be negotiated with course instructor) to make up work missed. This is similar to the previous policy but now it is written down. More information can be found in Dr. Souris's presentation.

Question – Could this be extended to club sports?

Dr. Nicklow answered yes, possibly.

Jessica Vinson, Dr. Moske, Dr. Subasi – Faculty salary analysis

Sources for salary analysis: College and University Professors Association HR. However, mainly College and Univ. Prof. Ass. HR was used because they collected more data. A couple of years ago (2023), during our first attempt at this, we hired a consultant but we found methodological flaws that the consultant couldn't incorporate changes due to their schedule.

2023 issues were:

1. Not sure who (which universities) to included/exclude
2. Used a smaller peer list than we would like
3. Consultant adjusted some CIP codes and shouldn't have.

This new analysis fixed these problems and are now revising the analysis.

- Included 239 full time faculty members.

Findings: Faculty gender representation does not align with student demographics as more male faculty members than male students. Additionally, the overall average years of service for faculty is 11 years. When comparing Florida Tech faculty median salaries against peer list across the board, Florida Tech is higher than peers but when broken down by college, some Florida Tech colleges are lower. Additional details are available in the faculty salary analysis presentation.

	Florida Tech	Peers
Overall faculty median salaries	\$98,000	\$89,000

Senator Weaver said we want to be top 50 institution, but we are being compared to lower level universities, which may explain why are faculty salary mean is higher than peers.

Senator Suksawang raised concerns about the data points from other institutions included in the analysis and suggested additional comparisons with specific sub-types of peer institutions (e.g., STEM-focused peers). In response, Ms. Moske clarified that only the median salary is provided based on the selected institutions. She also noted that selecting fewer peer institutions could result in insufficient data for meaningful salary comparisons.

Two major assumptions with the analysis performed are

1. Peers have similar academic structure
2. CIP distribution is same at peer schools.

However, these may not be accurate.

Senator Turgut mentioned that a few years ago, during a Board of Trustees meeting, a former Vice President presented data indicating that Florida Tech's salaries were approximately \$20,000 below the mean. He recommended using the median for comparison instead. Dr. Moske agreed to look into this and will try to locate the meeting minutes.

Senator Weaver also commented that based on our new peer list, we might re-evaluate faculty promotion and tenure criteria to better align with the new peer list. President Nicklow agreed.

Senator Berechenko-Kogan suggested that instead of comparing at the institutional level alone, we should evaluate individual academic programs at other universities. For example, when assessing the Math program, we should compare it to the top math or competing programs rather than the overall institution. This is particularly important for faculty hiring, as candidates will compare our program to well-established counterparts within their specific discipline (e.g., aeronautics at Embry-Riddle or psychology at UF).

Another issue that was raise is to compare the standard deviation of these data. In response, Dr. Subasi answer that it is difficult to do as in some unit, our sample is too small, i.e., we only have one professor in some unit.

Senator Bowman inquired about the exclusion of library faculty from the analysis. In response, Dr. Subasi explained that library faculty are classified under the university professional category rather than faculty within the system. As a result, there is currently insufficient data for comparison.

President Nicklow said this is a start; we can do a number of other things with these data. For staff analysis (which is coming next), it will be more difficult.

Ms. Jessica Vinson said these data may be used to start a pay for performance model for the university, or an improved merit pay system. President Nicklow said at least a portion of increase in salary each year should be based on merit (will work on this for future). President Nicklow said if you see a large disparity in faculty salaries now, notify your dean and unit head. The administration will look at it. Senator Turgut noted that the manager has the discretion to determine who is a high performer and this information could be used to award merit pay in future.

President Nicklow said we know why faculty have left Florida Tech in past because of exit interviews (salary may not be only reason). For this year, for 13 of 20 faculty positions – we have not been able to fill them so far. A Senator asked if we still have a faculty salary compression problem and president said we do but is it not as bad as it used to be.

Approval of minutes for Feb 2025 meeting

Senator Turgut suggested amending minutes by adding the email he sent to Dr. Kiss and Sen. Suksawang said he would include it – will approve minutes next meeting.

Officer Reports

President Report – no report

Scholarship Report – Senator Brown said working on 18 student finalists – winners announced next meeting.

Faculty Excellence Committee - Sen. Wildman said she will send Fac. Excellence Award recommendations to Provost's office soon

Academic Policies Committee (Sen. Kishore) - masters and Ph.D students can register for 0 credit course over summer; this was approved in grad council.

Technology Committee – Sen. Poole said will set Chief Technology Officer will come to next meeting.

Admin. Policies (Senator Kaya) – no report.

Old Business

Ad Hoc advisory committee policy and compliance – Senator Turgut suggested it is too early to work on the changes the university administration is proposing to faculty contract (or information flyer) language and a vote on it was not included in the agenda for today's meeting. Also, suggested all faculty vote on it via a survey. Senator Weaver said what is written is that policies can change without notice and this is not acceptable.

Senator Suksawang pointed out that we just need to give president feedback on this; no need to vote at this time.

A senator made suggestion to request frequency of contracts for tenured faculty be changed to every few years not every year. Senator Suksawang said we will put this topic on agenda for next meeting. Senator Turgut said even with this, the sentence that says anything can be changed at any time is a problem.

Sen. Weaver – suggested there is no need for annual letters for tenured faculty.

Senator Eskridge – Does the president decide on language in contract?

Yes, but he wants our opinion. We can ask for specific language in a letter if we want to do so. Senator Suksawang will get and distribute all feedback for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned 5:15 PM