

Faculty Senate Meeting
Tuesday, February 3, 2025, 3:30PM

Senators Present: Anna Muenchrath (SAC), Robert Joel Deacon (SAC), Yanek Mieczkowski (SAC), Marcus Hohlmann (APSS), Patrick Converse (SOP), Marshall Jones (SOP), Jessica Wildman (SOP), Tom Marcinkowski (MSE), William Bowman (Library), Tim Muth (COB), Alan Brown (CCE), Chris Bashur (CCE), David Wilder (SOBA), Nakin Suksawang (MCE), Ratan Jha (APSS), Charles Bryant (COB), Thomas Eskridge (EECS), Wanfa Zhang (SAC), Spencer Fire (OEMS), William Arrasmith (MSE), Angel Otero (COB), Robert Weaver (OEMS), Shawn Scott (COA), Csaba Palotai (APSS), Adam Prinkey (MSE), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Melissa Borgen (BES), Matt Taylor (COA),

Proxies: None

Senators Absent: Madhur Tiwari (APSS), Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Felix Delmonte (MCE), Adam Aboueid (COA), Gary Zarillo (OEMS)

Other attendees: John Nicklow (President), John Z. Kiss (Provost), Nasri Nesnas (CCE), M. Mine Subasi (Provost's Office), Ted Richardson (COB), Penny Vassar (COB), Kaylee Erdos (Library), Chelsea Carroll (Library), Heidi Hatfield-Edwards (SAC), Lisa Steelman (SOP), Jason Martin (Library), Rudi Wehmschulte (CCE), Suzanne Kozaitis (Library), Tristan Fiedler (BES), Nick Daher (COB)

Call to Order

Open Forum/Q&A with University Leadership

President Nicklow

- President Nicklow reported that Florida Tech is doing well financially and in enrollment in comparison with peer institutions.
- The administration is announcing the banning of micromobility devices on campus including electric scooters, electric skateboards, and e-bikes. This is due to hazards like battery fires, pedestrian injury, injury to users, and thefts. This will take effect on July 1, 2026. Violators will be ticketed and the device may be removed. Devices may be walked across but not stored on campus. ADA exceptions will be made, but electronic scooters are not necessarily mobility devices. Florida Tech's number one Clear violation is thefts of electric scooters. The second highest Clear violation is thefts of bicycles. Florida Tech's security department provides free U-locks to all students. Commuters will be able to park the devices at the outskirts of campus.
- The copyright policy is still open for feedback. An IP and Patent policy is under development.
- The answer to the question from last meeting about whether faculty are getting two workstations, one for teaching and one for research, is no.
- Last meeting there was a question about graduate student assistants not being paid for training. This is true, but it is not a change. This policy exists because some of the GSAs do not complete the training and therefore are never employed in their positions. The

training is the minimal barrier to starting to be paid. This can be changed if we want to change it, but the student government should likely get involved.

- Sen. Arrasmith asked how often computers are replaced. President Nicklow answered that there is a five-year refresh policy.
- Sen. Hohlmann asked who owns the nonprofit corporation of Florida Tech. President Nicklow replies that Florida Tech is run by a board, but is not, to his knowledge, owned by anyone. Sen. Muth replies that usually in the case of dissolution, a nonprofit's assets are distributed to the nonprofit sector to which the nonprofit belongs.

Provost Kiss

- Provost Kiss added to the discussion of micromobility devices that other institutions are taking the same steps, so this should not disadvantage Florida Tech's recruitment of students.
- Sen. Bashur added that a location to lock up devices will be crucial to stemming discontent from affected students, who may use these devices to commute to campus.

Associate Provost M. Mine Subasi

- Associate Provost Subasi talked about the development of a new syllabus recording policy to replace the old recording policy. The old recording policy was a result of the pandemic and was concerned primarily with the privacy of the students. The new policy addresses both faculty and student recording. The Restriction on Distribution of Course Materials refers not only to recordings, but the dissemination of any course material including homework or quizzes.
- Sen. Marcinkowski asked about the deletion of recordings. Associate Provost Subasi clarified that there is no longer a blanket policy on deletions. Rather, the new policy says that recordings are available in Canvas "with access expiring at the end of the semester unless otherwise specified." It would be up to the instructor to provide access outside of this time frame.
- Sen. Muenchrath asked why this needs to be a syllabus policy rather than an academic policy, since although the syllabus policy is binding, it is only binding if it appears on the syllabus and if an instructor, such as an adjunct, fails to put this on their syllabus, they would not be covered. Associate Provost Subasi agrees that syllabi are not always updated and would not have a problem with having it as a stand-alone policy but said that the syllabus policy is easier to update. Sen. Marcinkowski said that a solution to this would be for the provost's office to circulate the updated template at the start of each semester. Sen. Muenchrath agreed that this is a good idea, but reiterated that this policy, unlike the AI policy, shouldn't differ from syllabus to syllabus, so why can't it be university policy, rather than a syllabus policy. Nasri Nesnas agreed, asking why we can't link to an academic policy in this case. Sen. Muenchrath stated that this is not just about the implementation of the policy. Since part of the policy's impetus is to avoid surreptitious recording that could be disseminated in the media, it would seem to have more force coming from the university, rather than from individual instructors' syllabi. Associate Provost Subasi responded by saying that public universities cannot have such a policy since according to state law they are allowed to record in classrooms. She said that the provost's office does try to circulate an updated syllabus template every semester, but that when policies are updated the links get broken, so faculty should be checking these.

Also, students may not click through the links, so it's important to reiterate the policy in class. Sen. Hohlmann suggested the solution of importing the syllabus template to Canvas pages by the start of the semester. Associate Provost Subasi agreed that this would be a good solution. Sen. Hohlmann then indicated a concern about the list of entities with whom the students should not share materials, asking that this be extended to anyone/everyone in order to ensure that students don't share with, for example, family members or friends, who then may pass on materials to the media, as has happened in cases in the past few years. All materials should be for personal use only. Associate Provost Subasi agrees and says that the list will never be exhaustive, but we can add that any form of sharing is not allowed. Sen. Deacon asks whether the policy covers submitting work to AI platforms. Associate Provost Subasi says that "AI-enabled tools" are included under methods of recording in the policy, but there is nothing in the policy at present about distributing materials to AI platforms. Sen. Mieczkowski asked for clarity on the policy around where the camera should be pointing. Associate Provost Subasi suggests recording yourself and/or the board, rather than the students.

Approval of Minutes

January minutes were approved with one emendation.

Reports

President - Sen. Wildman: nothing to report

Secretary - Sen. Muenchrath: nothing to report

Academic Policies - Sen. Jones

- Academic Affairs met about the sunseting of the cultural competency designation, since some colleges use that designation to distinguish between different kinds of electives.
- Sen. Jones will also revisit the recording policy as an academic policy with the Academic Affairs committee when they next meet.
- A new Chair of the Academic Policies Committee is needed, since Sen. Jones's terms is ending.

Administrative Policies - Sen. Kaya

- The committee has met to discuss the issue of shared governance. It began by reviewing the handbook to find where the faculty senate's role is clear and where it is less specific. The handbook doesn't say anything about when the senate should be consulted, or what the senate's role is in a number of different kinds of policy decisions. The committee's goal is to clarify these so that shared governance is clear, transparent, and meaningful. Committee members are looking at examples from other universities and guidance from the AAUP, while others are reviewing the handbook language. The committee will meet again in two weeks and will plan to bring draft language to the senate for its review.

Faculty Excellence - Sen. Wilder

- Applications for faculty excellence awards are due on Friday, February 6th.

Scholarships - Sen. Brown

- 51 eligible students have been invited to apply. As of this meeting, there are seven or eight applicants. The deadline to apply is February 12th.

TRI - Sen. Bowman

- There was one complaint brought by a faculty member who had an IT ticket that was not resolved in a reasonable timeframe. The TRI committee was able to escalate the issue.

- If there are non-COES faculty members interested in serving on the IT committee, there are openings.

Welfare - Sen. Arrasmith

- The committee has been working on getting questions answered about the sabbatical leave policy. These have now been answered by the provost's office. The first question was: what is the sabbatical policy for teaching track versus tenure track faculty? The answer is that both tracks are considered for sabbatical. The second question is: what is the policy with regards to faculty who had earned the possibility for a sabbatical prior to the implementation of tenure? Since both tenure track and teaching track faculty are eligible for sabbatical, this question is irrelevant. The third question is: what is the policy for the accrual of sabbaticals for faculty denied a sabbatical in the past due to institutional reasons, like that no one could be found to teach their courses? The answer is that there is no accrual of sabbaticals. There is no right to sabbaticals; the university is constrained by financial and other circumstances in the number of sabbaticals awarded. Both last year and this year the Provost did not approve all sabbaticals. The Provost evaluates the applications using the Deans' recommendations. The Provost notes that in the past two years he has both awarded and denied applications from both teaching and tenure track faculty.

Research Ad Hoc Committee – Sen. Hohlmann

- Members for the committee have been recruited. There were several suggestions for priorities for the committee to address. The committee decided to focus on two things: the change in the research incentives and the legal review of contracts. The committee discussed DGRATS 2.0 and IRI. An outstanding question the committee has is whether indirect costs are still being distributed to colleges (although they are not being distributed to faculty). The next step is to gather information from the administration about the details of different research incentives.

New Business (motion passed to move New Business before Old Business)

- The Senate officially opened its call for nominations for three committees: Academic Policies, Administrative Policies, and Scholarships. Sen. Brown was nominated to continue as chair of the Scholarship Committee. Sen. Wildman was nominated as chair of the Administrative Policies Committee. Sen. Muenchrath was nominated as chair of the Academic Policies Committee.
- The formal call for nominations for Secretary and President-elect will occur at next month's meeting.
- If anyone decides at a later point that they would like to self-nominate or nominate someone, they should contact Sen. Wildman.

Old Business

- Discussion of the proposed Copyright Policy (the survey is still open for comments as well)
 - Question relayed by Sen. Bashur about what is copyrightable and whether or not research data is copyrightable. He also mentioned that there is some confusion in the research data section about whether or not original research data stays with the researcher if they leave the university. Sen. Bashur also brought a question about the consulting section, which says that a copy of the University's consulting

policy needs to be provided to third parties, even if the consulting work has nothing to do with the employee's role at the university. Why? Sen. Wildman will relay these questions.

New Business

- Discussion of proposed revision of the faculty evaluation procedure
 - This revision was initiated by HR in response to a request by the Board. The change is being made this year. The goal of our discussion is to build consensus in our feedback, but individual can also be provided in the survey.
 - Sen. Muenchrath brought up two concerns: the first is the timeline indicates that self-evaluations are due over the summer when most faculty are not being paid by the university. The second is that “contributing to a collegial, supportive work environment” may put faculty with care responsibilities who are unable to attend campus functions outside of normal work hours at a disadvantage. She continued that expectations for collegiality are also often gendered, which would produce an undue burden on female faculty to perform collegiality to a standard perhaps not expected of men in the same position. Sen. Wildman said that the task force has discussed the concerns with the timeline, so she will reiterate this again. Sen. Muenchrath suggested giving faculty until the end of the first reporting week in August to submit the self-evaluations.
 - Sen. Taylor asked if raises happen January 1, how would this work for 9-month instructors. Would their raise be retroactive, or would it only apply to half of their contract? Sen. Muenchrath responded that her understanding is that, yes, there would be two different salaries for the fall and spring semesters. Sen. Taylor also asked why the professionalism metric duplicates language from the teaching metric. Sen. Wildman says that the audience for teaching is students, while the audience for professionalism is colleagues. Sen. Taylor asks how instructors who commute from out of state would be treated under the professionalism metric, since they would rarely be able to attend extracurricular department events (this is not uncommon in the College of Aeronautics). Sen. Taylor also asked about the rationale for adding another rating to the rating scale, which seems like it splitting hairs (from “exceeds expectations” to “significantly exceeds expectations” and “moderately exceeds expectations”). Sen. Wildman responds that in psychometrics a five-point performance scale is usually considered a better practice than a four-point scale because it allows for more nuance, distinguishes high performers, offers a neutral midpoint, and provides equally spaced values on either side of that midpoint.
 - Sen. Suksawang asks how switching to a five-point scale will affect tenure and promotion, since, per our faculty handbook, tenure and promotion review is done on a four-point scale. He points out that professionalism is also not one of the criteria for tenure or promotion, which is because you don't want to be judged on collegiality by your program chair or the person conducting your review, with whom you may have personal friction. Does this mean we will have a different set of criteria and different rating scale for raises and for tenure/promotion? Sen. Wildman said that the task force did discuss this and was told that the employee

raise process was different and separate from the faculty promotion and tenure process.

- Sen. Kaya brought up that the Professionalism standard is hard to evaluate fairly and consistently because it relies on a manager's perception of someone's behavior. Sen. Kaya continued that professionalism is a risk to academic freedom and dissent, because metrics like collegiality can be used intentionally or unintentionally to punish faculty who dissent or bring up problems. The AAUP has repeatedly discouraged the use of Professionalism as a stand-alone category because it can suppress legitimate dissent in the process of shared governance.
- Sen. Weaver says that this is also his concern. At a time when newly tenured faculty are feeling empowered to speak out about how they think the university should be operating, the open-ended criteria of the proposed Professionalism standard risks quieting faculty involvement who may fear of retaliation in the awarding of raises.
- Sen. Kaya responds that compliance, for example, is a binary metric (either one complies or one does not)—not a metric for evaluation.
- Sen. Marcinkowski mentioned that some of these standards do not apply to all faculty. For example, “supports technology transfer, patents, and commercialization” is not relevant to education faculty. Sen. Wildman responds that the standard says, “when applicable,” and it will be recognized that not all standards apply to all roles. Sen. Marcinkowski replied that there is still the risk of subjective assessment in terms of which managers believe which standards apply to which roles.
- Nasri Nesnas asked why this change in evaluation is necessary. Sen. Wildman responded that the Board of Trustees has requested a move to merit raises. Dr. Nesnas responded that there are still two questions: why change the timeline? And why change the evaluation criteria from what they are in the faculty handbook? He also shares in the concern about the suppression of academic freedom. He added that the question of why HR, a non-faculty entity, is deciding how to evaluate faculty performance is a fundamental issue. Since it deals with scholarship, teaching, and service, this should have been a faculty-driven process.
- Sen. Jones said he was approached by HR to do manager training, and he assures Dr. Nesnas that although HR has directed the process, they have not controlled what the evaluation process looks like. The biggest problem with the evaluation process is that there are so many different roles that need to be covered by it (different disciplines; tenure and non-tenure track faculty) that the evaluation process will only be as good as the manager training that accompanies it.
- Dr. Nesnas responded by asking why this process seems like it was built from scratch when, for the majority of his employment, faculty had been receiving merit raises, and the timeline was still based on calendar years. What was wrong with that process? Sen. Jones responded that the problem with past evaluations was sometimes the perception of preferential treatment, but it was also the fact that managers often gave satisfactory ratings to everyone, because they don't want to mark people as poor performers.
- Sen. Bashur says this seems like a problem with the Professionalism standard. How easy or difficult will it be for managers to evaluate this standard about

faculty behavior? In the past, in COES, the annual reviews were linked to whether or not a faculty member was advancing toward tenure. If the standards are no longer linked, this would be a problem for knowing where one stands in relation to the tenure/promotion process.

- Sen. Holhmann added that peer review may provide a more effective model for performance evaluation. In Chemistry and Physics, faculty evaluated each other as part of the review. Sen. Holhmann felt that it went well, but the new administration stopped it. Sen. Brown said his department did this as well with positive results.
- Sen. Wildman summarized consensus on problems with the Professionalism standard and the timeline. Additional feedback can be provided through the survey until February 16th. Sen. Suksawang asked what happens to the feedback provided through the survey. Sen. Wildman says that the administration will consider it and then enact a policy. Sen. Suksawang asked if the administration will circle back to respond to our feedback, and Sen. Wildman says probably not due to the timeline, but like anything else, we can discuss new policies and bring more feedback to the administration at a later date. Sen. Taylor asked if there is a mechanism for us to provide a unified statement on our position on the new evaluations, rather than act as a rubber stamp. Sen. Wildman said that the limits of our authority may be a question for a lawyer, but we are an advisory body only. We can make recommendations or inputs, but we do not decide on organizational matters. Sen. Muenchrath asked whether if evaluations were part of the Faculty Handbook, the faculty have final approval over them? Sen. Wildman said that this sounds right to her. Sen. Wildman asked if faculty evaluations are currently in the handbook. Sen. Muenchrath responded that they are mentioned, but she's not sure in how much detail. Sen. Taylor and Sen. Suksawang said that the annual review process is in the faculty handbook. Sen. Wildman said that employers do have certain rights, and she's not sure where those lines are drawn. Dr. Nesnas asked whether a summary of the anonymous feedback to the survey could be shared with the Senate, so that we can hear the faculty's voice. Sen. Taylor said that he would hope that we would receive feedback from the administration on why revisions were made or not after the feedback is collected.

Announcements/Reminders

1. The faculty and staff appreciation picnic will be held on Wednesday, February 18th.
2. The following standing committee chairs are up for election (or re-election) in **March 2026**. Please make nominations now through February:
 - a. Administrative Policies (Fall 26-28)
 - b. Scholarship Committee (Fall 26-28)
3. The following Senate Officers will be up for election in **April 2026**. Please make nominations now through March:
 - a. President-Elect (FY26-27, President AY27-28)
 - b. Secretary (AY26-27)
4. The [Faculty Senate handbook](#) with all AY24-25 changes made is available on the Senate [website](#). If there are any corrections or revisions needed, please bring those to our Administrative Policies Committee Chair, Dr. Mehmet Kaya, at mkaya@fit.edu.

Adjournment

Appendix

REMOVE (current syllabus statement)

Recording Disclosure (Privacy Waiver): This course may be recorded for use by students and/or faculty. Enrolled students are subject to having their images and voices recorded during the classroom presentations, remote access learning, online course discussions, and remote office hours/meetings. Course participants should have no expectation of privacy regarding their participation in this class. Recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not registered in the courses, or uploaded to other online environments. All recordings will be deleted at the conclusion of the academic term.

INSERT

Recording Disclosure: *[Instructors must notify students at the beginning of the semester if class sessions may be recorded and which portions are subject to recording (e.g., lectures, discussions, or both). When recording, instructors should position equipment to minimize capturing student faces and voices and may pause recordings during sensitive discussions when requested or appropriate. The following notification must be included in the course syllabus.]*

The instructor may record class sessions to support student learning, provide access for absent students, and maintain course archives. All recorded lectures are official course materials and may be made available to enrolled students through Canvas, with access expiring at the end of the semester unless otherwise specified. By enrolling in this course, students acknowledge that their images, voices, and participation may be recorded during in-person sessions, remote learning activities, or online discussions. All recording of lectures and use of course materials must comply with instructor policies. Students may not make audio or video recordings, take photographs, or capture screenshots of class content without explicit prior written permission from the instructor. This includes all recording devices such as phones, cameras, AI-enabled tools, and screen capture software. Students with approved disability accommodations through the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) must notify the instructor upon receiving approval. Any recordings, photographs, or screenshots made under instructor or OAR approval must be used solely for personal academic purposes.

Restriction on Distribution of Course Materials: Students may not share, distribute, or upload any course materials (including, but not limited to, recordings, slides, notes, presentations, audio tracks, videos, assignments, or tests) to external platforms, such as commercial websites, social media, or file-sharing services. Unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of course materials violate the Student Academic Integrity Policy and may result in disciplinary actions, course failure, suspension, or expulsion.