**Florida Tech Faculty Senate**

January 9, 2018

**Minutes**

**Senators Present:** W. Arrasmith (DES), M. Baarmand (PSS), J. Brenner (CE), K.

Burke (SAC), P. Converse (Psych), H. Crawford (CS), O. Doule (HCDIA), C. Harvey (SBA), A. Huser (Lib), M. Jensen (MAE), S. Jensen (COB), K. Johnson (OES), U. Jones (Aero), M. Kaya (BME), S. Kozaitis (Lib), B. Lail (ECE), D. Lelekis (SAC), T. Marcinkowski (DEIS), B. Morkos (MAE), S. Murshid (ECE), A. Nag (PSS), B. Paulillo (Psych), L. Perdigao (SAC), C. Polson (Bio), D. Sandall (COB), M. Silaghi (CS), N. Suksawang (CCM), G. Tenali (Math), R. van Woesik (Bio), N. Weatherly (SBA), R. Wehmschulte (Chem), A. Welters (Math), B. Wheeler (Aero), K. Winkelmann (Chem), D. Yuran (SAC), Z. Zhou (Psych)

**Senators Absent:** T. Glassman (COB), D. LeVan (CS), A. Nnolim (ExSt), R. Rusovici (MAE), P. Sahoo (OES), A. Walton (COB)

**Proxys:** David Fleming (MAE) for R. Rusovici, Nasri Nesnas (Chem) for R. Wehmschulte

**Other Attendees:** Annie Becker (Research), Raymond Bonhomme (Academic Affairs), Amitabh Dutta (COB), Tristan Fiedler (Bio), Nancy Garmer (Lib), Kastro Hamed (DEIS), Linda Khan (Lib), David Lowe (Lib), Jignya Patel (COB), Hamid Rassoul (PSS), Munevver Subasi (Math), Richard Turner (Bio), Chao Wang (Lib)

**Call to Order**

President Baarmand called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November’s meeting; a motion was made by Senator Marcinkowski and seconded by Senators Sandall and Arrasmith.

The December Minutes were approved by unanimous vote of voice.

**Guest Speakers**

Dr. Marco Carvalho, Dean of College of Engineering and Science

*Topic: Merger of the College of Engineering and Computing with the College of Science*

Dr. Carvalho began by explaining the motivation behind merger, that FIT was going through transition and following a path set by Pres. McCay. Necessary steps were taken to adjust the direction of the University and the changes impact operations, finances, and strategy. Dr. Carvalho’s position is primarily concerned with the strategic phase of the changes to move FIT forward. Pres. McCay is pushing to advance College of Engineering in the rankings and has identified strategic areas that will benefit the institution’s success, the Pillars of Excellence. Engineering can benefit by aligning with expertise we already have on campus, which drove the decision to merge the colleges. Leadership considered implementation without having a negative impact on the programs. Six departments that are aligned to the pillars were proposed to the administration in late November. The larger departments reduce administrative overhead and will focus programs toward the vision by bringing people together. They are currently finalizing the makeup of these units to begin with the new structure in the next academic year. Dr. Carvalho met with departments and heads to gather input, and some updates have been made to the original plan.

Pres. Baarmand suggested the advantage to thinking through the structural changes before making the announcement. There is a perception among the faculty that their participation in discussing these details has been limited.

Dr. Carvalho agreed that there is a benefit in gathering feedback when making a transition, but also cited the potential risk of halting the process to move forward when decisions need to be made in a timely manner. The administration agreed that meeting with the department heads, who would then report to faculty in the departments, was the best way to proceed. In some cases, members of the administration have been invited to department meetings and in other cases they have not. The administration is receiving feedback from departments in this process. No request for a meeting was denied and anyone who asked to be part of the discussion was invited. Those who followed up on suggestions that were given have received replies with the considerations that were made.

Dr. Carvalho expressed his understanding of the perception that planning is done without faculty input, but assured the room that this is just a perception. The administration is interested in getting faculty feedback; there are just practical issues concerning the process. If all voices are invited to the table initially, you would find 60 different models.

Sen. Marcinkowski was curious what modifications were made since the announcement.

Dr. Carvalho replied that some parts of the initial structure had clear themes, but others did not. Originally, Mechanical, Civil, and Systems Engineering were grouped together; however, the current model, based on faculty input, has placed Systems Engineering with Computing. Meteorology was originally grouped with Aerospace, but has now moved in response to faculty input.

Sen. Arrasmith asked for the remaining timeline for implementation.

Dr. Carvalho reported that implementation is scheduled for Fall 2018, as postponing until Fall 2019 will continue to impact everything for another year. Faculty contracts will be rewritten. Academic programs are not impacted, but there will be some changes to course prefixes to adapt to the new structure. The structural changes should be finalized by the end of January or early February. Part of agreement is to get final approval from the Provost and President in time for contracts to be issued in April, so the new system can be implemented in August 2018.

Sen. Winkelmann questioned the relative budgets of two colleges. How will that ratio impact COS and COE program budgets in new system and how will it impact their future budgets?

Dr. Carvalho replied that there should be no direct reduction or increase in program budgets. However, the administration anticipates a reduction in expenditures due to programs sharing resources, such as courses, in the combined structure. There is no plan to reduce any faculty in any way. Budget-wise, resources will be maintained with allocations intended for reinvesting. The department heads will have more flexibility in balancing resources because of the larger size of the unit and the larger number of faculty, and it will be easier to move resources across programs.

Sen. van Woesik asked if the new departments would be physically combined or just virtually aligned?

Dr. Carvalho indicated there will be some physical moving, but that it will be postponed until the department heads and program chairs are in place in August. No moves are currently planned.

Sen. Brenner asked if any outcomes for the merger are defined and if there was an assessment plan for them?

Dr. Carvalho cited the anticipation that rankings would increase due to merger, due to an increase in the college’s publications and an improved faculty to student ratio. The college will benefit from combining talent and resources. He hopes that the production level of faculty and students will increase due to the merger along with the number of grants awarded.

Dr. Munevver Subasi asked who was making decisions on the number and selection of program chairs?

Dr. Carvalho responded that each department head will recommend program chairs, and this is going on right now. Small programs may not have chairs and the number of chairs in each department will vary depending on the number of faculty. He does not have the final numbers yet, but each department will have approximately 2-3 program chairs. The program chairs will focus purely on the academic programs, not on the faculty. This gives more flexibility to the department heads.

Sen. Winkelmann inquired about the three associate dean positions and accreditation director announced with the original plan. Will Dr. Grace’s position be filled?

Dr. Carvalho anticipated that the position would be filled, but the administration is still working through the process.

Dr. Nasri Nesnas asked if that position needed to be replaced, to which Dr. Carvalho replied that the administration is studying that possibility as part of the process.

Pres. Baarmand wondered if the administration had considered structuring the six units as divisions. He stated that it is awkward to refer to the academic programs together as a department, as department connotes field. A division seems more fitting and consistent with the other colleges.

Dr. Carvalho responded that others had brought the argument for divisions forward as well, but that the consensus was that departments were more fitting.

Dr. Ronaldo Menezes asked if any data supports that merged programs will collaborate more within a department?

Dr. Carvalho suggested that faculty who are neutral about collaboration will now be positioned to share resources. At a minimum, this is an advantage to a collaborative infrastructure, as purchasing resources will benefit more programs.

Sen. Arrasmith asked if there were ranking system metrics that are linked to combined programs.

Dr. Carvalho replied that there are several ranking metrics for undergraduate and graduate programs. Reputation is the most important metric and the increase in publications from the merger will have a positive impact on reputation and exposure.

Dr. Nasri Nesnas asked how the departments would impact recruitment, as they no longer denote a specific field.

Dr. Carvalho stressed that the student perspective is in pursuing programs. We can present programs at the forefront for students, while the departments are administrative and in the background.

Dr. Baloga added that advertising programs was one of the first things Dr. Carvalho had addressed. Marketing research says that students search by programs, not by departments. Our website is set up so students can easily locate those programs. Faculty may be interested in the larger structure of department.

Dr. Munevver Subasi asked how the difference in program requirements would be resolved due to the merger and how it would affect committees.

Dr. Carvalho believed programs will learn from each other, but that there is no requirement that programs under one department have to change requirements. There is no way to change committees now and we will have to work through a grandfathering process with the rollout.

Dr. Baloga added that the administration is actively looking into these questions.

Pres. Baarmand thanked Dr. Carvalho and recommended moving on to old business before introducing the next guest.

**Old Business**

**Election for the naming of the Faculty Excellence Award in Research**

With a majority vote by paper ballot, **Dr. Charles Helmstetter** was selected for the naming of the Faculty Excellence Award in Research. The Faculty Senate’s selection will be sent to Provost Baloga and Pres. McCay for endorsement.

Following the vote, Pres. Baarmand introduced CFO Wood.

**Guest Speaker**

Ms. Cathy Wood, Senior Vice President, Financial Affairs and CFO

*Topic: Financial Models for Florida Tech Accounting*

Ms. Wood thanked the senate for the invitation and began with an overview of Florida Tech’s budgeting model. She said that the university currently uses incremental budgeting, which is easy, but outdated. There is a base budget, but no review or reallocation, just requests for more. The model works when funding is increasing, but does not account for any goals, objectives, or strategies. In response to revenue drops, many institutions have changed models. There are many options to consider, such as building the budget around available tools and institutional goals and culture. Good systems require accurate historical accounting data to build a foundation for a better system. There also must be accountability, transparency, and training. One never wants to change the budget unless it’s necessary, during times of financial crunching, but if there aren’t goals or a plan the change will not be possible. Solving a problem should not create another. We are trying to get better reporting and recordkeeping so we have tools to manage labor and generate reports. Every report in the past was done with Excel, but now we have a new tool. She noted that they have been taking steps slowly toward a new model. Performance-based budgeting has been used in some areas, but it is not working out the best. Changes start small, so there isn’t a big impact, and we can learn from these experiences. We are trying to customize the budget from what we learn and increase inclusion. Performance based budgeting will not work in some areas. This is all part of the process.

Ms. Wood then brought up the summer term, as she’s been asked about separating it from the rest of the academic year. Attempts to correct a problem with summer, however, will impact the rest of the year. The financial office is working on the best way to implement performance based budgeting during the process, where operations are guided by measurements and tools rather than revenue and expenses. The timing of the process is a little off, and consideration to separate summer in the future may be possible.

Pres. Baarmand asked if it was possible for summer term to fall at the end of the fiscal year to keep it from impacting the rest of the academic year.

Ms. Wood replied that twelve months is twelve months and, if placed at the end, summer term would be burdened with making up budget shortfalls. Additionally, April is the national default, and to change it would costs millions of dollars and could take up to six months.

Pres. Baarmand speculated that a performance-based model for summer could help the rest of the year.

Ms. Wood noted that every dollar of revenue is counted. Summer money helps fund the fall and spring semesters and is not considered a separate activity.

Sen. Arrasmith promoted a cost/expense model for summer courses. If the cost of running a summer class is a plus, we should do it to help the university.

Ms. Wood pointed out, however, that the summer course’s plus may actually be a minus when considering the fall and spring terms.

Sen. Arrasmith questioned why a summer course of seven students wouldn’t be considered a plus if tuition from two and half students covered the instructor’s pay. Cancelling or disincentivizing summer courses like this is a missed opportunity. Can we fix this problem?

Dr. Baloga cited the administration’s decision to reduce the enrollment cap for next summer as a direct response to concerns over cancelled classes. Part of the budget process is to address issues that result in cancelled classes. We can run a course with four students and it still benefits students.

Sen. Arrasmith offered the talent among the faculty to help solve the problem. People are willing to serve if asked.

Pres. McCay questioned the two and half number, since it just considers student tuition and faculty salary. Almost no students pay full tuition. The average tuition paid is half the market value, so we cannot simply equate full tuition with expenses. The freshman discount rate is over 50%, and 74% for athletes. Real numbers from the financial aid office are needed. It’s not two and half, but more like 4 or 6.

Sen. Johnson added that financial aid in summer is different, as students have come to him about it.

Pres. McCay acknowledged that is true in some cases, but noted that only the students who are denied aid are the ones that would visit faculty about it. Five and a half was an accurate number ten year ago, but it may be different now.

Ms. Wood highlighted the differences by college. Some programs are much more expensive to run in the summer.

Dr. Nasri Nesnas asked if there was a way to have a cushion?

Ms. Wood reported that cushions were pulled in 2016 to balance the budget. Normally, you build cushions in your operations, but we have not been able to do that recently.

Ms. Wood then cited the greater concern that 88% of university revenue comes from students. When enrollment drops, such ratio will have a significant impact on the institution. It would be preferable to have more stability. She is hopeful that spring semester numbers are better and that we can get some stability, plan better, and put the cushions back in place. Changing the budget model will not make more revenue; it will just change how we think about the budget in order to plan and invest better.

Pres. McCay assured the room that the administration is trying to help the budget situation. Reputation is key to Florida Tech, since it is an institution with 88% tuition revenue driven by enrollment. If we’re in the top 100, we will get more and better students from that reputation. The college merger and establishment of the pillars are part of the process to increase reputation. We have a good reputation, but it’s not extensive. We recruit well in New England, Georgia, and Florida. Our international students do not pay full tuition, but they do pay a higher percentage than domestic students. International students pay 65% of the bill, so Florida Tech is revamping international recruiting. The university needs a wider reputation. Tenure will help, as we’re the only top-200 school on a contract system. He said that it’s amazing we are as good as we are without tenure. Enrollment drives everything at Florida Tech, so the difference between two and half and four is critical.

Pres. Baarmand did not believe it was clear that an enrollment drop was due to Florida Tech’s reputation. Other things play into it that could change things for the university.

Pres. McCay highlighted that Florida Tech now accepts only qualified students, which wasn’t always done before. Retention will be less of an issue for enrollment.

Dr. Baloga noted that graduate students are the highest percentage of international students. Anything impacting international students will obviously impact Florida Tech because we have a higher percentage of international students. Three recent hits were from adopting the WES evaluation system, requiring GRE scores for Electrical and Computer Engineering, and the Homeland Security’s hard stop on English proficiency. But now we are accepting other credential evaluation systems, applicants have adjusted to the GRE requirement, and we can issue I-20s for the approved bridge program for English language.

Pres. Baarmand also cited the new Northrop-Grumman Master’s program, to which Dr. Baloga added that those 130 new graduate students would pay full tuition.

Pres. McCay lauded the new approach to budget reporting. He said that in the past the administration could never find answers to financial questions, but now we have accurate information to make decisions with confidence.

Sen. Winkelmann asked where faculty can view the IRS 990 form, which reports financial information about the university.

Ms. Wood replied that guidestar.org posts IRS 990 forms, which are sent to the federal government. Last year’s form the is posted and includes a 52-page report that addresses tax exempt bonds, governance issues, and list of donors.

Pres. Baarmand asked if the IRS 990 form was required to keep Florida Tech’s not-for-profit status and Ms. Wood confirmed.

Pres. Baarmand then thanked Ms. Wood and recommended moving on to new business.

**Committee Reports**

***\*In the interest of time, the President’s Report and Committee Reports were postponed to the February meeting.***

**New Business**

**Discussion of Election Procedure for Committee Chairs**

Pres. Baarmand proposed an amendment to the Faculty Senate By-Laws (see handout), regarding the selection of chairs for the standing committees. The proposed change specifies a 2-year term and election by the senate, and would replace the current practice of ad hoc selection without input from senators.

**Elections for Chairs of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

In order to formalize an election process for chairs of the senate standing committees, the following amendments to the senate bylaws are proposed:

1. Concurrent with election of the senate president and secretary, the senate will also elect chairs of three standing committees each academic year.
2. In the following academic year, the chairs of the other three standing committees will be up for elections.
3. The senate president will call for nominations in the February session. Current chairs can be nominated and self-nominations are allowed.
4. The vote will be during the March session.
5. The new chairs will begin their 2-year terms starting with the Faculty General Assembly in August.

Pres. Baarmand added that the Executive Committee wants to put a formal procedure in place that considers input from senators and enables a regular rotation of faces and ideas for senators who wish to participate. He asked for input from the floor.

Sen. Perdigao suggested naming the committees and election cycle on the amendment, to which Pres. Baarmand agreed once the senate has endorsed the amendment.

Sen. Polson wondered if 2 years was enough? He suggested staggering two chairs on a 3-year rotation, instead of three chairs on a 2-year rotation. Sen. van Woesik, however, did not see a problem with 2-year terms in the interest of rotating ideas.

Sen. Brenner pointed out that in many units, there are no elections for senators. But if the senator term is technically for three years, a 3-year rotation would make sense.

Sen. Arrasmith, additionally, cited the 3-year commitment for Faculty Senate President, lasting from President Elect through Outgoing President, but Sen. Sandall believed a senator would need the first year of a 3-year term to be nominated for a 2-year chair appointment.

Sen. Huser asked if the committee chairs needed to be senators, since committee members don’t have to be, to which Pres. Baarmand responded yes. Committee chairs sit on the Faculty Senate’s Executive Committee and need to be senators.

Pres. Baarmand asked for a vote to endorse the amendment as stated, specifying a 2-year term, with the condition that committee names be listed on the 2-year election cycle. A majority approved by vote of hand.

**Adjournment**

Following the vote, Pres. Baarmand asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, so made by Sen. Nag and seconded by Sen. Johnson, and with a unanimous vote adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin R. Burke

Faculty Senate Secretary