

Faculty Senate Meeting

When: Tuesday, January 10, 2023 – 3:30pm
Where: Zoom @ <https://fit.zoom.us/j/95744544218>

Minutes

Senators Present: Faculty Senate President Tolga Turgut (Aeronautics), Ersoy Subasi (Aeronautics), Jordan Poole (Aeronautics), Charles Bryant (Business), Abram Walton (COB), Don Platt (APSS), Razvan Rusovici (APSS), Manasvi Lingam (APSS), Csaba Palotai (APSS), Kenia Nunes (BCES), Mehmet Kaya (BCES), Vipuil Kishore (BCES), Nasri Nesnas (BCES), Brian Lail (CES), Nasheen Nur (CES), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Joo Young Park (MTH), Nezamoddin Nezamoddini-Kachouie (MTH), Pallav Ray (OEMS), Gary Zarillo (OEMS), Spencer Fire (OEMS), Kevin Burke (SAC), Angela Tenga (SAC), Patrick Converse (PSY), Gordan Patterson (SAC), David Wilder (BA), Jessica Wildman (PSY), Julie Costopoulos (PSY), William Bowman (LIB),

Senators Absent: Steven Rivet (Business), Angel Otero (Business Online), Luis Otero (CES), Nakin Suksawang (MCE), Hamidreza Najafi (MCE)

Proxies: Vladislav Bukshtynov [for Senator Aaron Welters (MTH)]

Other Attendees: Jessica Ickes

Call to Order

Pres. Turgut called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. The minutes from the Dec. 6 meeting were approved and recordings of the meeting were acknowledged.

Update on SACSCOC accreditation, rankings and our upcoming 2025 SACSCOC accreditation reaffirmation cycle by VP for Compliance and Accreditation Ms. Jessica Ickes

Jessica Ickes begins by telling the Senate that we are heading into our reaffirmation process for 2025. Please reach out to me if you would like to participate in this accreditation process such as if you have done so in the past as there will be lots of opportunities.

We just returned from orientation which kicked off our reaffirmation in the beginning of December. I want to spend time today giving you a bit of an update on the standards that are related to faculty and to help you understand some of the things that have occurred in the past two years, the request that will be made related to faculty, and how they relate to our accreditation standards.

The accreditation process is to ensure constituents, students, the public, etc. of the quality or integrity of a higher education. This is related to the Federal funding that institutions receive related to accreditors. In a lot of industries, the Federal Government is more involved with the organization and ensuring quality and consumer protection, etc. In terms of higher education, that is delegated to accreditors on behalf of the

Federal Government. When an institution is recognized by a regional creditor, it allows them to do things like access, administer, and award Federal financial aid funds. Accreditation is done by voluntary organizations. We are members of SACS, we have a vote, our President is our voting member and our interim President currently does that. It is founded on the premise of internal and external peer review. For SACS purposes, that is based on self-assessment and the demonstration of compliance with the principles of accreditation which are the standards.

Regional creditors have been the gatekeeper for access to funds. There has been the removal of a distinction between institutional and regional accreditors which happened under a prior federal administration. Historically, you could only be accredited as an institution by your regional accreditor, except in a handful of circumstances, and for SACS that used to be the southern region – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Kentucky. The removal of that distinction has allowed institutions to be accredited in other regions.

For our purposes we are accredited by SACs. We go up for our reaffirmation on a 10-year cycle. Here is an update of those key accreditation dates, considered as a countdown to 2025. In July, 2022 we went to the summer institute which is where you refreshed on the things of particular importance. It focuses a lot on assessment and really preparing to do that well including ensuring that your processes are in place to do that well.

The December 2022 orientation occurs at the annual SACS business meeting. Dr. Carvalho, the interim president, Dr. Subasi, the interim CFO, and CJ from her staff, went to Atlanta, along with pretty much a representative from every other organization within that region, to attend the annual meeting. A subset of organizations, those that are up for reaffirmation in 2023, were invited to orientation. This is where they make sure that those folks in those key roles understand what the timeline is and what the expectations are heading into reaffirmation.

Between now and then, what we do is we develop our compliance certification essentially our self-study report. That is our demonstration of compliance with the standards that will be due in September of 2024. Those reports are a documentation of the good work that the institution does to remain in compliance through all of the 10 years, which is why we're very proactive in ensuring that we're maintaining compliance with the standards, and that we're generating that documentation to minimize the pressure, to gather that information as we move closer to that timeline, and if institutions are doing this well, we are regularly generating this information. This is a documentation of our ongoing processes, which is why those are important in November of 2024, when the offsite Committee Review will occur, which an external committee will do it. They first read the report, ask questions and give us feedback. We will respond to that in mid-February of 2025 and we will submit our QEP 3 (our quality enhancement plan, the third iteration of that).

Our on-site visit will occur between April 7-10, 2025. We will have until fall to respond to that on-site report if there are questions or follow-up. The reaffirmation decision coming at the annual meeting in December 2025.

Ms. Ickes next says that she will briefly highlight some of the standards that are related to faculty and if you are interested in a more detailed conversation she is happy to have one with you (at the end of her presentation she gives a link to the standards

and the Resource Manual). Any of those with a CR are considered a core requirement. This is standard that is of such significance that if you are in noncompliant with that, the Commission has the ability to take an immediate action in a public way.

First, is integrity: "The institution operates with integrity in all matters." This is one which you don't have to demonstrate compliance with, it is something she and the President signs off on.

Next, in the resource manual you will find section 6 on faculty. In 6.1 (CR) Full-time Faculty - "The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and the goals of the institution." Its companion is 6.2.b Program Faculty - "For each of its educational programs, the institution employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review." Recently, you have likely have received a request to update your CV and at some point in time you probably provided transcripts to the institution of your qualifications. Much of that is related to 6.2.a Faculty Qualifications - "For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members."

You all have expertise in a really broad area of things. So it is also common that even with your transcripts and your CVs that we have to reach out and have you explain to us what your dissertation was, or your research area, or your work experience was, and how that relates to a particular course, because her office doesn't have content matter expertise and all the various subjects that you teach. So she says that if they do that please in no way think that they are questioning your qualifications. They are really just needing help to facilitate an external reader to understanding the relationship between your experiences and your credentials and qualifications and the courses you teach.

Next, 6.2.c Program Coordinators - "For each of its educational programs, the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination." The institution assigns this role (not an official role like dean, department head, or program chair) to designate someone with subject matter expertise in a program that if there is going to be a curriculum change and assessment change that someone would reach out to them before doing that. Dr. Subasi and the Provost office has spent time with each of the Deans ensuring that we understand who that person is, and we document that.

Next, 6.3 Faculty Appointment and Evaluation - "The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status."

Next, 6.4 Academic Freedom - "The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom." Our handbook has the academic freedom statement. There is now a University wide policy from the institution broadly in the Provost office that says the institution recognizes and supports that statement, because this this particular statement requires that the institution seek to protect academic freedom. So the University has acknowledged the faculty statement in doing that.

Next, 6.5 Faculty Development - "The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission."

Next, 7.2 QEP - ``The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.” There is a process in which the next QEP will be selected. There is the first piece of that which is topic selection. You have to pick a QEP from one of the two categories, either student being student success focused, or being as assessment focused on assessment of student learning focus. The last two QEPs have been student learning focused. The third QEP will be student success focus. That is the only determination that has been made thus far about the QEP, as that will be something that will need leadership, support, and endorsement from the next President. There is currently a work group that has representation from all of the colleges and various administration units that is starting to gather data that the next group will be able to use to help with the topic selection.

Next, 8.2 - Student Outcomes - ``The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results.” This is an area of critical importance for the faculty because the faculty are the only members of the institution that can assess student learning in the programs, and then can actually use it to make a programmatic improvements. This has been a struggle for the institution. This has been an area we’ve had to provide additional information to SACS. Even after Dr. Subasi and I reached out and went to each academic unit at the beginning of the term, we are still not seeing through the curriculum committees much that’s changing or improving programs based on assessment findings. I would very much ask you to be very mindful of this standard to pay attention to it. If you’re not an assessment coordinator, ask in your department for that information and make sure that your improving programs, and you’re seeking improvement in those programs that you’re using.

Next, Sec. 9 – Educational program structure and content. These are standards related to program, content program, length, general education, institutional credits for undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees, requirements that post baccalaureate degrees have increasing rigor, and that there are stated program of requirements.

Next, Sec. 10 – Educational policies, procedures, and practices. 10. 2 and 10.3: The institution publishes academic policies that we make certain public information available around calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance refunds, 10.4: This standard is related to academic governance, which says that those policies are published on the authority of faculty and things that related to academic and governance matters. This is a key change that the Provost’s office ask the UGCC and the Grad Council in the revision of their charters, to actually ensure that they are reviewing and making recommendation based on policy. 10.7 and 10.8: Policies for and evaluating awarding credit. The General Education Committee is, is particularly important in the key role of the faculty that we have policies for awarding credit for evaluating and awarding that academic credit and faculty have the appropriate role in that.

Next, Sec. 11 – Library and learning/Information resources. These are the standards related to the library, so that there is a library, the appropriate library and

learning information resources that there's appropriate staff, and that faculty and students have access to those resources.

Next, Sec. 14.2 Substantive Change - ``The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy." This is a standard related to changes at the institution that would in some way either be a consumer protection, or change the institution in a notable way that should be approved as it could raise a conflict or concern with accreditation standards.

Next, Sec. 14.4 Representation to other agencies - ``The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions."

Ms. Ickes provides a slide that shows the most commonly cited standards and how they progress after the three stages of review. Then a slide for the keys to SACSCOC success which are: 1. Have a policy where appropriate; 2. Follow any written policy or procedure documents; 3. Ensure standards that require regular (i.e., at least every three years) review or as often as policy states; 4. Ensure adequate documentation.

There will be trainings throughout this process. Please participate when you're available, and some of you will be asked to meet with the visiting team. Please do, and please make yourself available in 2025 when they come.

Ms. Ickes asks if Senate has any questions and if you do not want to ask a question here to feel free to email her as she is happy to answer any of the questions you have related to accreditation.

A question from the private chat to Dr. Turgut was conveyed and is asked to Ms. Ickes: What are the adverse effects of failing the accreditation? Ms. Ickes answers: First thing you'd be asked to do is provide a report, a monitoring report, or a follow up report more significantly. There are sanctions that could put you essentially through a process where you're going to continue to have to try to demonstrate compliance over multiple years. They could remove you from membership, and you would lose the ability to offer Federal financial aid.

Old Business

Committee Reports:

1. Excellence Awards Committee: President Turgut reads the report of Senator Julie Costopoulos. She would like to remind the faculty to apply for the excellence awards for this year. The deadline for this material submission is Feb. 10, 2023. Also this committee has one vacancy. They need a faculty member from engineering side and we need one Senator. In order to comply with this policy, if possible, to fill both these, we would request the Senator phone the engineering to join us for reviews of applications. It is a positive group where we get to discuss the stellar work of our colleagues in the month of February. Please

contact Dr. Costopoulos whom is the chair of this committee and her email is provided under the Faculty Senate webpage under our committees.

2. Academic Policies Committee: Senator Vipuil Kishore said we had a meeting yesterday with the academic policies committee, and there were a couple of issues that we discussed that I would bring it up to the Executive Committee the next meeting, so as a new business item. They have three committee members all from COES so they would like additional members from other colleges.
3. Scholarship Committee: Senator Nezamoddin Nezamoddini-Kachouie said nothing to report.
4. Welfare Committee: Senator Nakin Suksawang was away and no message from him.
5. Administrative Policies Committee: Senator Mehmet Kaya said he had nothing to report.
6. Technology, Resources, and Infrastructure (TRI) Committee: Nothing was discussed as this committee needs to elect a chair.

President's Report:

President Tolga Turgut begins by saying the over the winter break he was still working with respect to the President's Search Committee, where he spent circa 120 hours on this. As discussed in the last meeting, the timeline is being closely followed when it comes to the President's Search Committee, and he is one out of seven members there representing the faculty. He reminds the Senate that there is a webpage where you can follow the President's search under the Office of the President. The announcements with respect to developments about the President's search will be made by the chair of our Board of Trustees which he anticipates they will be announcing the finalists around January and their interview in February and March. (This ends the President's Report.)

Proposed Modification (recommended by the AFTC and has been discussed since October 4, 2022 meeting) to the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee Charter for endorsement:

President Turgut begins by saying the plan today is to endorse the proposed modification recommendation by the AFTC which has been discussed since Oct. 4, 2022 Faculty Senate meeting. Before this he provided some detailed background.

As you know, all the academic Freedom and Tenure Committee members are comprising of our colleagues who represent each college within our university. They were all endorsed by the Senate, and they made revisions to the AFTC charter with the purpose of further clarity, improving its functionality, and to promote a more impartial charter that guides them. They made this as a recommendation to the Faculty Senate.

In the Oct. 4th meeting we started discussing and debating on it. In the aftermath of our Senate meeting on November 1st, 2022, he channeled the discussions as suggestions to AFTC. They also took the time to watch the Faculty Senate recordings of our Nov. 1st meeting. As a result they made a second revision and send it to us and that document was shared with all of you on December 2nd, and I read the specific changes during our meeting on December 6th. There were no questions during our last meeting, or afterwards. Now after discussing on it for over 90 days, we are ready to vote on this important revision. In fact, he commented that this may be the longest and most collaborative policy change which has been discussed, debated on the Senate floor prior to voting in many years. So he thanked the AFTC and everyone from the faculty for all the input.

President Turgut asks for a motion to vote on this proposed AFTC charter revision. Senator Mehmet Kaya makes a motion and Senator William Bowman seconds the motion.

President Turgut briefly discusses how we will vote. Given that we are a representative body where we are accountable to our constituents, especially on policy issues like this that will go into the fact of the handbook, I, as the presiding officer of the meeting, would like to do this via a roll call vote. This will assure transparency and remedy any other problem that may occur.

The table below shows the results of the voting by roll call and as announced during the meeting. (Secretary's note: This information was announced during the meeting and then prepared and sent to me by the President Turgut.)

Senator Name	College	Department	Vote
Ersoy Subasi	COA	N/A	Yea
Jordan Poole	COA	N/A	Yea
R. Tolga Turgut	COA	N/A	Did not vote deliberately
Charles Bryant	COB	N/A	Absent during voting only
Steven Rivet	COB	N/A	Absent
Abram Walton	COB	N/A	Yea
Angel Otero	COB	Business Online	Absent
Donald Platt	COES	APSS	Yea
Razvan Rusovici	COES	APSS	Nay
Manasvi Lingam	COES	APSS	Yea
Csaba Palotai	COES	APSS	Yea
Kenia Nunes	COES	BCES	Yea
Mehmet Kaya	COES	BCES	Yea
Vipuil Kishore	COES	BCES	Yea
Nasri Nesnas	COES	BCES	Nay
Luis (Danny) Otero	COES	CES	Absent
Brian Lail	COES	CES	Nay
Nasheen Nur	COES	CES	Yea
Nakin Suksawang	COES	MCE	Absent
Hamidreza Najafi	COES	MCE	Absent
Chiradeep Sen	COES	MCE	Yea
Joo Young Park	COES	MTH	Absent
Nezam Nezamoddini- Kachouei	COES	MTH	Yea
Aaron Welters	COES	MTH	Abstain (proxy vote)
Pallav Ray	COES	OEMS	Yea
Gary Zarillo	COES	OEMS	Yea

Spencer Fire	COES	OEMS	Yea
Kevin Burke	COPLA	SAC	Abstain
Angela Tenga	COPLA	SAC	Nay
Gordon Patterson	COPLA	SAC	Abstain
David Wilder	COPLA	BA	Abstain
Patrick Converse	COPLA	PSY	Abstain
Jessica Wildman	COPLA	PSY	Abstain
Julie Costopoulos	COPLA	PSY	Nay
William Bowman	LIB	N/A	Abstain

Total Tally Breakdown:

Yeas : 15
Nays : 5
Abstain : 7
Absent : 6

Other notes : Dr. Turgut did not vote as the presiding officer. Would have voted in the event of a tie. Dr. Bryant was present during the meeting but was unable to vote.

The AFTC Charter description, as revised as the second version has passed.

Standing committee lists of members to be completed:

President Turgut mentions that most committees are in need of at least one faculty Senator other than the chair of the committee (as per policy). Priority is the following though.

- Member of Faculty Excellence Committee: in need of a COES senator.
- Chair of Academic Policies: open until March, must be a senator.
- Chair of Technology, Resources and Infrastructure: open until March, must be a senator.

He mentions that he received a couple of interested faculty for committees, and they inquired questions and more explanation about what kind of work and responsibility that committee membership and chairmanships entail. These committees, as you know, are very important for our Senate to function better and stronger. I would like to give an idea of how much time is required to work per month as a member. It requires five to six hours a month to work in a committee. If you're a committee chair its about 10-15 hours/month with about half of that being attending executive committee meetings.

He also shares that the Faculty Senate website has a description of what these committees are tasked with as well as the offices which includes the sitting president, secretary, president-elect, committee chairs and a brief description of the charter or responsibilities of each of these committees. There is also a list of vacancies on these committees.

Discussion on term limits for senators, committee chairs and senate officers:

President Turgut says he began discussing about this during our last meeting and also in his vision statement he had discussed term limits for the Faculty Senate, Committee Chairs, and Senate Officers. His objective is to have a more diverse and inclusive representation of the senate, because the institution of the faculty senate must be reflective of all the voices among the 300 full-time faculty. He sees serving in the Senate as a senator and president to be an honor and privilege, as he said before, and we must provide this opportunity to all the faculty.

In order to assure this, he thinks, limiting the terms for Senators, Committee Chairs, and Senate Officers by two terms may be a good idea. For example, this would mean serving in the Senate for 6 years as a Senate Senator maximum, 4 years as a committee chair, and so forth. This would promote more rotation among the faculty in the Senate and, as well as other committees. This would lead to a more educated and versatile faculty population who has awareness and knowledge of the Senate, and also the other committees in our institution.

Also, if we can promote a more competitive environment and culture to serve in the Senate then we will have more competitive senator elections in the departments and colleges as well. This will also reflect in making committee chairmanships and senator selection more competitive. For example, other than the year he was elected, President elections recently have been mostly unopposed. The same goes for Senate Secretary, who happens to be the other Senate officer for our Constitution.

He asks the important question: Can you please (asking all the senators who are in this meeting, and those who will watch the recording later on) take this issue of term limits of senators, committee chairs, and senate officers to your constituents and we discuss and possibly vote on it during our next meeting?

The current situation we have is according to our policies that Senators are elected for three-year terms. And there must be elections within their department/colleges at the end of their 3 year terms. (President Turgut opens the floor for questions and discussion.)

Senator Abram Walton asks if he is asking for discussions now or is just going to go straight to a vote next meeting?

President Turgut responds: No, it would be great to get feedback first, and then we can discuss in the next meeting as well.

Senator Abram Walton responds: They have talked about it in the college of business and it doesn't actually make sense for us right now we've pretty much as a faculty divide out the roles. So when we look at the specific roles that have to be orthogonal and separate, we have limited faculty to do this. So he thinks that the discussion should need to be at the college level. Asking what is the distribution of faculty across all the required faculty committees, and what would the impact be on the ability to fill all the positions?

Senator Kishore responds: I agree with Abram as well, like what we've seen with the positions that are open for committees, and we've not seen much interest. If you enforce the term limits, we may have positions that are unfilled for a long time. That's my concern. So I also ask if you could graph a paragraph that we could share with our constituents. That would be helpful for us to get their feedback.

President Turgut responds: Yes, I think that's what I will do. He then asks whether anyone else thinks it's a good idea to have the suggested term limits.

Senator Kaya responds: I think it doesn't hurt to have the change and could be discussed. There could be some flexibility in it though. He is also ok with the two term limit.

Senator Lail responds: I think we want to be careful and caution us regarding overly constraining the system unless it truly has a distinct advantage, because the side effects could be negative, as pointed out by Dr. Walton.

President Turgut responds: Thank you. I appreciate that. So what I will do is within the next week I will draft just a little note and share it with the senators. And if you don't mind just discussing within your departments and colleges, and come back for further discussion on this issue.

New Business

President Turgut brings up the following piece of new business.

The departments/colleges to be reminded to hold senator elections internally for their senators whose three-year terms are ending. The incoming new senator names should be sent to Faculty Senate President and Secretary from their Colleges/Departments latest by the third week of February if possible.

Senator Julie Costopoulos brings up the following new piece of business based on a question from one of her constituents. The school of Psychology and Behavior analysis are being moved out of Harris Commons to give space to the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine. Our Dean tells us that that may mean pushing all of our current classes into other classrooms on campus in the middle of this semester. This will affect all university classes and fall when we will be scheduling them with at least seven less classrooms available when this building is given up. So given the potential impact of this space transition on the overall University. This faculty member asked: Can Senate request more university-wide sharing of information regarding plans to address this classroom shortage?

President Turgut responds: He will bring this up in his monthly meeting with the interim President and Provost and directly ask that question to them.

Senator Bryant responds: Is there a timeframe for that, Julie? Like when their starting to move people. Do they have a plan for that?

Senator Costopoulos responds: Originally they were told July and then told the middle of this semester.

Senator Wilder responds: January 25 in two weeks we are moving, that is for the school of behavior analysis and then psychology in March.

Senator Costopoulos responds: Where are their classes going to be located? This is a pretty serious concern.

President Turgut responds: Give me a few days to get feedback directly. Is that okay?

Senator Costopoulos responds: Yeah, that's what we're hoping for. We really just want information. And we also wanted to alert the faculty across the campus that this will be affecting more than just us.

Tolga Turgut asks for a motion to adjourn.

Senator Mehmet Kaya responds. Motion to adjourn.

Senator Kenia Nunes responds. I second the motion.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46pm.

Respectively submitted,

Aaron Welters, Faculty Senate Secretary