Faculty Senate Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021

*Present:* Melissa Anderson, Amy Belcastro, Jeremy Carlton, Paul Condon, Brian Fedorek, Paul French, Andrew Gay, Marianne Golding, Justin Harmon, Laurie Kurutz, Jesse Longhurst, Merrilyne Lundahl, Brendan McMahon, Matt Moreali, Tiffany Morey, Anna Oliveri, Michael Parker, Aprille Phillips, Mark Siders, Ellen Siem, Michael Stanfill, Chad Thatcher, Precious Yamaguchi, Kemble Yates

*Absent:* Laurie Kurutz

*Guests:*  Lee Ayers, Leslie Eldridge, Sherry Ettlich, Niko Hatch, Scott Maguffin, Pavlina McGrady, Joel Perkins, Jessica Piekielek, Alena Ruggerio, Devora Shapiro, Vincent Smith, Karen Stone, Jamie Trammell, Sue Walsh, Jody Waters

Meeting called to order at: 4:00 pm.

1. **4:00p Approval of Minutes from 11/30**

Motion & Vote:

McMahon moved to approve the minutes, and Belcastro seconded. **Motion passed** unanimously with one abstention (Golding).

1. **4:05p President’s Report – Linda Schott**

No report this week.

1. **4:10p Provost’s Report – Sue Walsh**

Report:

* A call for ideas was sent as an email last Friday to obtain feedback from faculty regarding the current academic organization model, which is now 7 years old.
* People have seemed content with the current organization, but over the past couple of years, there have been questions/requests from faculty for revisiting the model.
* During a retreat on August 6, the division directors and Provost Walsh decided to put out a call to faculty to see if there is any interest in looking at other options.
* A working group is being created that will consider the ideas from programs or individual faculty.
* Provost Walsh expressed hope that faculty will express interest over the next week or so in joining the working group.
* Talking with program colleagues, chairs, and division directors would be a great way to contribute as well, though faculty should not feel compelled to become involved.

Discussion:

**Fedorek** asked about the timing and, specifically, the reason to revisit this after 7 years with SOU’s financial challenges and a number of additional challenges that faculty are involved with, such as learning remote teaching and revisiting the general education model. **Provost** **Walsh** replied that there’s no evidence or theory that this is a good time to revisit the model but that she’s been asked over the past couple of years to revisit. She emphasized that if faculty would prefer to have the conversation at a different time, to let her know through their directors.

**Yates** felt it was reasonable to revisit the structure now if, after 7 years, faculty and administration are happy with the general structure. He first viewed the call as maintenance, where (given the guardrails that the intent is not to save a lot of money/have a large reorganization) we might realize there is a program that might fit in another place or if there is a more coherent way to collect new multidisciplinary programs. Yates stated that, eventually and maybe not in 2021, he would like us to take a longer, harder look at the structure to perhaps identify one that is more effective. **Provost** **Walsh** replied that perhaps this is a step toward that deeper look and that some faculty have submitted ideas that might lead to a few tweaks but that this is indeed not intended to be a way to save money.

**Gay** asked whether there are certain benchmarks by which realighments or new affinities would be evaluated. For example, saving money, providing more equal loading for chairs or division directors, or better serving faculty. **Provost Walsh** hopes the working group will raise these types of issues in their feedback and reiterated that the intent is not to make extraordinary changes but that she is open to having larger conversations after seeing recommendations from the working group. She added that there have been 5 responses since Friday and that the call/process will be a topic of the chairs and directors meeting next week.

**Yates** encouraged faculty to provide feedback to their chairs and senators to send to the Provost. AC will ask for updates and senators can continue asking questions about this.

1. **4:15p Advisory Council Report – Chair-Elect Melissa Anderson**

Report:

* Curriculum
* This is the main focus of today’s agenda.
* Senate will vote on new proposals and, because of a minor administrative error for one of the proposals, a vote on that proposal today will require that we waive the 2-week rule.
* Faculty Awards
* There are lingering questions about the faculty awards and confusion about the process, which does not seem to have simplified. The timeline for the awards, particularly its justification and implications, is still somewhat unclear.
* This will be a discussion item for today.
* Faculty Rewards Group
* The Provost shared the faculty rewards group work that has been done and how she would like to move forward and do more with the recommendations from the group.
* We will hear more about this in the future.
* Spring Term Course Delivery
* AC discussed the email sent from the Provost office last week that was intended to open up a conversation about Spring term course delivery.
* This is an exploratory conversation with a number of unknowns, including what will happen with K12 and how safe students/faculty will feel on campus. T
* Some programs are having conversations with their students to find out if there are different ways, safe for everyone, to offer special types of classes that would normally be in person but have not worked well remotely.
* The university does not have a vaccination policy yet, but we are trying to stay on the same page as other universities.
* In regards to the vaccination groups, most states consider educators to contain K12 but not colleges/universities, but the language is not yet clear for us.
* This will be on our radar because COVID spreads fairly rapidly in college communities.
* COVID Impacts on Promotion & Tenure
* There are currently many national conversations about this regarding the burden on working parents and, in particular, women.
* We want to continue discussing this and how to address the things that have happened in our promotion and tenure materials.
* Post-Tenure Work Group
* This group has nearly finished with its recommendations.
* We will hear more about this once the recommendations are ready.
* FPAR Group
* This group will need an exception for Joan McBee, as she is now the director of BCE.
* These types of exceptions have been made in the past, so it should not be a problem.

Discussion:

**Yates** stated that AC always begins their meeting with a set agenda but other conversations happen as well. Regarding delivery methods for Spring term, there is a wide spectrum of faculty interests. Some faculty are looking at safe ways of teaching live. AC was reassured (and this is clear in the email) that if a faculty member is concerned about their safety in Spring, they have the option to remain remote in Spring.

1. **4:20p ASSOU President’s Report – Niko Hatch**

Preface:

Hatch is the new ASSOU President, a history and political science major, and a resource

for faculty.

Report:

* SFC
* ASSOU has begun the student fee process and required forms have been sent to the fee signers. The forms are due on Januarry 22.
* The goal to finish the two back half processes of setting the fee and allocating the fee a week prior to the Spring Board of Trustees meeting so that President Schott can review and approve it before it is brought to the Board.
* Vacancies in Student Government
* The vacancies are for the International Student Senator, the Student Director of Multicultural Affairs, and the Student Director of Recreation and Athletic Programs.
* Please encourage students who are qualified and may be interested in any of these positions to fill out an application.
* Applications for these will be sent tomorrow (1/12) in the Southern Exposure Newsletter.
* Proctoring Software Task Force
* ASSOU is looking for a student representative to sit on this committee. Please encourage students who might be interested in this position.
* Positive Change for Students
* ASSOU’s various committees continues working to create positive change for students.

Discussion:

**Golding** requested the list of the current vacancies and needs. **Hatch** shared this list through the chat.

1. **4:25p IFS Report – Devora Shapiro**

Summary:

The Inter-Institutional Faculty Senate met this past weekend in a mini-meeting. IFS is working on developing relationships with tSenator Dembrow and Representative Leon, both of whom were present. One of the main topics of discussion involved a current House Bill to create a common course numbering system. The IFS wants to ensure that faculty have control over curricular design and courses while continuing to work with state representatives, in this case for improving transferability between institutions. IFS continues asking the extent of this problem; for example, SOU has a large bank of common courses. Dembrow’s suggestion is that we create a common course numbering system for 100- and 200-level courses, and IFS narrowed the scope to scaffolding classes, many of which might already have the common numbering.

Discussion:

**Gay** asked how this serves students and raised the concern that students might take a course a second time if course numbers are changed. **Shapiro** stated that the goal is to have certain courses (*e.g.*, MTH 243) available and identical at all institutions so that transfer students would not have to repeat classes. IFS is concerned that this might require majors to add classes, creating more problems than it addresses.

**Yates** stated that this issue has been with the OUS system since the 1980s. In the early 1990s a “common numbering system” was adopted for a number of courses. However, this has drifted increasingly since. Institutions have since left the OUS system but encountered a political problem involving transfer students from community colleges. Yates expressed hope that this focuses on courses that are commonly transferred rather than a guarantee that every community college can provide the first two years of every possible major at every possible university. **Shapiro** agreed, stating that we may have done a lot of that work already and may not need an additional bill to address our current challenges in this area. She stated that IFS will solicit feedback once the final proposal is ready. At the moment, the proposal focuses on all 100- and 200-level courses.

**Moreali** asked whether interest groups or student groups had brought this to the legislature and the reason it is being brought forward now. **Shapiro** replied that, as Yates mentioned, this has been with us for decades and that students, families, and constituents have continued to approach lawmakers about this. The task is now to determine the extend of the problem and the effectiveness of our current ways of handling it.

**Belcastro** asked whether IFS is having conversations about the vaccines regarding the inclusion of faculty and staff as educators and requiring students/others to be vaccinated. **Shapiro** replied that IFS has not yet had enough time to have a substantial conversation about this yet. She added that IFS potentially understands higher ed as being separate from K12, which has different concerns. IFS is very interested in expectations for faculty, and Shapiro expects that this discussion will also involve unions and broad faculty representation. Shapiro expressed interest in having this as part of the IFS conversation.

**Belcastro** encouraged IFS to take an advocacy role for faculty, as a voice that our senators and governor listen to, especially in a time with so many moving parts.

**Shapiro** stated that she will report this back to IFS.

1. **4:35p New Programs and Courses (Action) – Curriculum Committee**

Notes:

* Because this was introduced and discussed at the 11/30 senate meeting, the associated documents are located in the 11/30 agenda folder.
* The cybersecurity certificate blends choices between undergraduate and possible graduate courses, depending on which students work on the certificate. The courses were approved by the Graduate Council prior to our last senate meeting and approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee after our last meeting. The new, more up-to-date version of the certificate is in the 1/11 agenda folder and has fairly substantial changes. Therefore, Senate would have to waive the 2-week rule to vote on the certificate.

Motion & Vote:

Gay moved to waive the 2-week rule, and Siem seconded. **Motion passed** unanimouslywith no abstentions.

Motion & Vote:

Gay moved to approve all of the new certificates, minors, and new courses proposed at the 11/30, and Thatcher seconded. **Motion passed** unanimously with no abstentions

1. **4:50 New Graduate Programs and Courses (Discussion) – Graduate Council**

Summary (from Waters):

The proposed changes are fairly minor, including an alteration to the course description for BI 444/544 and the adoption of an open credit policy for 2 environmental education courses, one for research and one for thesis. Senate will vote on these items at the next meeting.

Discussion:

**Yates** asked whether the catalog changes submitted by computer science should be considered as part of the graduate council proposal. **Waters** replied that because the CS changes do not include the creation of new courses or curriculum, they would not require approval from Faculty Senate.

1. **5:00p New University Studies Course (Discussion) – University Studies Committee**

Summary (from Ayers):

As a reminder, the University Studies Committee (USC) will not entertain any new proposals for the remainder of the year, as its members have shifted their work towards helping the General Education subcommittee for Winter term. However, a couple of course proposals came in before Fall term and one is moving forward.

The USC brings proposals forward through the shared University Studies Committee folder on the Google Drive; all senators have access to this folder. The course proposals, and the rubrics used to evaluate them, are located in a subfolder named for the academic year (AY 2020-2021).

The course under discussion (ENG 315) includes supplementary material showing how it meets the J-strand requirement. This course received a unanimous yes vote, with the exception of a member of the committee who was not present and did not participate in the vote.

Discussion:

**Yates** identified the course and **Ayers** stated that the course currently meets the I strand and that the course has an EDI approach, documented in the proposal, that would allow it to satisfy the J-strand requirements.

**Oliveri** asked if we are still approving courses for the current general education model because some students will follow this or a previous catalog year. **Ayers** replied that this is concluding business from last year and that the USC sought guidance on this last term. The USC is not entertaining new proposals for exploration or integration courses and is instead devoting its energy to the new general education model.

**Yates** stated that, since the new general education model will not be implemented until Fall 2022, the current general education model will need to function through next year. He then asked when students would be able to use ENG 315 to fulfill their J-strand requirement if it were approved as a J-strand course. **Ayers** replied that students would be able to use the course immediately. Once the course is entered as such in Banner, it becomes a course that meets the requirement for the J-strand.

**Yates** then asked whether it would count as a J-strand course for students who had taken the course in the past. **Ayers** replied that the course has made a shift that has allowed it to qualify for the J strand. Based on how the course is entered into Banner, it would qualify for either the I or J strand, depending on how it’s direct. It will now appear in DegreeWorks as suggestions for courses to take that would qualify for a J-strand, and this could help the students as we move forward and begin teaching out the current general education model.

1. **Brief Discussion of Faculty Awards – intent, processes, and timelines**

Preface (from Yates):

Questions about the time required, the intent of the award, and the philosophy of the award have come up a number of times AC and Faculty Senate since discussing and passing the scholarship award in Fall. Applications for awards have been submitted for this year, so any changes would apply to next year’s process.

One of the issues that seems to keep coming up is that the awards have different time requirements.

Preface (from Morey):

The teaching award requires 2 years, the service award requires 5 years, and the scholarship award requires 2 years. The service award has a longer, 5-year requirement based on significant research (including discussions with other university systems) and a valid argument from the X-Factor.

Morey recommended that AC review the original paperwork or hear the argument that supports having a 5-year time requirement for the service commitment. The Faculty Development Committee (FDC) entertained the argument and voted to keep the 5-year timeline for the service award. Morey stated that she sent an email to Faculty Senate that included their reasoning and would be happy to send the email again.

Discussion:

**Yates** stated that the intent was not to second-guess the time and energy put into this by the FDC or the X-Factor.

**Gay** stated that conversations he has had have not questioned why the service award has a longer timeline but, rather, why the teaching and scholarship awards have comparably shorter timelines. From his understanding, the original intent of the awards was not to help faculty with their tenure and promotion to associate professor or senior instructor but instead to recognize work that was distinguished, meaning an accumulated record or body of work. The question is how 2 years of scholarship or teaching would be sufficient. **Morey** replied that the awards originated from the X-Factor and that she thought the reason for the shorter timelines is so that adjunct faculty or faculty on 3-year contracts. She stated that the evaluations of applications are holistic and the focus is not on the timeline.

**Yates** stated that the current questions are not so much focused on questioning the work the FDC has done so far but on how far back the review of a faculty member’s work extends and whether faculty can win an award more than once.

**Morey** shared that the nomination and application process is difficult for faculty and asked if the concern is whether a large number of faculty might be nominated for and apply for the award with the shorter timeline. **Yates** recognized that the topic was simply under discussion and that there is no upcoming vote associated with it. He then stated that the concerns about the timeline include whether the intent is for the award to include a larger body of work.

**Golding** stated that the timeline may have more to do with consistency, that we want to see awardees showing consistent quality over the years. She said that she thought faculty could only receive the award once. **Yates** replied that awardees have to wait before receiving the award again, and **Fedorek** clarified that the waiting time is 10 years. **Oliveri** noted that Fedorek provided this additional information in the chat:

*Scholarship: Eligible again after 10 years*

*Teaching: No mention of "re-winning"*

*Service: No mention of "re-winning"*

**Siem** asked and **Yates** clarified that the time requirement for receiving the award (a first time) is in regards to how long the faculty has been at SOU but not in regards to how far back the FDC can review the faculty’s record of work relevant to the award.

**Yates** shared that, after speaking with Hala,the X-Factor had initially wanted to propose 2 teaching awards, one with a 5-year requirement meant for ongoing faculty and one with a 2-year reqtime requirement meant for term-by-term faculty. A concern later came up by X-Factor and/or the FDC that the one with the shorter requirement might be seen as the lesser award. It was decided that it would be better to have one award so that one would not be viewed as a special case.

**Anderson** added that Schepmann’s input might be helpful in this conversation. X-Factor originally wanted the teaching and scholarship awards to have a longer timeline to reflect the time it takes to show a distinguished record of work. There are 4 teaching and 2 service awards each year, meaning that there are 6 awards that can be given to faculty who have been at SOU for only 2 years and 2 awards that have a longer time requirement. There is also an equity issue. Research shows that female faculty tend to have heavier service loads, and it would be harder to receive a service award before going up for tenure and promotion.

**Yates** stated that the 5-year period for service seems to make sense because it takes time to establish a sustained, distinct record of service. This argument could also be applied to research, particularly because it tends to occur in a less continuous way, with some years being much more active than others. Research often takes a longer timeline to develop a record. Several colleagues have stated that because we work at a University with a heavy teaching load, we want to be able to award those who thrive in that environment; the focus should be on excellence and accomplishment. There was a fear that the award could be given to someone who comes to SOU with a large body of research already completed, but this was addressed when the language was amended for the scholarship award to accentuate and focus on world one at SOU.

**Morey** asked if McMahon (also on the FDC) had anything to add, and **McMahon** stated that the FDC did consider aligning the award timeline to the administrations promotion and tenure timeline.

**Yates** requested a simpler summary that streamlined and clarified the of the nomination and application timeline for each of the awards. **Morey** affirmed that she will contact Yates about this.

**Yates** indicated that this discussion was an initial revisit and encouraged faculty to provide input about this topic. There will be at least one more discussion before any changes are proposed.

1. **5:25p Announcements/New Business**

**Oliveri** stated that she is teaching an in-person/hybrid virtual lab where she is meeting with students, and she offered to answer questions from faculty who might be considering offering in-person/hybrid courses in Spring. She is happy to discuss how she is doing this; how students feel; how they are dealing with safety; and how the university has supported this financially by ensuring that the room is clean, that the content is streamed to others, and that a staff member is available to help. She added that she was on a summer working group that did a lot of research about how to offer in-person labs and was one of the members of the group who decided to take that route.

**Ettlich** added, in the chat:

*Instruction and Research Reopening Subgroup is looking at putting together a Panel discussion with faculty who have taught in-person and/or hybrid fall term. This would be an opportunity for faculty to get ideas about possibilities for spring. Joan, my co-chair, is currently reaching out to potential faculty participants.*

**Thatcher** seconded Oliveri’s offer, stating that the Outdoor Adventure Leadership program has been teaching classes since summer and conducting most classes in person.

**Siders** asked whether we should discuss an email sent to campus that questioned SOU’s commitment to diversity. **Oliveri** replied that the email did not seem to address her day-to-day work at the University. **Yates** stated that he would bring this up at the next AC meeting and requested feedback for how AC might want to channel this discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 5:33 pm.