

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2024

Senators in attendance: (no particular order) T. Nupp (chair), M. Rogers (chair-elect), M. Hankins (Secretary), J. Grosskopf, J. Greer, A. Gilbert, J. Clements, T. Limperis, C. Brucker, P. Dykema, D. Dunnick, D. Murphy, S. Escobar, S. Huss, M. Bradley, C. Austin, V. Jones, C. Capen-Housley, T. Pennington, S. West, S. Apple, S. Tinerella,

Guests: A. Santos (provost), J. Myers (Assoc. VPAA), B. Clary (Board of Trustees)

1. Call to Order (Dr. Tom Nupp)
2. Approval of October 8, 2024 Minutes
 - Minutes approved with the following updates:
 - Correction to listed attendance – S. Tinerella was not present.
 - Correction to spelling of CUPA.
3. Committee Updates
 - A. Standing Committees
 - i. Budget Advisory Committee (Nupp) – No report
 - ii. General Education Committee (Tinerella) – No Report
 - iii. Institutional Aid Committee (Rogers) – No Report
 - iv. Shared Governance Committee (Huss) – Discussed adjustments to current draft document following Dr. Jones’ comments from last meeting. Dr. Huss is seeking further feedback on this document.
 - v. Campus Space and Utilization Committee: (Jones) – No Report
 - vi. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: (Nupp) – No Report
 - vii. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Murphy) – No report
 - viii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema) – No Report
 - ix. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple) – No Report
 - x. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Escobar) – No Report
 - B. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees
 - i. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss) – Committee has been busy with updated policy drafts. Summaries of these items are provided below:
 - Teaching, Scholarship, and Service Sections of the Handbook: The committee has solicited feedback on potential changes to these sections from each college and department with help from junior faculty on the committee. The presently proposed changes are not significant; they are mainly focused on specifying certain aspects of the policy. The committee requests Senate to review these changes and provide feedback.

- Grant Writing as an Evaluation Criterion: The committee has summarized feedback from faculty on this issue, particularly concerns related to junior faculty. At present we think the suggested changes will not have a significant impact on how faculty are evaluated, but aspects of this policy should be discussed with senate and feedback is requested.
- Office Hours Policy: The committee is recommending that the "Office Hours Policy" be renamed the "Student Hours Policy." They also suggest updates to the language to make it clearer that faculty are required to be in their office during student hours. The goal is to make the policy more student-friendly and specific. These are relatively minor changes the committee hopes can be approved easily. But feedback is still requested.
- Disability Services Policy: The committee reviewed a policy from Disability Services, which they believe is fine as is. They are presenting the policy to the Senate for informational purposes only. This policy deals with granting course credit when students have a legitimate, verified disability that prevents them from completing certain aspects of a course.

There was substantial discussion around the faculty workload policy. The present policy specifies teaching (60 – 80 %), scholarship ($\geq 10\%$), and service ($\geq 10\%$). Revisions that are currently under consideration would provide ranges for scholarship and service which are (10 – 30%) while maintaining (60 – 80 %) for teaching. The hope is that this will allow for a greater deal of flexibility for faculty rather than being viewed as a strict 80/10/10 split. There was discussion around the timeframe that the workload for individual faculty would be decided in this 'new' system. Previous versions of the handbook which allowed for more flexibility in the faculty workload split, the relative fractions for teaching, service, and scholarship were decided at the start of the year. However, it was debated whether this was the best possible arrangement given that there are uncertainties in trying to project how things will be in the upcoming year. In many cases it would seem to make more sense to try and apply these workload percentages retroactively. There would seem to be several practical issues that need to be considered as this policy is crafted.

- ii. Insurance Benefit Committee (Clements) – open enrollment just finished on the 8th of this month. The committee has another meeting scheduled next week.
- iii. Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee (Wondolowski) – No Report
- iv. Credit for Prior Learning and Microcredentials (Bradley) – Discussed the process of how a student applies for CPL from beginning to end. The logistics of this has been worked out internally, but now it's a matter of implementation and updating the website.
- v. Rules Committee (Dykema) – No Report
- vi. Recruitment and Retention (West) - The Recruitment and Retention Committee met and had Dana Tribble as a guest speaker. Tribble spoke about Tech 1001 and 1013, which are freshman-level courses designed to introduce students to the university and its resources. The committee has also discussed some type of mentorship program. Possibly focused on

sophomore level, as there are already many safety nets in place for freshmen. Many details on this still to be worked out.

- vii. Assessment (Murphy and Jones) – Had a prior meeting to discuss AI in assessment. There is a plan to have something related to this as part of the January Professional Development.
- viii. Common Hour Committee (Clements) – The committee is still looking for a common hour that would work well across all departments. Discussion with Dr. Santos has encouraged us to continue looking for a solution to this, but if we cannot find a campus-wide common hour, then they can work to find a different solution with common hours defined by individual colleges and/or departments.
- ix. Merit Pay Committee (Rogers) – The committee has been assembled, and includes representation from each college, as well as junior faculty, senior faculty, and an instructor track faculty. Research has been done on the last ‘binding’ policy on this subject that was voted by the Board of Trustees (which dates back to 1998), and it is different from the current handbook policy. So, there is consensus that this needs to be updated moving forward. Dr. Huss has worked on a draft document of the policy that includes a purpose for the policy, a definition of merit pay, a section about the merit pay pool, and a process section, which details how merit pay will be implemented when funds become available. The committee has also noted several practical issues with implementing merit pay:
 - Funding cycle is different from annual evaluation cycle, and it is unclear how to remedy this from a timing perspective. Ideally, we’d like this to be a shared process between Dept. head, DPTC, and Dean, which is tricky from a time perspective.
 - Librarians, which are faculty, are not evaluated on the same cycle as other faculty (because they are under the staff designation when it comes to evaluation). Policy will either have to be broad to include librarians or it will need specific provisions for librarians.

4. New Business

A. VPAA Update/academic calendar updates

- President Jones will be making an announcement on CUPA in a couple of weeks as part of the President’s communication meeting at the end of the month.
- A conference is planned for January 6th to focus on policies related to student retention. Dr. Nichols is helping to organize this event. It will include department heads, deans, members of individual recruitment and retention committees (around 80 people total).
- Possible Calendar Changes - Proposed changes to the academic calendar were presented, primarily aimed at providing a full week off for Thanksgiving. This will necessitate a change to the end of the semester, which could result in pushing back the final grade deadline to be after graduation. If this occurs, senior grades would not be due early, but graduating student would still be allowed to walk. Some details of this still need to be worked out, but faculty was generally in favor of this because it will give a larger time lag between the last day of finals and when final grades are due.
- Concerns were also raised related to the timing of fall break, which is not consistent with local K-12 schools. It was noted that there is some difficulty in scheduling this to

match every time because of the athletics schedule and homecoming.

- The institution was previously criticized by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for insufficient reporting on assessment data and its use in program improvement. While progress has been made, some departments, including several certificate programs, have not yet provided the required data for 2022 and 2023. Please follow through with this so that we can finalize data for that year.
- Faculty are reminded about completing their Title IX training for those who haven't already. The absolute latest deadline for this is Nov. 22nd.
- Email about struggling students – Dr. Santos sent an email to faculty who have struggling students. We would like to see more students utilizing tutoring services. This discussion highlighted the need for faculty to continue reaching out to and supporting struggling students, especially in light of retention goals.
 - A point was raised among the faculty that many of the students who were provided on these lists have attendance problems and this seems to be the greatest barrier to their success. Despite faculty efforts to encourage students to come to class, many of these students still don't come to class and it's unclear how to overcome this.

B. Curricular items, Ms. Weaver – The summary list of these items is provided as an attachment.

- A motion was made to vote on these changes as a block. The motion was approved and the vote in favor of these items was unanimous.

5. Old Business – None

6. Open Forum

- Start thinking ahead about faculty/staff member of the year award. We (senate) could go ahead with nominations on webex and have a vote to go ahead and get this out of the way for the spring. Something to consider.

7. Announcements and Information Items

- Please send comments on policy's that are currently being reviewed in committee to Dr. Huss.
- An AI usage survey will be going out soon. Please encourage students and faculty to participate. Will help shape ATU policy for years to come
- ATU was awarded the contract for AGS for the next 3 years. Dr. Grosskopf will be the director.
- This weekend ATU debate will be hosting an event with 16 different universities. For anyone who might be around this weekend, they are looking for judges.
- Witherspoon auditorium is getting a new curtain. Will be a different look after many years.

8. Adjournment