

Faculty Senate Business Meeting
September 27, 2021

Submitted by K. Craven

Members Present:

Stephanie Adams, Douglas Airhart, Dan Allcott, Michael Allen, Sean Alley, Troy Brachey, Chris Brown, Debra Bryant, Steve Canfield, Melissa Comer, April Crocket, Kris Craven, Yun Ding, Dennis Duncan, Mary Lou Fornehed, Scott Hagarty, David Hajdik, Katherine Hermann-Turner, Tammy Howard, Samantha Hutson, Janet Isbell, Matt Langford, David Larimore, Emily Lee, Jane Liu, Mark Loftis, Chad Luke, Jeanette Luna, Ann Manginelli, Lori Maxwell, Jennifer Meadows, Holly Mills, Linda Null, Brian O'Connor, Joseph Ojo, Kristin Pickering, Richard Rand, Christopher Reames, Lee Ann Shipley, Drew Sisk, Scott Smith, Troy Smith, Sandi Smith-Andrews, Holly Stretz, Dan Swartling, Lenly Weathers, Robert Wilbanks, Kimberly Winkle, Laith Zuraikat

Members Absent:

Steven Garner, Syed Rafay Hasan, Christy Killman, Elizabeth Ramsey, Russ Witcher

Special Guests: Bedelia Russell, Mark Stevens

Call to Order

Senate President Jeanette Luna called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Senator Smith moved approval. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

Approval of Minutes and Notes

Some non-substantive edits were discussed. The institution that left the TN eCampus was ETSU, not TSU.

1. August 16, 2021 Faculty Senate Breakfast Workshop Notes

Senator Rand made a motion to approve the notes from the Workshop. Senator Duncan seconded. There was one abstention. The motion carried.

2. August 30, 2021 Faculty Senate Business Meeting Minutes

Senator Rand moved to approve the Minutes from the Business meeting on August 30. Senator Mills seconded. There were 2 editorial notes discussed. The motion carried.

3. September 13, 2021 Faculty Senate Covid-19 Special Meeting Minutes

Senator Smith moved to approve the Minutes from the Special meeting on September 13. Senator Rand seconded. There was friendly amendment to add to the minutes links to the Resolutions that were passed. The motion carried.

4. September 20, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting with the President Notes

Senator Rand moved to approved the Notes from the meeting with the President on September 20. Senator Smith-Andrews seconded. There was a question about the amounts of money being received by the students through the HEERF federal support. A friendly amendment was added to confirm the correct values. There was one abstention. The motion carried.

Committee Membership Follow-up

5. Budget Advisory Committee – Sandra Smith-Andrews and Troy Smith

Senator Smith-Andrews volunteered at the last meeting. The Senate needs another member to serve. Senator Smith was asked if he would agree to serve. He agreed. The first meeting is Thursday of this week. Senator Smith-Andrews moved to approve Senator Smith for this position. Senator Rand seconded. Senator Smith abstained. The motion carried.

Policy 223 (~20 minutes)

1. Online and Distance Education Policy (Smith-Andrews/ Guest Bedelia Russell)

At the end of last year, there was an attempt to approve the new version of this policy and it was considered to be lacking. There has been a lot of work in the policy over the summer. Dr. Bedelia Russell is here to discuss the new version and get feedback from the Senators.

Dr. Russell thanked the Senate for the invitation. She took the memo that was generated which help with an understanding of the scope of the issues. She needs to maintain alignment with SACSCOC expectations and would like to answer questions and is seeking clarification before presenting the new version of the policy to the Administrative Council this week and the Academic Council on October 6.

2. Discussion and Feedback

Question: Has the Academic Council seen the new version? Have you had any feedback from them?

Answer: They have not seen it yet.

Question: The language of the policy seems to indicate that an online version of a course will need approval in the curriculum committee. If it is the same course, wouldn't it be expected to have the same quality?

Answer: If there are significant changes, then it needs to go to the Curriculum Committee for approval. There are three buckets for courses: those that have existed for a while, those that transitioned to online rapidly due to the pandemic, and those that still need to be designed. As long as the procedures align, the online version is inclusive with the traditional delivery.

Question: Do we really need this policy? Regardless of modality, any course should have the same quality.

Answer: All policies and procedures apply to both. In early conversations, there was confusion about the defined purpose and the use of “the same” reference in other policies and procedures. In Policy 203, section 4 includes online delivery but it was lacking in specificity. There was a need to make the need for high quality be defined as the role of the faculty to be stated explicit in policy 223.

Question: The new version states in section III, part c (on page 2) that all faculty should be on iLearn? Is that really the intention?

Answer: There is an iLearn shell enabled for all courses as of last spring.

Question: On page 3, #7 – what processes will be established?

Answer: SACSCOC has something set up, this is a contractual agreement.

Question: Does this cover all contracts? All faculty?

Answer: Not to employment, it is more about programmatic agreement. I will take another look at the SACSCOC requirements for clarification.

Question: As a faculty member, it is understandable. However, as a department chair it is not clear.

Answer: The form that is required is about education and experience of the faculty. It is to make sure that faculty member has sufficient qualifications to teach the course. There should be a form for each faculty member. The modality of delivery does not matter.

Question: On page 6, #2 & #3 on support. Will there be a change in the online fee?

Answer: For #2, it is a matter of providing sufficient support for the modality of delivery. The fees can be different based on the specific needs of the different modalities. For #3, it is an agreement to market the online courses the same as the conventional courses.

Question: But is the fiscal support different?

Answer: The cost is different. Resources are different. We are still working the numbers. Currently there are approximately 15% of the courses designated as web, this is almost 30% of the total number of courses.

Question: All web courses are on iLearn. Isn't that the main cost for online teaching?

Answer: Don't want to misspeak. Some cost comes from Technology Access Fees (TAF) for the iLearn software, it is a large percentage of the TAF funds.

Question: There is an additional fee for taking a course online. As we transition to universal course design, should this fee disappear?

Answer: I disagree a bit. There are some nuances that do not translate to iLearn. As far as iLearn, let me clarify from earlier – there is a shell enabled for every course, but there is no confirmation that every shell is being utilized. From a delivery standpoint, some courses won't necessarily use it. Using iLearn doesn't make it an online course. But since the support is coming from the TAF funding, we want to use it in an appropriate way.

Question: Will this affect courses in the TN eCampus?

Answer: No. That is a different agreement. They set the policies and procedures for those courses.

Question: Section E, #2 – An editorial request. It talks about additional external review for these courses. Can it be changed to “will be available” and not “will assist”?

Answer: This should not be an issue. The intention is to identify course quality review. I will have Dr. Huo do a re-read.

Question: Shouldn't this be in another policy? It implies that the external review applies to all online courses.

Answer: I will need to see if it was required by another source, but your comment makes sense.

Question: Then where would it reside?

Answer: There were task forces that worked on this policy. I need to review where that came from, maybe from those task forces. I will track where it came from.

Any other comments and/or questions, please contact Dr. Russell directly

Policy 208 (~20 mins)

1. Faculty Workload and Overload (Senate President Luna/Mark Stevens)

It is a SACSCOC requirement to have a policy. Previously we worked under the TBR policy. When we moved to having our own Board of Trustees (BOT), we needed to generate our own policy. There was a committee formed which included faculty and Senators. Then the pandemic happened and the policy was never finalized. This policy uses the same conditions and requirements as the one used when under TBR. There is a need to accommodate all diverse categories of work done by faculty members. One approach is to develop a more refined policy with definitions for amounts of each possible aspect of faculty work. This will result in a very long and complicated policy that is restrictive in its application. Also, it would require a change in the policy for any new considerations that come up. The other approach is a more general policy that leaves much of the detail up to each unit to define the application based on their own standards. That is the approach that was chosen. With a SACSCOC report coming due, it is needed now. He is here for questions and input from the senate before presenting it to the Administrative Council on Wednesday and then it will go to the Provost.

2. Discussion and Feedback

Question: Years ago, there were faculty load reports that were completed. Then, it was expected that the load would total to 15 equivalent hours, or more. This policy says 15 hours is full time for faculty members. Does it have to be 15 hours?

Answer: It can vary by department. The 15 hours is a general guideline, similar to estimating clock hours. There are a number of things that can apply to some and not others, like labs, large size classes, research expectations, service resulting in faculty members teaching less than 15 credit hours of courses.

Question: Is the expectation that the minimum would be 15 credit hours?

Answer: The idea is to ensure that everyone do the defined minimum so that no individual is assigned an excessive amount compared to others. There is a need to understand what is considered regular for the unit in order to define overload.

Question: Faculty are not assigned to Faculty Senate, we do it as willing volunteers. There could be similar issues with serving on other committees. Can we ask for fewer assigned courses?

Answer: This would be a part of the discussion with the department chair. Similar to other considerations in some departments like extra consideration for large classes.

Question: Section 5 – It says determined by the Chair and the Dean, for Provost approval. There is no mention of national expectations. Will it be deferred to the chair and dean primarily, or set by the Provost?

Answer: It will always start with the faculty in the discipline. Then compare us to other schools. Expectations should be applied similarly across the college for fairness and equity. However, it

will be reviewed by the Provost to protect faculty members from being overloaded without compensation.

Question – from the chat: 7.5 hours / week = 3 cr hrs, in SACSCOC. Is this the standard we will be using?

Answer: Our policy was derived from SACSCOC policy. We are not dictating specific totals. There are other considerations now. What does the new 15-week semester mean? This is not an attempt to put clock hours to credit hours. Also, classes are 50 minutes, not an hour. SACSCOC doesn't dictate precise units. This will also include time for meeting with students, class preparation, grading, etc. We are looking at averages.

Question: There is discussion of moonlighting in this policy, what is that? Is it similar to overtime?

Answer: This word comes from Tennessee state law. There are restrictions on summer work and pay, no more than 6 hrs overload outside of summer. It is an attempt to assure that the state gets their 37.5 hour per week from each faculty member.

Report from Faculty Affairs (~20 mins)

1. Report on Recent Case Result (Sandi Smith-Andrews)

There was a case back in May where a faculty member applied for Full Professor and believed they were treated unfairly. There was work by the committee over the summer to investigate the case. There was support by the peers, chair, and dean but the Provost denied the promotion. There was also a question about the reporting of the results and the time required for the final decision causing the faculty member a chance to reapply. Therefore, Senate President Luna has asked the provost to join the next meeting to discuss the following items.

2. Discussion

- There are concerns about communication.
- The applicable policy/policies need reviewed.
- Are the procedures being followed properly?
- What is the current status of the cover letter for dossiers?

Policy 600 (~20 mins)

1. Discussion of Section III-C (Luna/Alcott/Smith)

2. Discussion

There are some concerns about the phrasing of Section III, part C. If it looks like you are guilty, you will be punished as if you are guilty. This also needs to be discussed with President Oldham at the next meeting.

Other Such Matters

Masks – President Oldham said that faculty can use grades as penalties. Is this a good practice? Should we really be using grades to force students to follow university practices?

Adjournment

Senator Fornehed moved to adjourn the meeting. Senator Mills and Duncan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Approved: October 18, 2021