

Fairmont State Faculty Senate

Minutes, 11.12.24

Members: **Bob Niichel** (Executive Committee: President, Computer Science & Math), **Donna Long** (Exec Committee: Vice President, Humanities), **Barbara MacLennan** (Exec Committee: Member at Large, Behavioral Sciences), **Dexter Simon** (SGA), **Deb Hemler** (Academic Affairs), **Kelley Flaherty** (Natural Sciences), **Stephanie Jones** (CSM), **Jason Frazer** (CoBA), **J.L. Tomlin** (Social Sciences/Ex. Committee, Secretary), **Gina Fantasia** (BOG), **Jason Bolyard** (ET), **Jamie Toland** (Nursing), **Kristi Kiefer** (COHHP), **Candace Moench** (COHHP), **James Long** (Math/CS), **Tabitha Lafferre** (ENG/Tech), **Nathan Myers** (Humanities), **April Townshend** (Nat Sci), **Jim Matthews** (Academic Affairs)

Guests: **Susan Ross** (Interim Provost), **Tim Oxley**, **Spencer Flanagan** (Falcon Center/ Campus Recreation), **Valerie Morphew** (CTLI).

1.-3. Called to Order at 3:00 pm. Approval of Agenda called for. No objections. Approval of Oct. 8 minutes. No objection. Approved.

4. President Davis. Not present.

5. Spencer Flanagan present to discuss Bookstore developments. Last year emergency contract was used, but cannot be renewed. In May, another RFP will be needed for bookstore. Admin has asked for new options (potentially revenue generating.) Admin will propose severance for spirit portion of bookstore (clothing, supplies, etc). Textbook sales will be shifted to virtual vendor. Under emergency contract we do not receive *any* remuneration from Follet (current vendor). Spirit store would involve hiring of manager. Desire to include student employees somehow. Except during temporary physical locations, remote bookstore would not be housed on campus (inventory or store front) most of the time. This allows us to keep all the revenue from the spirit store. Projected revenue this year would have been ca. \$250,000(if we were receiving rent or commission) so we received none of this. As a standalone store, the spirit store would generate over \$390k. Follet has been losing money in every category except clothing sales. Through RFP process, we should also receive commission from virtual book sales. Very early on during this process. Question from Fantasia about potential issues dealing with third party without a physical presence on campus. Spencer explains staffing is already an issue with existing contract. This should allow for expanded open hours and hands on experience for student workers in a retail environment. Physical return/buy back and purchase will be possible at high volume times on campus. Question from Tomlin about candidates for vendors. Search for Vendor has not begun yet. Faculty will be involved in that process when it begins.

6. Old Business Major/Minor. None.

7. New Business Major/Minor. Minor items: Niichel raises issue of post tenure faculty review item. First item for discussion is where/who is the appropriate body to be interacting with admin over this issue? MacLennan points out multiple committees will be more able to cover such a wide ranging task, and even then it is likely to be laborious. Question from Niichel about whether handbook committee is appropriate. Long suggests no. We haven't had a report from the handbook committee from last year. They are likely overworked, and this wouldn't fall within their purview. Perhaps faculty welfare or an ad hoc committee to focus on these questions. Faculty workload discussions are in process, and those proposals have not been seen. They will need to be reviewed first, and faculty agency over that process is important. Niichel redirects to other committees that might take up post tenure review. Should questions or feedback go to a given place/committee? MacLennan points out that an ad hoc committee with this specific charge is more fair and equitable than tasking existing committees with a new task. Fantasia expresses agreement with Long and MacLennan. Townshend asks which faculty would be eligible to participate in these discussions. Niichel says faculty of all ranks should be involved. MacLennan points out that if this a situation of discussions outside of faculty senate could lead to some degree of information bleed. An ad hoc committee would centralize all these questions and simplify relaying that information to senate. Consensus handbook committee is not the place for such questions? Discussion of whether to move to create ad hoc committee. Fantasia asks if there is time constraint or pressing need on this? If not, senators could have time to go back to their units to raise the issue and solicit feedback. Annual faculty review already addresses many of these issues. Compensation committee is reviewing similar issues as well. Long points out that this issue covers several separable items. An Ad hoc committee, for instance, would have to decide the specifics of its charge. (Workload, compensation, post tenure review, etc all involved separate problems/possible solutions). Question about whether the existing AFR process is a broken one. Long suggests it is largely reflective in nature. Fantasia points out it is used in some places, but not uniformly. Hemler says it is still a meaningful process, and the issue of incentives is a separate issue. Niichel asks where we want faculty workload discussions to be assigned? Is that senate or a separate committee? Fantasia asks if a more appropriate venue than the larger senate is needed? Long suggests faculty have to have input on, and even be the drivers of, such a process of discovery as the best equipped to evaluate workloads relative to their respective disciplines. Fantasia points out that state policy also directs that these issues be done in consultation with faculty in some way. Consensus to move on for now to the next item.

Niichel and Spencer Flanagan have met to discuss improving interface and collegiality between staff and faculty. Suggestion to swap liaisons between the staff council and faculty senate. How might this work/look? Motion to explore the creation of such a liaison moved by Tomlin, seconded by Hemler. Question from Long about what such a role would be tasked with. Niichel says better communications is the point. Niichel updated the whole senate on the meetings between staff and senate executive committees to discuss this. Broad agreement between those committees. Carried by voice vote. Request for senate to supply a representative to Provost search committee. Would senate like to nominate or table the request till the next meeting? Question from MacLennan on timeline for process. Provost needs to be in place by

July 1. Frazer volunteers. Moved to support by Matthews, seconded by Fantasia. Carried by voice vote to make Frazer senate representative for Provost search.

8. Provost Report-(interim provost, Susan Ross). Introduction, statement of values. Emphasis on working with faculty. Shared governance. Goal is to hand over role to new Provost from a position of understanding the university structure/shared governance, and to prepare them for the role as best as possible. Questions solicited. Who will assume Ross's responsibilities as she is in interim provost role. She is still doing most of her previous tasks, and other administrators are helping carry the workload. Dean Matthews will be helping out with some items. Other responsibilities are in the process of being shifted to others. Long asks who else is on search committee. Oxley says President is creating this committee. Motion to extend thanks to Dr. Ross. Passed.

9. Reports

ACF-Clark. (Not present)

BOG-Fantasia. BOG met on 10/23. Finance committee brought forward a change in tuition rates for consideration. On Admin's recommendation, BOG approved a change to out of state rate to the metro rate and eliminated the old metro rate. Now a simple out of state and in state rate system. This will make FSU more competitive with peer institutions. Approved by BOG. Not much from Academic Affairs. Bylaw committee brought two items. Repeal on policy 50 (policy on policies) and adoption of policy 1.1 is out for public comment. At next BOG meeting in December, BOG will consider public comments on these adoptions. Fantasia recommends faculty consult these changes to be sure of what/whom is affected by them. Ex. Committee reported on a recommendation from Admin to reinvigorate the research and development corporation. Dr. Oxley is leading this process. It may reflect an easier way to administer grant/fellowship processing and dispersal. It was discussed, and now BOG as a whole will examine the issue. BOG also considered the proposed strategic vision changes. BOG approved the strategic vision as provided. New action was BOG appointed members to a financial committee for potential audits. BOG discussed an honorary degree (Dixie Yann). Fantasia expressed support for this degree nomination. BOG took no action on personnel items, and provided no discussions or decisions on this. Fantasia points out that during this semester many people have received erroneous information about BOG decisions (which did not in reality take place, or were mischaracterized). Reminder that the BOG does not make operational decisions. Long asks if the audit committee is new or existing. Existing committee that did not get appointed last year, but technically always existed. Question from Niichel about whether BOG member has been placed on existing search committees? Fantasia says she thinks this is true for Provost search, CFO search, etc. Niichel expressed concern that BOG members are on these committees. Niichel points out BOG can't make operational decisions, but even as ex officio members they will influence this process. Niichel also says this has garnered concern from a variety of campus stakeholders. Fantasia responds that the BOG has served in this capacity in the past, and has precedent. Niichel says some of these searches makes sense to have BOG buy in/presence, but Provost search especially is troubling if the BOG presence sends message to candidates/and or President that they have a say over the process. Niichel expressed

concern that this sends the message that the BOG does not trust the President in this process. Long asks if President wishes for the BOG presence on these committees? Fantasia says yes. Niichel says that is not the impression he got. Fantasia says BOG presence on senior positions search is appropriate, and they will not have power to steer hiring decisions. Fantasia expresses understanding for these concerns, but feels they are unfounded given the BOG's legal duties and their conduct so far in these processes. Niichel again expresses concern for how this affects faculty/admin already involved in the process who may now feel the need to cater to BOG interests in the search. Fantasia again expresses that she feels these concerns are unfounded. Long asked about the purpose of having the BOG members on these searches, if the President is actually in charge of the process. Fantasia suggests it is for passive oversight, but not active intervention. Question from Hemler about when it was decided that the BOG will provide members on the search committees. Fantasia will check into this to find out that answer. Niichel again points out the poor optics to this decision. Long points out that this is a fair question for the President, as to whether he wants BOG members on these committees, and if so, why. Fantasia says President asked for these members himself. Niichel suggests the need for further information on this. Agreement on this from several senators.

SGA- Simon has updates on funding requests. SGA voted on organization constitutions and the addition of student tabling. Christmas with a Falcon initiative announced. Flyers given out with more information on this. Riley or Eli will be responding to any questions or concerns about this. Request to spread the word about the initiative, which is to provide xmas presents for needful children locally. SGA has a calendar for donations as well. (Link to be provided by email to senators). Middle College representatives on SGA are also planned.

10. Miscellaneous

Update from Jason Frazer on ad hoc treasury committee for use of Aladdin bucks. After discussion, interest in an "etiquette dinner". Aladdin presents problems for this (staffing/prices). Funds exist for the food and location. Possible silent auction as well to raise money. March 8, 15 are the most readily available dates for using Colebank. Potential run up events for this (similar to president's inauguration) also received favorable impressions. Gala would be the preferred option according to this committee. This would be geared for faculty, staff, and community. Anyone willing to pay per ticket. Motion to move for an event on March 8. Carried by voice vote.

Valerie Morphew: update on CTLI and title III. BB ultra rollout started about a year ago, is going well. Summer had first pilot run of ultra across 11 courses. In the fall, 77 courses used it. By Spring, 631 courses will use it. Training is finishing up in spring 2025. All courses will be in ultra by fall 25. HLC interim report requires FSU to demonstrate an infrastructure on this, and current process will allow us to meet those requirements. For Title III, with hi-flex there is a misconception that faculty will be forced to teach those formats. This is untrue. In fact, hi flex courses require special training so will not be open to faculty until they have done this. Those online already will find this conversion process easy. Timeline (rough) for this is submitting a hi flex course for acceptance by December 1. Followed by one month training. Then from March -May course redesign and approval will process for teaching in summer or fall. Grant requires four to be taught in fall 25. Funds are available to pay for many more than four, however. Four hi

flex rooms exist now across campus. Question about those faculty who have not completed ultra training. Question from Tomlin about moving courses from learn to ultra. Does course copy work? No, at least not well with an entire course. Allegedly works fine if you do it in small chunks. How long will BB learn courses (old format) be available to faculty? No idea. Probably not after spring term. Question about Hi flex from Fantasia. Will professional development days provide hi flex training or tips? Yes, this will be provided in January. MacLennan (on hi flex committee) addresses some of these concerns and what the committee has been doing to support this process. Question about whether students who don't do well with this format will be stopped from doing it at some point? Potentially from an advising or financial aid perspective, but in general no. Question about restriction to upper division courses from Long. MacLennan points out a best policies and practices program issued by the hi flex committee, but this is at the departmental or unit discretion. No, hi flex is not limited to upper division courses. Need to move on for time.

Niichel raises academic calendar committee. He is currently serving on this committee. One question arose over the 14 vs 15 week semester plan. Consensus to go back to 15 week plan. The academic restructuring committee has been suspended(not dissolved) indefinitely (at least until after the permanent provost replacement is in place). Committee's charge came from Phillips, and after her departure, President Davis discussed the future of the committee and it was decided not to move forward with the process at this time. President is still in conversation about the interim deans process given this pause. Question from Long about restructuring process. Are any of the individual committees attached to the restructuring process still active? Yes, compensation committee for instance is still moving forward (reference the presentation from Chief of Staff in October meeting). Question for whether a meeting with the President about Provost Phillips' departure is appropriate. Niichel spoke with the President who is available Thursday at 3 (not an official senate meeting) to discuss plans moving forward after Phillips' departure. Debate about whether to include all faculty or just senate in such a discussion. Senate only is decided. Not a formal senate meeting. Informal. In the usual senate meeting place.

11. Open Forum (none allowed)

Adjourned at 4:57.