

Senate Steering Committee Minutes

October 3, 2019

3 p.m.

Tigert 226

Present: Katie Vogel Anderson, Sylvain Doré, Laurie Bialosky, Hans van Oostrom, Richard Scholtz, Amy Bucciarelli, Hannah Norton, Suzan Alteri, Ray G. Thomas, Ana Spiguel, Ashley Ghiaseddin, and Rick Stepp.

Call to Order

Ray G. Thomas, Chair

-The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approve [September 12, 2019 Minutes](#)

Ray G. Thomas, Chair

-The minutes were approved with the following amendments:

Provost's Report addition: -There was an inquiry about the status of a search for a new College of Medicine Dean (since there is currently only an Interim Dean) and the Provost has not heard that it has been initiated.

SCORS Report addition: -The Provost's Office will be a resource for council for information and updates related to the hiring and research funding statuses of faculty through the pre-eminence initiative.

Reports

• **Chair's Report**

Ray G. Thomas, Chair

-Welcome to Dr. Ashley Ghiaseddin, as the new chair of the Budget Council and to Dr. Hans von Oostrom as the new chair of the Academic Policy Council.

-Civility was a topic often mentioned in the Rankin Consulting Faculty and Staff Climate Survey, and civility on campus remains a topic of discussion. There have been suggestions for a civility code, much like the honor code, and there was a suggestion that President Fuchs might be in a video promoting civility.

-The Chair has participated in Fall meetings with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Faculty Council and the College of Education Policy Council as part of an effort to strengthen communications between the college-level governance bodies and Faculty Senate.

Some of the discussions regarded new faculty orientations, and the suggestion that they should receive a better introduction to Canvas. They should also be introduced to Quest courses and how there is a going to be a reduction in general education courses. There were discussions about sharing mentoring resources with new faculty.

There continue to be concerns expressed about the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET), how questions are framed, and the need for guidelines regarding the use of SET results.

-The Chair has also attended meetings of the Welfare Council, the Academic Policy Council, Budget Council and the Compensation Committee.

The importance of early career experiences, and creating a culture of caring are topics of discussion, as well as improving access to Baby Gator and early childhood education. Next week, the Chair meets with Dr. Patricia Snyder, and will report to the Senate regarding the current conditions and propose future policy. Dr. Snyder is the David Lawrence Jr. Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Studies and Director of the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies.

-The Chair continues to work on a parental leave policy for our entire faculty. There was a suggestion that we investigate various models of parental leave at peer institutions, by having faculty members contact colleagues at other institutions to collect stories about how parental leave affected their work-life-academic balance.

-While UF has become an academically elite institution, on the FASFA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form, 42% of the applicants indicate that their family can contribute only \$5,000 or less, toward the \$22,000 cost of tuition. UF Online held an event titled “Supporting Student Parents at UF” featuring Dr. Robyn Moreland of Eastern Kentucky University, which describes itself as “The School of Opportunity”. A discussion was held about supporting undergraduate students who are caring for dependent children while earning their degrees. Nationwide, 26% of undergraduates are student parents. These students often experience mental health issues from the toxic stress of living on the margins, and the difficulties of moving from where they are to where they want to be. Resources UF offers include a food pantry to address food insecurity and the [Aid a Gator program](#), which provides emergency financial aid that has helped retain 300 students. An unexpected car repair, or a family situation that reduces the support from home, are reasons frequently cited for withdrawing from college.

-The Provost is hiring a Director of Campus Experience.

-Dr. Michelle Campos a faculty member in CLAS addressed a letter to the Chair and President Fuchs about Accent’s invitation to Donald Trump Jr. VP of Strategic Communications and Marketing, Nancy Paton, has issued an [official statement](#) from UF.

-Feedback regarding the new external link email caution banner was sought and shared, including concerns of alarm fatigue and the need to remove the caution banner when replying to a tagged email from an alumnus/alumna, a colleague outside of UF, or other trustworthy source. The banner currently reads: “EXTERNAL EMAIL: Exercise caution with links and attachments”. Users should forward any suspicious email to abuse.ufl.edu, but perhaps a whitelist of approved external products which are frequently used could be generated by IT to eliminate those caution bannered emails.

-There was an inquiry pertaining to availability of emergency funds to help financially support international students who are in urgent need of short-term or unplanned financial support. Contacting the Postdoctoral Affairs Office to help publicize the [Aid a Gator program](#) resources (possibly via the addition of a link on this office’s website) was suggested.

-An inquiry was raised about sharing College of Medicine faculty suggestions and discussions pertaining to teaching and course evaluations in either the Welfare or Research & Scholarship Council. GatorEvals have been discussed in Faculty Senate, the Academic Policy Council (APC), and Welfare Council and discussion can continue in any of these councils due to overlapping topic themes. Faculty in the College of Medicine are discussing such concepts as: proposing a two-tiered evaluation system with half of the value generated from student evaluations and half from peer review, with consideration given to teaching and mentorship assignments; implementing such a system at the college level; examining how to best encourage fair evaluations for faculty teaching highly rigorous subject matters; and reducing under-sampling or response rates in course evaluations. P&T packets may also be strengthened if peer as well as student evaluations could be included.

-Steering Committee discussion included that positive feedback has been received from faculty in the College of Engineering who have participated in the GatorEvals pilot; overall, these faculty members found it to be a much-improved system offering better data and increased student response rates.

[Creative Campus](#)

Amy Bucciarelli, College of the Arts
UF Creative Engagement Liaison

-Creative Campus is one of four programs which Amy manages for the Provost’s Office and efforts are being made to provide as much advanced notice as possible to faculty to encourage application to

the Creative Catalyst Fund (up to \$15,000 per project) and the Creative Scholar-in-Residence Program (compensation to home department \$5,000 per scholar per semester) before the January 24, 2020 deadline. This application process is internal, and an [overview of the Creative Campus program and opportunities](#) will be presented to Faculty Senate this month.

BOT Regulations

Ana Spiguel,
University Constitution & Regulations
Committee Liaison

No regulations are currently pending. Any regulation needing consideration in the next week will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Secretary for posting and addition to the October 17th Faculty Senate agenda.

Compensation Committee

Steven Thomas, Past Chair
Compensation Committee

-Past Compensation Committee Chair Steven Thomas will present the [proposed Compensation Committee charge](#) which seeks to change the committee's constitutional charge to evaluate matters of compensation beyond raise results and salary structures and compensation relative to peer institutions. It also updates language to include a President or President's designee administrative appointment to remain consistent with other constitutional language. This item was approved.

Council Reports

Infrastructure Council

Richard Scholtz, Chair

Research and Scholarship Council

Hannah Norton, Chair

-The Research and Scholarship Council and the Infrastructure Council provided September updates at the last Steering Committee meeting and will meet later this month.

Budget Council

Ashley Ghiaseddin, Chair

-The divestment proposal forwarded by students to the Infrastructure Council in the Spring is now being discussed in Budget Council in terms of the general topic of investments in carbon neutrality while being aware of fiducial responsibilities. Budget Council is participating in these conversations with both the Infrastructure Council and the (joint) Sustainability Committee.
-It was noted that, as educators, this has provided an opportunity to help facilitate the conversation of sustainability with students.
-Additionally, the [Sustainable Transportation Fair & Electric Vehicle Expo](#) takes place next week.

Academic Policy Council

Hans von Oostrom, Chair

-The charge of council was discussed in the last meeting. Council is working on wording to clarify its proper role of policy evaluation, as opposed to a role in evaluating specific merits of academic candidates.
-Faculty titles, including non-tenure track faculty titles will be a topic of council discussion this semester.
-At the next meeting, council will discuss a proposed GatorEvals syllabus statement and new language to the [current Policy on Course Syllabi](#) to implement a course accessibility statement which would assist faculty in facilitation access for students with disabilities in their courses.
-The Chair and Steering Committee wish to invite Dr. Zina Evans, the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost, to present at Faculty Senate to address the topics of admissions policy at UF in light of the "Varsity Blues" scandal, acceptance of legacy and non-legacy students, and a discussion about improvements to UF campus tour experience. This will be a follow

up to the invitation extended to her in the Spring when she was unable to attend. There is continued interest from Senators on the topic.

-Shared governance topics were discussed, including: standard operating procedures and the use of vice-chairs in committees and councils; components of the Faculty Senate chairmanship including time commitments related to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and BOT committee responsibilities, and how faculty service can be administrated within the three university tenants of research, teaching, and service. It was suggested that in the next New Faculty Senator Orientation, an emphasis could be made that much of the faculty's work in shared governance is achieved via participation in Faculty Senate committees and councils.

Welfare Council

Suzan Alteri, Chair

-Council will discuss the issue of civility and will ask council liaison and VP of Human Resources, Jodi Gentry, to report on what initiatives may have been taken based on results from the Rankin Consulting Faculty and Staff Climate Survey.

Approve [October 17, 2019 Faculty Senate Agenda](#)

Ray G. Thomas, Chair

-The agenda was approved with the caveat that any pending regulation requiring consideration within the next week will be posted and added to the October 17th Faculty Senate agenda.

Adjournment

Ray G. Thomas, Chair

-The meeting was adjourned at: 4:13 p.m.