

Clayton State University Faculty Senate

8 May 2023

ATTENDEES

Attendance records could not be obtained from Microsoft Teams by Secretary Ann Showalter as of 31 May 2023.

ORDER

The Senate chair, Dr. Eric Bridges, called the meeting to order at 11:00am.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Georj Lewis described the upcoming dates for the university budget approvals. May 16 is when budget allocations for each institution are scheduled to be approved by the Board of Regents (BoR) and distributed to the institutions. By May 26, the university has to submit its proposed budget to the BoR, which will vote to approve the budget at its June 14 meeting. Currently, President Lewis has received no final information about the \$66M cuts to USG, though it is expected to be about \$860K for Clayton State University.

In response to questions about the budget cuts, President Lewis stated that the decisions have already been made related to the \$7.6M budget cut, which does not include legislative cuts to the USG budget. This budget includes reductions in force (RIFs) for 28 faculty and staff positions in Academic Affairs (affected employees have already been informed). Additionally, President Lewis indicated that budget cuts are going to continue through FY25 because of declining enrollment, and the only way to stop the trend is to bring up enrollment in the next academic year. President Lewis described plans to be more intentional in including Faculty Senate and Staff Council in discussions related to future budget cuts. Provost Dr. Jill Lane said she would send out a document with more details related to Academic Affairs restructuring to meet the budget cuts.

President Lewis reviewed the key administrative council priorities including enrollment goal of 6000 students, generation of funds through grant writing and fundraising, and implementation of the three-year strategic plan. The complete document was shared with all faculty by Senate Chair Dr. Eric Bridges.

President Lewis provided an update on key administrative searches: the Provost search is in its final stages; candidates for the Athletics Director search will be giving presentations this week; the AVP of Student Affairs search committee is interviewing about 10 semi-finalists; and the AVP of Advancement and Strategic Initiatives search committee is reviewing resumes with the goal of interviewing candidates in late May.

PROVOST'S REPORT

Interim Provost Dr. Jill Lane reported on the graduation ceremonies and enrollment. We are currently only 20 students away from our enrollment goal for summer, and fall enrollment is only down 2% from last year.

Provost Lane stated that the projected budget cut to the USG could result in a \$515K cut to Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs is examining vacant positions that were not reported on the previous budget to meet this new reduction, although additional reductions in force may be required. Updates on the budget cuts will be emailed to faculty during the summer and there may be another budget town hall.

MINUTES

There was a motion to approve the 9 January 2023, 13 March 2023, and 24 April 2023 meeting minutes, and there was a second. The members voted orally and over the chat on Teams. The motion was approved.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

1. Academic Policy Committee. Senate Chair Dr. Eric Bridges reported that the APC had no updates.
2. Faculty Affairs Committee. Chair Dr. Michael Sitvarin reported that Mr. Jonathan Goodson from Information Technology (IT) stated that IT would not be able to implement the new SEI through Qualtrics as previously reported. The problem is in extracting and sorting the data from Qualtrics for each instructor and their relevant supervisors. IT does not have a developer able to oversee this task. However, Mr. Goodson described the current SEI system as limping to critical failure as IT has very limited ability to change, update, or repair the current system. His recommendation was to purchase an off-the-shelf software solution (currently CSU pays nothing for its existing SEI system). Several suggestions for addressing the situation were discussed among meeting attendees.
3. University Curriculum Committee. Chair Dr. Dmitriy Beznosko reported that the UCC has finished reviewing all agenda items they received. The committee plans to hold elections for the next UCC chair in the fall.
4. Student Affairs Committee. Co-chair Dr. Deborah Deckner Davis provided a brief update on the number of respondents to the committee's student survey. Because of the low response rate, the SAC will expand data collection for summer and possibly fall terms.

UPDATES & OLD BUSINESS

Approval of curriculum change proposals. There was a motion to approve the curriculum change proposals that were approved by the University Curriculum Committee at its April 14, April 21, and April 28 meetings, and there was a second. The members voted orally and over the chat on Teams. The motion was approved.

Summary of USG Faculty Council meeting. Dr. Sam Maddox, who attended the meeting, summarized the key points discussed at the meeting. During a Q&A session with Chancellor Perdue about BoR policy on post-tenure review, Faculty Council expressed concerns that the changes proposed by the Chancellor/BoR did not fully address faculty and AAUP concerns. The Chancellor indicated that legislative approval of budget cuts to the USG seemed to stem from misunderstanding about that amount of roll-over money in university budgets. Attendees expressed concerns that waiving student entry-testing might hinder the ability to identify the level of student preparation for college courses. The USG Faculty Council discussed tuition increases, underfunding of university operational costs, and inconsistencies among institutions in the quality and equivalency of learning outcomes in core courses.

Conclusion of the ethics investigation of Faculty Senate. Senate Chair Dr. Eric Bridges reported that the Faculty Senate had been exonerated on all ethics violation charges levied against the Senate body and individual members. The charges were related to the Senate's activities to form an ad-hoc committee to investigate faculty contract non-renewal policies.

SENATE OFFICER ELECTIONS FOR 2023-24

Members of the Faculty Senate for 2023-24 voted on officers for the next year. Nominees for Senate Chair were Dr. Eric Bridges (9 votes in favor) and Dr. David Williams (4 votes in favor). The nominee for Senate Vice Chair was Dr. Larry Menter (14 votes in favor). The nominee for Secretary was Dr. Kate Cotter-Reilly (14 votes in favor).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29pm.

Minutes recorded by Ann Showalter, Secretary of the Faculty Senate.