**Faculty Senate Minutes**

Monday, November 16, 2020, 3:10 p.m., online via Zoom

**Senate Roster for 2020-2022:**

Kurtis Adams (MUSC), Robert Anthony (SCCJ), James Broomall (HIST), Larry Daily (PSYC), Rhonda Donaldson (LIB), Karen Green (SOWK), Jeff Groff (DEPS), Michael Groves (NURS), Max Guirguis (PSCI), Osman Guzide (CME), Heidi Hanrahan (ENGL/LANG), Desmond Lawless (RSES), Mengyang Li (CHEM), Belinda Mitchell (EDUC), David Modler (ART), George Ray (BADM), Kathleen Reid (ECON), John Steffen (BIOL), Cindy Vance (ACCT), Kevin Williams (COMM), Max Guirguis (ACF).

**Officers:** Heidi Hanrahan (President), John Steffen (Secretary), Jeff Groff (Parliamentarian)

Kurtis Adams MUSC Present

Robert Anthony SOCI/GEOG Present

James Broomall HIST Present

Larry Daily PSYC Present

Rhonda Donaldson LIB Present

Karen Green SOWK Present

Jeff Groff DEPS Present

Michael Groves NURS Present

Max Guirguis PSCI Present

Osman Guzide CME Present

Heidi Hanrahan ENGL/LANG Present

Desmond Lawless RSES Present

Mengyang Li CHEM x

Belinda Mitchell EDUC Present

David Modler ART Present

Tim Nixon ENG / LANG x

George Ray BADM Present

Kathleen Reid ECON Present

John Steffen BIOL x

Cindy Vance ACCT Present

Kevin Williams COMM Present

Guests: Scott Beard, Alan Perdue, Sylvia Shurbutt

Meeting called to order in the presence of quorum at 3:10 p.m.

**I. Approval of November 2, 2020 Minutes**

Motion to approve made and seconded. Approved without amendment.

**II. Committee reports**

**Assembly Committees and Representatives**

A. Admissions & Credits (Senator Reid)

Request for more details on A&C forms to justify late withdrawal requests.

B. Curriculum & Instruction (Senator Groves)

Approved a number of second reads were approved. The BA/BS in APST will be coming back to C&I one more time to approve minor tweaks.

C. Core Curriculum (Tim Nixon)

Distributed by email.

D. Advisory Council of Faculty (Senator Guirguis)

No report.

**Faculty Senate Committees and Representatives**

E. Library Liaison (Senator Donaldson)

No report.

F. Professional Development, Faculty Salary, and Welfare (Senator Reid)

Due date reminders for spring items coming soon.

G. Scholarship & Awards (Senators Vance and Adams)

Convocation will be virtual again this year. We are working on selecting the last lecturer now.

H. Senate Bylaws (Senators Anthony and Groves)

No report

I. Washington Gateway (Senator Williams)

No report

**External Committee Representatives**

J. Calendar Committee (Senator Mitchell)

No report

K. Diversity & Equity Committee (Senator Green)

No report

L. Enrollment Management Committee (Senator Broomall)

No report

M. Graduate Council (Senator Williams)

No report.

N. Student Success Committee (Senator Hanrahan)

Report emailed out earlier. Beacon seems to be working; keep sending reports. Please respond to student emails in a timely manner.

O. Technology Oversight Committee (Senator Guzide)

No report.

Robert Anthony – There is uncertainty about the process this year. No meetings and no procedures have been posted.

Osman Guzide – IT is talking directly to lab administrators about computer lab replacements. However, at this time we do not know if we will have extra money for non-computer lab proposals. Discussion on this is ongoing.

**Other Committees**

P. Assessment Task Force (Senator Donaldson)

No report.

Q. Budget Advisory Council (Senator Adams, Senator Groff, Senator Williams)

Report sent out electronically.

R. Internationalization Advisory Council (Senator Lawless)

Scheduled meeting on December 3rd.

S. Threat Assessment Task Force (Senator Daily)

No report.

**III. Old Business**

A. Letter of Thanks (Senator Anthony)

There was much discussion on the merits of this letter of thanks. The group is in agreement that the letter needs to acknowledge the contributions of sometimes “invisible” but essential support staff. A concern with the letter is the idea that it is specific in its recognition but is not comprehensive. For example, counseling services, financial aid, and the student health center are not recognized but probably should be recognized. This will be worked a bit more and brought up to the Senate at our last meeting this semester for a vote of approval.

B. Planning of Interdisciplinary Majors/Definition of Degrees: Update from Working Group (Senators Anthony, Broomall, Groves, Hanrahan, Modler, and Reid)

Had their first meeting. We are thinking about a variety of ideas including how advisory boards meet and if only faculty are voting members of these boards on curriculum decisions. Also, we considered if a University wide oversite committee should be established to review interdisciplinary items. The group meets again in December.

C. Student Evaluations (Senator Guirguis)

Guirguis – After the meeting, Senator Guirguis sent the text of his comments, pasted her in full:

I've discussed with my department the evaluation of all courses every semester and the transition to an online platform. My department is unanimously opposed to both. I have four points to make on behalf of the department.

The first point is that this is an ex post facto change of how evaluations are being done. It's happening in the middle of the semester, and in a way that contradicts the Faculty Handbook. On p. 63 of the current Faculty Handbook, it says that "Each Fall semester, a minimum of two classes, chosen by the faculty member, will be evaluated by the students." This is not being followed, which raises a question as to whether this semester's evaluations should still be used in P & T.

The second point is that these changes are taking place without adequate input from the faculty. The changes were announced on Oct. 30th by email before we had a full discussion in the senate and with our departments. That's not how shared governance is supposed to work. It's also inconsistent with the policies of the HLC, our regional accreditor. I'm referring to two policies in particular:

Policy 4.B.3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Policy 5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

If these changes were adopted without any significant input from the faculty, then we are not in compliance with HLC policies on that matter.

The third point is that we are told that all courses will be evaluated from now on to have more "sunshine and ventilation" and to know what's happening in the classroom. This approach appears to be a knee-jerk reaction rather than a well thought-out response. It also embodies an adversarial and punitive attitude toward course evaluations, instead of embracing the actual purpose of the evaluations, which is to assist the faculty in improving their teaching effectiveness. Evaluations are supposed to be an assessment tool and not a surveillance tool.

A separate but related issue is that if evaluations will be used as a surveillance tool, we have not been told how student input will be used by the administration if an area of concern is identified. Will it be handled as a form of misconduct, or a failure in performance, or a deficiency that needs to be corrected? What is the plan for improving or correcting an aspect of teaching performance? What will happen to the faculty member? These are legitimate questions in light of recent developments.

Finally, if all courses are being evaluated, and if the evaluation process is viewed as punitive or threatening, this could discourage creativity and innovation in the classroom. Faculty members may be reluctant to introduce new courses, or to experiment in class content and delivery. In the end, academic freedom can be compromised.

Robert Anthony – The evaluation we do are actually not instructor performance evaluations but student satisfaction surveys.

Provost Beard – Course evaluations are one dimension of data on which promotion and tenure decisions are made. They help point to problems involving aspect of a course such as effective communication and civility issues. The pandemic certainty affected the way the new evaluation was rolled out. There is limitations and benefits to using an online and automated tool. Perhaps a group can come together to consider the evaluation process and policies and improve the process and product.

Robert Anthony – Senator Guirguis’ points have not been addressed. Perhaps the best way forward is to withdraw the evaluation of all classes in all semesters and proceed anew with faculty input.

Alan Purdue – No change in how these evaluations are used has been implemented nor would any changes be made without significant process. A benefit is that faculty do not have to surrender any class time to administer evaluations.

Ultimately, a working group was formed. The group, including Senators Guirguis, Daily, Anthony, Groves, and Williams, will work with SB and AP on proposed changes and report back to Senate.

**IV. New Business**

A. Updates from SGA President (Senator Hanrahan):

**V. Announcements**

No new announcements: Motion to adjourn 4:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Groff and Heidi Hanrahan, filling in for John Steffen.