

The University of Southern Mississippi  
**The Aquila Digital Community**

---

Faculty Senate Minutes

Faculty Senate Archive

---

Spring 4-2024

## **Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes April 2024**

Faculty Senate

Follow this and additional works at: [https://aquila.usm.edu/faculty\\_senate\\_minutes](https://aquila.usm.edu/faculty_senate_minutes)

---



## **Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

Friday, April 5, 2024, 2:00p.m.

Via Zoom

### **Call to Order**

President Jennifer Courts called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Roll Call**

Quorum: A quorum was established and recognized.

Voting Membership Present:  $\frac{2}{3}$  membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions was established.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

A motion to accept the agenda was made. The motion was seconded. The motion to accept the agenda was approved by the majority of members.

### **Approval of the Minutes (PREVIOUS MONTH)**

The March 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

## **5.0 Officer Reports**

### **5.1 President:**

I attended the UFHC meeting as a member of the gallery on March 11, 2024. My interest was in a proposed revote on an anonymous recommendation to change the timeline for teaching-track promotion. The original vote occurred in their February meeting, and the minutes for that meeting were approved, including the results of the original vote. A motion was made to vote again without discussion on the recommendation. The result of the second vote reversed the original vote. My interest in this is not to debate the merits of the anonymous recommendation, this is the purview of our Handbook Advisory Committee's report. Instead, I am reporting this disconcerting disregard for the rules of order. Further upsetting is a proposal to change their bylaws to in the future to not follow Robert's Rules of Order for meetings.

Members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the President of the AAUP@USM met with the President and the Provost on Thursday, March 21 to discuss the recent changes to GA stipends across the university.

The primary goal was to gain clarity on the rationale for the restructuring. The Provost stated that this is one of a number of steps employed to find efficiencies toward improving salaries across the institution. Additionally, it was stated that it was a means to increase stipends for PhD students to further encourage the types of research PhDs that contribute financially to the institution through exterior funding. It was noted that the new structure of Carnegie R1 designation requires at least 70 research PhD graduates per year.

While the Provost's office is now not decreasing allocations to colleges, as was the initial plan, there are only providing funds to increase research PhD stipends to \$13K across the institution.

The increase in other GA stipends to \$11,700, as part of a three-year plan to increase all stipends, is being carried by colleges and GA positions have been cut as part of consolidation of existing stipends to fund increases.

Problems with the rationale include:

1. This isn't finding a new pocket of money to add to a pot for salary increases; instead, it is not allocating money for GA stipend increases.
2. We graduated 125 research PhDs last year and are not in jeopardy of losing our R1 status

The FSEC noted that the removal of summer tuition waiver coverage for GA's who are not employed over the summer will delay progress to degree for some students and preclude them from participating in programs like the British Studies Program. The FSEC requested that alternative measures be considered, such as applying unused waivers from the regular term to the summer.

We also reminded the university's leadership that shared governance requires that the faculty be meaningfully consulted on decisions that impact learning, and that cuts of this sort should

be discussed in advance with faculty and that administrators should not be making those decisions unilaterally, especially since they are likely unaware of all the downstream implications of their decisions.

The FSEC advocated the implementation of the Executive Academic Leadership Council as described in the faculty handbook in order to reinforce communication and transparency across the institution.

Also discussed were rumored cuts in enrollment services and University Libraries. Kristi Motter and Provost Nail reinforced that while 7(?) positions were lost, they were overwhelmingly vacant positions. Two were situations of duplication. Those that lost their job were told they could apply for other open positions at the university. Again, the FSEC advocated for increased communication and transparency to help to address speculation and anxiety when cuts like these occur.

Lastly, the Provost noted a number of upcoming searches where he will solicit faculty senate participation including:

1. Dean of the Honors College
2. Dean of the Graduate School
3. Associate Provost on the Gulf Coast for Lifelong Learning

As announced yesterday, three members of the senate are serving on these committees. Josh Bernstein (Dean of Honors College); Tanya Funchess (Dean of Grad School); Damon Franke (AP GC). My many thanks to them for their service in this capacity.

I attended the Senior Leadership meeting on Tuesday, March 26. Dr. Paul opened the meeting reinforcing that both he and Chad Driskell are spending much of their time in Jackson advocating for increased appropriations.

Director of Athletics, Jeremy McClain, presented on plans for the Reed Green Colosseum renovation that will be shared publicly in mid-April. They hope to begin taking bids in Fall 2024 and anticipate 18 months to 2 years for completion with minimal disruption to normal activities.

Next, Krystyna Varnado presented the Human Resources Annual Review which included troubling statistics about employee turnover at USM. While faculty turnover is consistent with national CUPA data at 8%, staff is at 22%. First year, non-exempt (hourly) staff turnover is at a staggering 46%. Ms. Varnado argued that it is not driven by custodial workers, but instead by trade workers. I have emailed her for more statistics on this point to present to the senate. Her explanation for the turnover is: 1. Poor hiring decisions; and 2. Lack of onboarding. Her office is working on creating systems to address these issues, and she was adamant that the turnover is not financial or benefit driven. Also disturbing was a staff engagement pulse survey that showed only 47% of staff have confidence in USM's future, a 34% drop from the previous year. Ms. Varnado also provided feedback from the annual Staff Council Roundtable, where Staff Council

meets with Varnado. Staff expressed fear and anxiety with the level of restructuring without being provided the opportunity to provide feedback on changes. Staff Council seems to share the same concerns about transparency, communication, and the problem of administrative bloat as the Faculty Senate.

While Varnado repeatedly stated that salary levels have nothing to do with staff dissatisfaction, Dr. Paul in closing made it clear that "absence of fair and equitable pay is a demotivator."

I contacted Ms. Varnado after the meeting to follow up on the actual percentages of custodial turnover, and she responded "I don't have that information readily available. Unfortunately these calculations are all manual at this time (we are working on getting an electronic system)." I have sent a request to IR for this information and will report to the senate when I have this data.

Other notable statements in the "Good of the Order":

1. Provost Nail stated that reduction in force serves the end of:
  - a. Faculty and staff pay increases
  - b. Enrollment growth
  - c. Maintaining R1 status
2. Kristi Motter stated that Fall Orientation registration is up 17% from this time last year
3. Allison Easterwood is expecting flat senate appropriations.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee with President Paul and Provost Nail on Thursday, March 28.

1. There was a recommendation to adjust the teaching track salary increases during promotion to create more equity between teaching track and tenure track.
2. Academic program review

Not all programs will be intensely reviewed The Provost will use data available in Heliocampus to identify programs in need of a more rigorous review and we reminded them to work with

programs to understand the unique nature of all programs before any cuts are proposed in keeping with the standards of shared governance.

3. Many vacant staff lines will be cut in order to increase the minimum wage on campus from \$11.50 to \$12 per hour.

4. Because the early childhood education program is now online and there are no longer students available to staff the Center for Child Development, it will no longer be accepting new children and will eventually be shutting its doors. EC noted the potential impact on recruitment and retention of new faculty without childcare available on campus.

5. Nicole Ruhnke was announced for her appointment as Director of University Communications/Chief Communication Officer

6. There are searches for Associate Provost for the GC, Dean of the Honors College and Dean of the Graduate School. These are internal searches, and notification was circulated to the university on April 4.

7. Removing "staff inefficiencies" has created \$600k. They have also pulled in vacant faculty lines from all colleges (5 total) in order to move towards the Provost's goal of \$1m in savings.

8. Private funding is being used for Coursera software. This is primarily intended to provide an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and alumni to earn industry credentials. The developing executive education offerings could bundle some of this content with what external partners are seeking in course content. There is potential for some of the courses offered to replace our traditional courses in some cases, and the Provost stated that "decisions would be driven at the school or college level." I reinforced that faculty needed to be involved with any potential future decisions.

9. It is potentially possible to change policy are to allow GA's to be paid using lab fees as long as they are not instructor of record and could save several GA positions that were slated to be cut.

10. The Zoom software budget will be cut to \$11k. This will allow for just over 100 licenses on campus that will be shared upon request

Lastly, Joshua Bernstein and I met with Doug Masterson and Kathryn Lowery on April 3 to discuss potential changes to program emphasis areas because of the need to report Gainful Employment. We learned that there are no required changes.

*Senators express concerns about "efficiencies" as these seem to be downsizing measures in which jobs are eliminated as well as concern about the elimination of 5 "vacant" faculty lines. Each college was required to not fill a vacant line. CAS had to not fill 2 lines. Senators have concerns about Coursera and the potential of some of those courses being used to replace courses being taught at USM. Senators express concern about the end of services for faculty and students through CCD and the impact of this change on faculty welfare, recruitment, and retention. Senator Bryan Spuhler shares some history of the CCD and its functioning not as a daycare but as a lab school, which requires heightened standards while it has been paying teachers a low wage as if it was a daycare. The university decided not to take it over and run it as a daycare, perhaps due to financial constraints. Senator Paul Donohue notes that he has chaired*

*the board of directors of Early Encounters Daycare and Preschool at Parkway Heights and is willing to aid in these discussion or provide knowledge about childcare in the future.*

## **5.2 President-Elect**

1) Campus daycare closing. The Center for Child Development announced on its website that:

For 94 years, the Center for Child Development (CCD) at The University of Southern Mississippi has provided quality services to children while serving as an academic teaching and research facility for University students and faculty. The CCD has educated thousands of children, trained hundreds of students and impacted countless families across South Mississippi and throughout the University community.

Historically, students in the Child and Family Sciences (Child Development) program were required to complete field experiences at the on-site center, which served as a laboratory school. With the surge in online enrollment in 2016, the program was modified to offer flexible training opportunities in the cities where students lived and worked. This change in delivery method from in-person to online positively impacted the student experience and allowed the program to educate a larger number of preschool teachers across the state and region. With this change in delivery method, however, the number of in-person students also changed, and the number of student teachers who needed to complete field experiences at the CCD became less and less.

Amid rumors of the closing, the FSEC raised strong concern with the Provost and President at our Mar 28 meeting at the dome. I stressed that amidst a critical shortage of daycare providers, particularly in south Mississippi, USM cannot expect to attract or retain top faculty, especially women and parent faculty, without childcare support, ideally on-campus. Parent-students will also suffer. I stressed that the on-campus childcare center was a tremendous selling point for my family when we moved here, and that an investment in campus childcare likely pays for itself in the long run, since it sustains faculty and learning. I asked if alternate funding models or sources could be located, though it remains to be seen whether anything will happen here.

2) Possible future goals for FS. Given the closing of the campus childcare facility, the persistently and increasingly inequitable salaries of faculty and staff, and the absence of a parental leave policy in keeping with peer standards, it's hard to see how USM remains committed to its fifth institutional strategic goal: "Invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential." My recommendation to the FS for the coming year is to expand the push for fair pay into a broader campaign to promote faculty and staff welfare, which should entail, among other things, subsidized daycare (perhaps under a different model), parental leave (pending legislative approval), and equitable salaries in keeping with peer norms.

3) Legislative update on PERS and allocations. According to Mississippi Today, the House plan to dissolve the member-elected board that governs Mississippi's massive public employee pension plan and replace it with a board dominated by political appointees died Tuesday in the Senate Government Structure Committee.

Sen. Chris Johnson (Hattiesburg), with whom the FSEC met last month, reportedly urged the [PERS] board to delay the start of its plan to increase by 5% the amount public entities, state and local governments, school districts and universities and colleges must contribute to the program.

The 5% increase is scheduled to begin with a 2% increase in July and be phased in over three years.

In the event the increase is delayed or shelved, we need to urge the leadership of USM to make good on its commitment to invest the saved funds in faculty salaries, as noted in last month's FSEC meeting and President-Elect report.

4) Parental leave and UFSAM update. The parental leave resolution, endorsed by each faculty senate in the IHL and by the UFSAM, was sent to Dr. Rankins, the IHL Commissioner of the IHL, along with a cover letter stating, among other things:

As the proposal explains, standard parental leave policies, beyond those which are mandated under the Family and Medical Leave Act, are needed for ensuring the retention and recruitment of talented faculty in Mississippi, especially women, and to minimize disruptions in the learning of students and in research. The effort also aligns with Mississippi's pro-life goals. Most research universities and a growing number of colleges in the U.S. offer paid parental leave to faculty, including many in our region, such as the Universities of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Memphis, and Kentucky, and the University of Louisiana System.

Dr. Rankins on behalf of the IHL replied on Mar. 11, 2024 to the effect that the IHL does not have the authority under the law to make changes to leave policies of this sort and that the legislature is responsible. Thus, our next step needs to be in working with legislative aides to advocate for the drafting of a bill to implement paid parental leave. (As a sidenote, the departing governor of Louisiana recently implemented by executive order a policy of paid parental leave for all employees of the University of Louisiana System). A UFSAM representative indicated that at least one university president is interested in working with an aide to draft language for a legislative bill. I recommend an open letter or petition be drafted, as well, and would welcome any support in in that effort. I plan to recommend this step to the UFSAM at our next meeting.

THE UFSAM also sent a letter to the Commissioner thanking him for his advocacy for competitive pay for faculty and a letter affirming support for the UFSAM representative at Jackson State University, who has faced reported conflict with an administrator on the campus over what the representative has reported to be faculty-led concerns.

5) Strategic Plan. Subcommittees are finalizing their recommended goals, objectives, and key performance indicators, which will be compiled and discussed by the steering committee (under the co-leadership of Nina McLain) in April. Important points to note are that the strategic plan, while something of a blueprint, is not itself a plan for implementation. Separate groups will work out the implantation and devise strategies for that, as needed.

6) Ombud issue. The ombud position has been announced, and the search committee includes a representative from the Faculty Senate, Bryan Spuhler. We are grateful to the Provost for following the Senate's recommendations on this matter.

7) Reorg survey. I intend to submit to the Governance Committee of FS, hopefully by its coming Tuesday meeting, a draft of a final report on and recommendations to the Provost and President this spring on the basis of comments and results from the survey. One theme to highlight is that in the survey, 32.8% of faculty indicated that Vision 2020 has had a significant negative impact on faculty governance and academic freedom, with many citing concerns about administrative bloat. Furthermore, only 2.2% of faculty felt that Vision 2020 had a significant positive impact on faculty governance and academic freedom.

8) Proposal to change degree emphases. FS Pres. Jen Courts and I met with Dr. Masterson on April 4, 2024 to gain clarity on the proposal. The main takeaway is that no changes are being forced on any program at USM. They are free to keep CIP codes as they are. Dr. Masterson

acknowledged that there is no mandate to change anything from outside the university, nor is there a mandate from our university. Directors have been told that programs have the opportunity to make changes if they wish, and doing so may help them in marketing, given the expected future obligation to report earnings. But each program can decide that for themselves, and directors are required to talk with faculty about that choice and make the decisions through their curricular bodies.

9) Shared governance. At the FSEC meeting at the dome on Mar. 28, we highlighted the importance of shared governance and cited concerns that have been brought to us by the faculty, such as the effective cuts to the GA budget and changes in waivers, along with rumored terminations on the Coast. These things will be discussed at our FS meeting and in the discussion of consultative process. One positive, however, is that President Paul and Provost Nail agreed to our request to reconvene the Executive Academic Leadership Council, as described in the UFH:

#### 1.8.1.1. Executive Academic Leadership Council

The Executive Academic Leadership Council is comprised of chairs and chairs-elect of Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, Council of Directors, and the Dean of the Graduate School (ex officio). This committee facilitates communication between faculty governing bodies and administration.

10) Staff Council and staff update. It is our understanding that the recent (and former) President of Staff Council is no longer employed by USM. Several people (including

senators) have asked me if I know anything about the circumstances of his departure. I do not know anything but intend to follow up. As noted previously, there has also been significant turnover among staff, as Pres. Paul conveyed at our dome meeting. He acknowledged that the FSEC had in the past raised concerns about the need to pay some of its lowest-paid staff, including custodians, more equitably, and noted that he intends to implement a small raise in effort to address turnover.

*A senator expresses concerns about shared governance issues within his school, as some programs are treated more favorably than others and evaluation criteria are not consistent. Dr. Courts suggests that this can be one of the examples that grounds our discussion about consultative process. Senator expresses concerns about restrictions on the ability to create new emphasis areas—will we have freedom to develop new emphasis areas in the future?*

### 5.3 Secretary

With Dr. Spuhler's recommendation, Dr. Salyers has reached out to Pat Simms for further context, history, and possible sustainable models for childcare on campus and will update senators when she receives more information.

### 5.4 Secretary-Elect

No report.

## **6.0 Discussion/Decision/Action Items**

### **6.1 Governance Committee: School Documents Recommendations**

The Governance School Documents Subcommittee compared documents for all schools and noticed significant discrepancies across documents. To ensure uniformity and consistency across school documents, to follow best practices, and to streamline processes of college and university annual evaluation and promotion and tenure committees, the Faculty Senate strongly recommends that all schools adhere to the following guidelines for school documents.

#### **Guidelines**

- Policies in school documents should not contradict policies in the Faculty Handbook.
- Schools should develop verbiage associated with workload that addresses school-specific situations.
- School documents should be reflective of school procedures and school-specific situations not just annual evaluation and promotion and tenure guidelines.
- Note on collegiality and engagement: “Separate categories of “collegiality” and “engagement” should not be added to the traditional three categories of faculty performance.” (FHB 4.5)
- Expectations for promotion and tenure should be aligned. In rare cases, there may be extenuating circumstances that allow one without the other.
- All faculty with the exception of adjuncts, visiting faculty, and emeritus should have a formal vote, anonymously, if requested, to approve school documents as well as updates to school documents. School documents should be created and approved in a manner that reflects the principles of shared governance.

#### **Structure of Documents**

- Introduction
- Mission, Vision, and Values
  - Core Principles and Values
  - Vision
  - Mission
  - Shared governance
  - Other items required by the program.
- School Organization/Structure
  - Organizational Chart
  - School Personnel
    - Faculty – see description in FHB (2.1)
    - Director – see description in FHB (1.7)
    - Associate Director (not currently defined in FHB – school specific)
      - Scope of Authority, Essential Functions, and Responsibilities
      - Selection
      - Evaluation
      - Compensation
    - Other Administrative Faculty Roles (Faculty Leads, Program Coordinators, etc.) – includes any positions that receive a course release due to administrative tasks
      - Scope of Authority, Essential Functions, and Responsibilities
      - Selection
      - Evaluation
      - Impact on Workload

- Non-Corps of Instruction Faculty/Staff
    - Scope of Authority, Essential Functions, and Responsibilities
    - Selection
    - Evaluation
  - Staff Personnel – general description
- School Level Responsibilities – description of functions at the school level
- Program Level Responsibilities – description of functions at the program level
- Committees
  - School Standing Committees (FEC, P&T, etc.)
    - Scope
    - Selection
    - Term
  - Program Level Standing Committees
    - Scope
    - Selection
    - Term
- School Procedures Outside of Evaluation/Promotion and Tenure
  - Faculty Grievances – should reference the Faculty Handbook directly (FHB 7)
  - Faculty Voting Procedures – what method would faculty use to vote on important matters like committee memberships, curriculum matters, personnel selections, etc.?
- Workload Guidelines
  - School specific situations
- Annual Evaluation Guidelines
  - Required Annual Evaluation Materials and Submission Process (FHB 4.4)
  - FEC Evaluation Process – timeline
    - Option for meetings with FEC (FHB 4.5.2)
  - Director Evaluations - See FHB 1.6.1
  - Tenured & Tenure Track
    - Teaching: Meets, Fails to Meet, Exceeds Expectations
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity: Meets, Fails, Exceeds
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service: Meets, Fails to Meet, Exceeds Expectations
      - Specific descriptions
  - Teaching and/or Clinical Track
    - Teaching: Meets, Fails to Meet, Exceeds Expectations – must be the same as the teaching requirements and guidelines for tenure track
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship/Professional Development: Meets, Fails, Exceeds Expectations
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service: Meets, Fails, Exceeds Expectations
      - Specific descriptions
  - Goals for Next Evaluation Period
  - Faculty Development Plan (FHB 4.5.4)
  - Annual Evaluation Rubric (FHB Appendix C) – rubrics should be reflective of the expectations outlined in the school documents and should be updated when expectations/school documents are modified.

- Promotion and Tenure Guidelines (FHB 5)
  - Promotion and Tenure Committee
    - Responsibilities of Committee Chairs
  - Note: Director responsibilities, evaluating faculty responsibilities, candidate responsibilities are defined in the Faculty Handbook and cannot be changed at the school level.
  - Note: Pre-Tenure Review is defined in the Faculty Handbook (5.2) and follows annual evaluation and tenure and promotion guidelines.
  - Promotion to Associate Professor
    - Specific descriptions
  - Tenure
    - Teaching
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service
      - Specific descriptions
    - Note: procedures for tenure are defined by the Faculty Handbook (5.8)
  - Promotion to Full Professor
    - Teaching
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service
      - Specific descriptions
    - Optional: External Review for Promotion to Full Professor (FHB 5.5)
  - Post-Tenure Review (FHB 4.7)
  - Promotion to Lecturer or Associate Teaching Professor (FHB 5.7.2)
    - Teaching
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service
      - Specific descriptions
  - Promotion to Senior Lecturer or Full Teaching Professor (FHB 5.7.2)
    - Teaching
      - Specific descriptions
    - Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity
      - Specific descriptions
    - Service
      - Specific descriptions
- Appendix
  - Rubrics for Annual Evaluation
  - Optional: Peer Evaluation Rubric

*Senators express appreciation for this work and ask if each school has a Policies and Procedures committee. Would it be under the purview of Governance Committee to recommend that each school have a Policies & Procedures committee? Senators express that they want to ensure faculty are contributing to the development of these documents. Prof. McCardle expresses a desire to not take away the flexibility of how committees are determined differently in various schools. Senators ask if collegiality is supposed to be factored into annual evaluations. The Faculty Handbook prevents collegiality from being a separate category, but currently there are schools that have it as a separate line item under research, teaching, and service in these documents. IHL Bylaws include collegiality, so we must keep it in the handbook.*

A vote is taken. 27 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain

## 6.2 Executive Committee Resolution on Consultative Process

Authored by: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

Introduced by: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

### A FACULTY SENATE Resolution on Consultative Process at The University

WHEREAS The University of Southern Mississippi supports the widely accepted principles of shared governance (University Faculty Handbook 3.2); and

WHEREAS The University acknowledges that true faculty participation in the governance of academic affairs requires good faith on the part of both faculty and administration and a genuine commitment by both to a program of shared governance (UFH 3.2); and

WHEREAS The University also endorses a consultative process by which academic decisions are made through a joint effort of faculty and administrators and with the cooperation and support of the affected faculty constituency (UFH 3.2); and

WHEREAS The University recognizes that the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. (UFH 3.2); and

WHEREAS SACSCOC reinforces that “the tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs (degrees, certificates, and diplomas). (SACSCOC Resource Manual 10.4); and

WHEREAS The Senate provides a forum and a voice for the faculty to assert its distinctive viewpoint and principles for the general welfare of the university, and act on matters relating to due process, governance, resource allocation, and university planning (FS Bylaws 1.1.2); and

WHEREAS Senate has responsibility for (1) facilitating meaningful input regarding matters of faculty concern; (2) advising on policy, development, planning and budgeting, resource allocation, and operations of the university; and (3) ensuring faculty representation to all relevant

university committees, boards, and task forces administering the affairs of the university (FS Bylaws 1.1.2); and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate strongly urges that the administration, university representative and advisory bodies, and the faculty adhere to the norms of shared governance and collaboration thorough meaningful consultation with all requisite parties.

*Senators ask: With the close contact between the Provost and our FS Ex officers, is the Provost still making a lot of decisions without first consulting with our FS officers? What are the issues now driving this reasonable resolution? Did FSEC know that the School of Coastal Resilience would be closed prior to the university announcement? No—most of these decisions are made, and FSEC find out afterwards. Senators ask if this resolution is in addition to the one that addressed the secondary education resolution? It is an amendment. Can this resolution be more specific and list decisions that have been made without utilizing shared governance? Senators express preferences both for waiting and for voting now on this resolution, but a consensus to vote now is reached.*

A vote is taken. 29 yes, 1 no, 2 abstain

## **7.0 Standing Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Academics**

- Workload: The Academics Committee Chair, Emileigh McCardle, worked with the Provost and Deans to create a proposal regarding a baseline percentage of teaching and research/service for all faculty to start with and a method of documenting workload conversations within the annual evaluation meeting by using Watermark Faculty Success.
  - The goal of this proposal was not for this proposal to decide any faculty member's workload percentages but to primarily encourage directors to meet with faculty to discuss and document workload as required in the Faculty Handbook.
  - The initial proposal including a baseline starting point of 80% teaching (8 courses per year) and 20% service with research faculty and those doing additional service work receiving course releases for that work. It also allowed directors to enter this information in the "Workload" link in Watermark Faculty Success.
  - Emileigh, along with Doug Masterson, met with the Council of Directors on Monday, April 1, to share the proposal and gather feedback. The directors shared their many concerns with this proposal.
  - One of the main concerns presented by directors was their lack of time to complete this task in Watermark Faculty Success along with their other duties. A suggestion was to complete it during the annual evaluation meeting with the faculty.
  - Some directors also expressed that they were not sure faculty felt a workload discussion was needed.
  - Some directors shared that they were already discussing and documenting the process. This is exactly what we want all schools to do.
  - I am asking that you all, as faculty senators and faculty members, request a workload discussion and documentation with your director as part of the annual evaluation process. Regardless of the percentages used, this is a requirement of the faculty handbook and a necessary part of knowing our expectations, increasing transparency, and making sure our work is accounted for.

*Senators express gratitude for this work and describe that this meeting with the Director and discussion of workload are listed as steps in the Faculty Success system when submitting one's annual evaluation. Senators express concern that 80% teaching as the baseline for an R1 university is too high. Senator acknowledges that there be support for self-advocacy. Senator acknowledges that sometimes Directors conflate annual evaluation/discussion of goals meeting with grievance meetings. Senators suggest making different baseline percentages for teaching track and tenure track.*

## 7.2 Administrative Evaluation

The survey was concluded and had 167 respondents. The committee will run their analyses and return results to schools by the end of April.

## 7.3 Awards

The committee has finalized awards, and the awards ceremony will be May 3.

### JUNIOR FACULTY OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AWARD:

Tristan Clemons, Ph.D.,  
School of Polymer Science and Engineering

### JUNIOR FACULTY OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD:

Chao Meng, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, School of Marketing

### JUNIOR FACULTY OUTSTANDING CREATIVE RESEARCH AWARD:

Michael Aderibigbe, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, School of Humanities

### EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING:

Christopher Sirola, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

### EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE:

Kevin Green, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Humanities

### EXCELLENCE IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANSHIP:

Jamie Stanfield, MLIS  
Assistant Professor, Gulf Coast Libraries

## 7.4 Bylaws

No report.

## 7.5 Elections

The Elections Committee has identified eligible and willing members of the following schools in need of new senators to begin their term in Fall 2024:

Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences

Education

Finance

Kinesiology & Nutrition

Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Music

Performing and Visual Arts

Professional Nursing Practice

Ballots will be distributed next week, and we will seat the new senators at our May 3rd meeting.

Senators from the aforementioned schools, please make yourselves available to talk about the position to any colleagues who may be interested in learning more about the role of the Faculty Senate and the responsibilities of senators.

## 7.6 Faculty Handbook Advisory

The Faculty Handbook Advisory Committee presents 4 changes that will be voted on in the next UFHC meeting. Dr. Scott would like to have senators vote today on these changes so that he can accurately reflect the sense of the senate in that meeting.

The University Faculty Handbook Committee moves that the following section:

### 2.3.1.1. Teaching Tracks

Teaching faculty who do not have a terminal degree in the discipline, or a closely related one, in which they teach are initially appointed as instructors and can be promoted to lecturer and then senior lecturer. Individuals in these positions who earn the relevant terminal degree may be moved to the rank of assistant teaching professor.

Teaching faculty who hold a terminal degree in the discipline in which they teach, or a closely related discipline, are appointed at the rank of assistant teaching professor, unless a higher rank is negotiated when hired, and can be promoted to the rank of associate teaching professor and then teaching professor in a manner comparable to tenure-track faculty.

Have its language changed to:

#### 2.3.1.1. Teaching Tracks

Teaching faculty who do not have a terminal degree in the discipline, or a closely related one, in which they teach are initially appointed as instructors and can be promoted to lecturer and then senior lecturer. Individuals in these positions who earn the relevant terminal degree may be moved to the rank of assistant teaching professor.

Teaching faculty who hold a terminal degree in the discipline in which they teach, or a closely related discipline, are appointed at the rank of assistant teaching professor, unless a higher rank is negotiated when hired, and can be promoted to the rank of associate teaching professor and then teaching professor in an equivalent time frame to tenure-track faculty.

Rationale: The existing language was vague and could likely be construed as referring to the process whereas it should more clearly refer to the time frame (e.g., number of years required for eligibility to be promoted). Additionally, this policy was implemented as a short-term measure to fast-track long serving faculty. The need for this remedy has expired. All such cases were specifically identified and addressed. Further, all faculty remain eligible to apply for early promotion as specified under unit guidelines. Finally, aligning the time frames mitigates the likelihood of unnecessary conflict in the unit that might otherwise arise between faculty in the two tracks.

A vote on the sense of the Senate to be shared with UFHC is taken.

Results: 16 do not support, 8 support

The University Faculty Handbook Committee moves that the following section:

#### 5.7.1.3. Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor

The standard probationary period for promotion from associate professor to professor is five years. In the sixth year of service at rank, the candidate may apply for promotion from associate professor to professor. Early promotion may be considered once excellence is established in all work-related categories beyond the record considered for promotion to associate professor. Generally, eligibility for early promotion may be granted in the fifth year in rank.

Have its language changed to:

#### 5.7.1.3. Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor

The standard probationary period for promotion from associate professor to professor is five years. In the fifth (or later) year of service at rank, the candidate may apply for promotion from associate professor to professor, with an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year. In

exceptional cases, it is possible for an individual with qualifications far exceeding school guidelines to receive consideration for early promotion. Generally, eligibility for early promotion may be granted prior to the fifth year in rank.

Rationale: This modification allows associate professors to apply for promotion during (or after) the fifth year of service in rank consistent with history and policy prior to the reorganization.

A vote on the sense of the Senate to be shared with UFHC is taken.

Results: 19 do not support, 4 support

The University Faculty Handbook Committee moves that the following section:

#### 5.7.1.4. Tenure Application

Unless credit for time served at another institution has been awarded in the hiring process, faculty must apply for tenure in their sixth year.

Have its language changed to:

#### 5.7.1.4. Tenure Application

Unless credit for time served at another institution has been awarded during the hiring process, faculty must apply for tenure in their sixth year of service with the award becoming effective at the beginning of the following academic year (i.e., 7th year). Faculty members who are unsuccessful in applying for tenure will receive a terminal contract.

Rationale: This modification provides clarification regarding when the award of tenure becomes effective. It also provides notice of the consequence of an unsuccessful application or outcome.

A vote on the sense of the Senate to be shared with UFHC is taken.

Results: 17 support , 5 do not support

The University Faculty Handbook Committee moves that the following section:

#### 5.7.2. Promotion in Teaching-Track Positions

A five-year probationary period for a new assistant teaching professor or instructor provides time to demonstrate excellence in teaching and service prior to being promoted to the next rank. A notable exception to this probationary period applies to candidates whose initial appointment gave them credit for service prior to joining the University. Individuals with qualifications far exceeding the guidelines may receive consideration for early promotion. However, non-tenure-track faculty do not have any mandate to move towards promotion unless that candidate so desires. Given the nature of non-tenured positions, promotion should be considered a desirable goal rather than a mandate. In particular, non-tenure-track promotable faculty at the University are allowed to remain at the University even if there is no promotion from assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor or from instructor to lecturer.

There is no University-wide mandatory probationary period for promotion from associate teaching professor to teaching professor or for promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer for the non-tenure-track corps of instruction.

Have its language changed to:

#### 5.7.2. Promotion in Teaching-Track Positions

A five-year probationary period for a new assistant teaching professor or instructor provides time to demonstrate excellence in teaching and service prior to being promoted to the next rank. A notable exception to this probationary period applies to candidates whose initial appointment gave them credit for service prior to joining the University. Consistent with section 2.3.1.1. above, teaching track faculty may be promoted in an equivalent time frame to tenure-track faculty. In cases involving promotion from assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor, or instructor to lecturer, an application for promotion may occur during the sixth year of service (or later) in the lower rank, with an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year. The standard probationary period for promotion from associate teaching professor to teaching professor, or lecturer to senior lecturer, is five years. In the fifth (or later) year of service at rank, the candidate may apply with the promotion becoming effective at the beginning of the following academic year.

Individuals with qualifications far exceeding the guidelines may receive consideration for early promotion. However, non-tenure-track faculty do not have any mandate to move towards promotion unless that candidate so desires. Given the nature of non-tenured positions, promotion should be considered a desirable goal rather than a mandate. In particular, non-tenure-track promotable faculty at the University are allowed to remain at the University even if there is no promotion from assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor or from instructor to lecturer.

Rationale: This modification aligns the time frame for promotion of non-tenure track faculty with tenure track faculty and streamlines some otherwise cumbersome language.

A vote on the sense of the Senate to be shared with UFHC is taken.

Results: 15 support, 1 does not support

## 7.7 Faculty Welfare and Success

No report.

## 7.8 Finance

The committee will be meeting with Allyson Easterwood in the next couple of weeks. Please send Fan any questions you would like for the committee to ask Allyson.

## 7.9 Governance

School Documents: The school documents subcommittee met and finished their recommendations for schools to use in improving their school documents in the future to include elements that not all schools may currently be including. This then moved to the full Governance committee and was approved to move forward to the full Senate.

- This process was initiated due to the review of all school documents for the University and the observation that documents varied widely. Some schools needed more details included in their documents while others might have too many details. Many schools were going only off of the baseline requirements during the reorganization and include primarily annual evaluation and tenure and promotion information. The Governance Committee suggests that schools look to improve

school documents to make them more in line with explaining the policies and procedures for the school in addition to the required annual evaluation and tenure and promotion guidelines. Additionally, we hope that by encouraging more specificity in some areas of the documents, this will encourage schools to include more details about how they implement shared governance in their processes.

#### 7.10 Gulf Coast

The committee met and had invited Molly Minta who is doing a story about changes in staffing at the coast, but she was unable to be there. Jaime Stanfield spoke about changes in the library hours and responded to the committee's letter to her. For the Fall, the library will change the hours to stay open until 10 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. She wants to strategize with the committee and GC faculty to encourage students to use the library through events such as plenaries, game nights, and humanities programming, but the committee also hopes that offering more courses in the afternoons and other curricular initiatives on the coast will encourage more library use naturally.

#### 7.11 University Relations and Communications

No report.

#### 7.12 University Welfare and Environment

Use of UNV 100 orientation course

Discussion on making the UNV 100 orientation course mandatory for all students including transfers and international students. Concerns that international students aren't getting properly oriented on using Canvas, Outlook, etc. Suggestions to have separate sections tailored specifically for international student needs/cultural differences.

Improving integration and support for international students.

There seems to be no current strategic plan for supporting international students.

Ideas proposed:

- Mentorship program pairing international students with American students.
- Orientation materials explaining American culture/customs.
- Getting direct feedback from international student organizations

Mark and Tammy will work together to gather feedback from international student groups.

Improving accessibility for students with physical disabilities

Proposed having the wheelchair basketball team test campus accessibility by going through with a planned route. Bring awareness to any barriers by getting media (student newspaper/TV, local TV) involved. Mark will follow up with the team at the Pain Center.

#### Key Areas of Focus:

- Wheelchair Accessibility (Mark Puckett and Kate Smith)

Mark reached out to the Payne Center on Monday to inquire about when wheelchair basketball is played, but they did not have any information on it. However, he was able to get the contact information for Robert Sullivan at the USM Institute for Disabled Studies (IDS). He emailed Robert but had not received a reply as of Wednesday morning. On April 3rd, Mark sent a message to the IDS inquiring to speak with someone knowledgeable about issues faced by disabled students at USM. He is currently awaiting a reply from the IDS. Upon receiving a response, the plan is to try to set up a meeting to discuss any accessibility issues and concerns for students with disabilities on campus.

- Dropout/ Retention (Terry Cullum and Robert Press with Kate Smith)

Terry emailed VP Motter inquiring about the use of the UNV 100 Orientation Course and its inclusion of International and Transfer Students. We are presently waiting for a response from VP Motter.

- International Students (Mark Puckett, Tammy Greer, and Fan Zhang)

Tammy reached out to two international students who hold positions in their student organizations to ask about subcommittee members visiting to start a dialogue about ways we can support our international communities in their concerns. April 11th is a tentative date to start the process.

- Custodial Shortage/ COVID-19 Preparedness (John Lambert and Fengwei Bai)

- Physical Plant (Mark Puckett with Kate Smith)

#### Recommendations:

There are no recommendations as of April 5, 2024

#### 8.0 Outside Committee Reports

None.

#### 9.0 Reports from Other University Advisory Bodies

None.

#### 10.0 Consent Items

None.

#### 11.0 Unfinished Business

None.

#### 12.0 New Business

None.

### 13.0 Good of the Order

Dr. Scott invites everyone to attend the AAUP meeting on Monday, April 8.

Reminder: Michael DeCesare is the Senior Program Officer for the Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance with the National Chapter of the AAUP. He will join us to give a talk on AAUP-recommended principles and standards of academic governance.

We encourage you to make every effort to attend. Feel free to invite guests as well. Please SHARE with your school/program! You can send the link to anyone interested.

"What Should Shared Governance at USM Look Like?" on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> 12:15-1:00

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3aQrcP9JOG354wA4RruKRwWk1th1im4iPs3aHLPO-x67A1%40thread.tacv2/1710965804796?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%227f3da4be-2722-432e-bfa7-64080d1eb1dc%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%220edb6b6-2dc8-4944-a0f9-44df9d0088ae%22%7d>

View the recording:

[https://smttt.sharepoint.com/sites/aaup\\_usm2021/\\_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Faaup%2Fusm2021%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2FRecordings%2FWhat%20should%20shared%20governance%20at%20USM%20look%20like%2D20240408%5F190941%2DMeeting%20Recording%2Emp4&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1lXZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTdGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rliwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0&ct=1712683495962&or=OWA%2DNT%2DMail&cid=82045c4a%2Da2a7%2Ddd5a%2D2cac%2D828c195972a5&ga=1&WSL=1&referrer=StreamWebApp%2EWeb&referrerScenario=AddressBarCopiedShareExpControl%2Eview](https://smttt.sharepoint.com/sites/aaup_usm2021/_layouts/15/stream.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Faaup%2Fusm2021%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2FRecordings%2FWhat%20should%20shared%20governance%20at%20USM%20look%20like%2D20240408%5F190941%2DMeeting%20Recording%2Emp4&nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJTdHJlYW1lXZWJBcHAiLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJTdGFyZURpYWxvZy1MaW5rliwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXcifX0&ct=1712683495962&or=OWA%2DNT%2DMail&cid=82045c4a%2Da2a7%2Ddd5a%2D2cac%2D828c195972a5&ga=1&WSL=1&referrer=StreamWebApp%2EWeb&referrerScenario=AddressBarCopiedShareExpControl%2Eview)

Dr. Press encourages faculty to invite students to be part of the Students for Human Rights organization.

Dr. Courts invites everyone to attend the eclipse watch party on Monday.

### 14.0 Announcements

14.1 Next Faculty Senate Meeting, May 3, 2024 at 2:30pm (note time change). We will be electing the next Secretary-Elect and President-Elect during this meeting.

### Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made. The motion was seconded. The motion passed by a majority of the Faculty Senate.