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Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of September 10, 2020, Meeting

Members Present:

Christian Griggs (Senate President), Ali Akdeniz, Karren Bennett, Samantha Blair, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Omin Chandler, Cindy Davis, Cecile de Rocher, Carl Gabrini, Nick Gewecke, Tom Gonzalez, John Gullledge, Mike Hilgemann, Liz Hubbs, Mike Joseph, Clint Kinkead, Victor Marshall, Nancy Mason, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Travis McKie-Voerste, Hussein Mohamed, Jennifer Parker, Jennifer Randall, Tammy Rice, Pat Ryle, Kristen Weiss Sanders, Lorena Sins, Greg Smith, Sharlonne Smith, Jeff Stanley, Megan Vallowe, Kevin Yan, Matt Hipps (*ex officio*), Margaret Venable (*ex officio*), Bruno Hicks (*ex officio*), Jodi Johnson (guest), Katrina Autry (guest), Mary Nielsen (guest), Lori McCarty (guest), Marilyn Helms (guest), Tammy Byron (guest), Xavier Bryant (guest), Stacie Kilgore (guest), Paul Tate (guest), Ulises Garcia (guest), Cameron Godfrey (guest), Lisa Peden (guest), Chad Grant (guest), Jenny Crisp (guest), Mellanie Robinson (guest), Mariela Vazquez (guest), Mackenzie Manley (guest), Callie Hornbuckle (guest), Cheryl Owens (guest), Mike D'itri (guest), Jenny Guy (guest), Harriet Shelton (guest), Vallarie Pratt (guest), Jami Hall (guest), Robin Roe (guest), Kim Horne (guest), Melissa Whitesell (guest), Angie Nava (guest), Gina Kertulis-Tartar (guest), Nick Deslattes (guest), James Wright (guest), Sarita Gale (guest), Garrett Burgner (guest), Jane Sample (guest), Marina Smitherman (guest)

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting of the Senate was convened remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Senate President Christian Griggs called the meeting to order at 3:18pm and established that a quorum

was present. He asked for approval of the minutes of the April 23, 2020 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by electronic poll.

II. Reports from Officers

- a. Welcome. Christian Griggs, Faculty Senate President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of the online meeting protocols. He expressed how the faculty voice is important and essential to provide leadership and to ensure faculty concerns are heard. He requested that, as members of the Faculty Senate, we be in touch with those we represent and bring any issues to the Senate to be addressed. This includes working outside of our monthly meetings, via committees and communication with faculty in our departments. Input has been sought this year about plans and further input will be sought (Strategic monitoring planning committee). Members of the Strategic Planning Monitoring Committee have been conducting SWOT analyses and plans are being made to address issues that arise from these analyses. Over the summer, the Executive Committee met with Dr. Hicks and the Deans and we were invited to work with administration on advising, retention, diversity, and other related issues. Christian is hopeful and optimistic about this year.
- b. Parliamentary Procedure. Travis McKie-Voerste, Parliamentarian, spoke about online procedures for Faculty Senate meetings. He said that we can leverage some things on the online platform, such as polls and the hand raise feature to be recognized to speak. In some instances, an individual can interrupt (e.g., point of order: objection, rule not being followed, need information that is vital; point of privilege: audio isn't working, garbled, background noise, etc.). He reminded everyone that we do business through motions, so when bringing issues to senate, frame it in the form of a motion. Also, be mindful when we have guest speakers and make it clear to what motions you are speaking.

III: Open Business

- a. Faculty Manual – Amy Burger, a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee for the past 3 years spoke about updating the Faculty Evaluation manual. She stated that work is ongoing, and committee members are debating whether to keep the revisions within the committee or to seek additional volunteers to help with task. Christian added that this is an important task because the manual is very much out of date. John Gulledge made a motion to refer the manual revisions to the Faculty Welfare committee, and Tom Gonzalez seconded the motion. Travis McKie-Voerste asked whether the Senate could offer to help expedite this process since it has been an ongoing process for so long. Amy stated that the committee will assess first and see if they want to solicit more help. The motion passed via online poll.

IV. New Business

- a. COVID-19 reporting and response. Cheryl Owens thanked Christian for inviting her to speak and stated that it is important that everyone is aware of how DSC is coordinating the COVID-19 reporting and response process in conjunction with Georgia Department of Public Health. They have been planning this response since spring. They moved the student self-reporting link to the forward facing DSC webpage, put it on the Rage app, as well as on the Student Health Services and Dean of Students webpages. Students fill out the report (via Maxient), it gets processed through to Cheryl who reviews the form and reaches out to the student to gather more information and immediately starts working the case with the student and others who need to be notified. There are difference methods to deal with each type of case: if the student is a close contact or has been exposed, if the student is experiencing symptoms or has been diagnosed with COVID, etc. The protocol is to remove any student from campus who needs to be isolated or quarantined. Testing can be done in the community (campus members can usually schedule a test within 24 hours with results received in 24-48 hours), but there are no resources to test on campus. Cheryl mentioned that on such a small campus as ours, it's easy to breach confidentiality, so that is why less information on cases is

provided compared to larger schools like GA Tech. She also mentioned that most exposures are coming from the community into DSC rather than the opposite.

Kristen Sanders asked that if she has a student who had contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID but the student tested negative—does that student need to remain quarantined or can they return? Cheryl stated that guidelines say the student must remain in quarantine for full 14 days because they could become contagious later (e.g., if tested too early). So regardless of a positive or negative test, you must stay out at least 14 days.

Annabelle McKie-Voerste asked whether faculty who were exposed but asymptomatic must stay away for 14 days? Cheryl answered yes, if the faculty member was within 6ft of the infected individual for at least 15 minutes. Annabelle made a motion that if a faculty member is being quarantined without symptoms, they be allowed to continue teaching their classes remotely (rather than getting someone to cover their classes). Samantha Blair seconded the motion. Discussion ensued and the motion was passed via online polling.

Megan Vallowe asked why we are only reporting students who have been on campus within 2 days of symptoms or a positive test? Cheryl said that the CDC's guideline states that individuals can be contagious 48 hours before symptom onset, so the two days is within that window. If a close family member is a possible case, then we must follow the CDC quarantine guidelines for close contacts.

Tammy Byron asked if there will be on-campus flu shots this year? Cheryl said yes, starting 10/8 in the Quad. Flyers will be posted around campus announcing dates and times for administering the vaccine.

Cheryl ended her time by stressing that it is better to over-report possible COVID-19 cases than under-report. We can report about another individual, even if that individual has already self-reported.

b. Faculty equity while teaching during pandemic – Discussion

Christian stated that several faculty members have expressed the concern that faculty were told they could not unilaterally move fall classes online, but it appears that some classes have been moved online without “permission” or approved accommodations. The concern is not about moving classes online, per se, but about how it's occurring. If it is not allowed, why is it

being done? If it is allowed, faculty need to know about it. In addition, it is unclear what constitutes online vs in-person (e.g., would meeting in person once or twice a month still be considered as meeting the definition of an in-person class?).

Annabelle McKie-Voerste mentioned being asked to cover for other faculty members who are quarantined and having to submit schedules of availability to cover classes for colleagues. Kristen Weiss Sanders is one of the faculty who filled out form to teach virtually; given her accommodations, she volunteered to cover colleagues' classes online but not in person, and it was accepted because it was better than having no coverage at all. Tammy Byron said it was her understanding that we should format our classes in a way that we could transfer online when needed, so that when faculty needed to quarantine it was already set up to teach remotely while quarantined (rather than needing to get faculty to cover classes). Dr. Hicks stated that Tammy is correct. He further clarified that if, for instance lab activities were planned for on campus (such as in Bio sciences), shift some responsibility for just those labs to a colleague, but there should be no real obligation to cover. If a faculty member is quarantined but not sick, they should still be teaching their own classes remotely. We should only need to get someone to cover if we are sick and unable to continue.

Clink Kinkead asked to address point above—students have stated that his class is their only class still F2F even though some classes started F2F at the beginning of the semester. If the policy is that spontaneous switching is not allowed, it IS being done. Dr. Hicks stressed that faculty cannot move online without approval. We must first get approval via Chair and/or Dean. He stated it would be a problem if that is being done, but we cannot know who has moved online with (versus without) approval because of confidentiality issues. Academic Affairs have not received complaints about this happening.

Travis McKie-Voerste expressed concern is the other way around; faculty are not given enough flexibility to determine the best way to teach their own classes. He asked whether there was sufficient flexibility to go to one's chair to request online even if you don't meet accommodations because you believe an online format would be most beneficial for your particular course.

Tammy Byron stated that she was being told that some chairs are allowing faculty to move online even without accommodations and stated it is unfair if some chairs are allowing it but others are not. According to Dr. Hicks, the limitations on what we can and cannot do come from USG and BOR, but he will further speak with Deans about this issue.

Travis McKie-Voerste made a motion that faculty be provided maximum flexibility in determining course delivery format, in communication with chairs/immediate supervisors during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was seconded by Patrick Ryle. After some discussion, the motion passed via online poll.

c. Current plans for next semester. Dr. Hicks reviewed the document outlining plans for next semester. He stated, much like this fall semester, we need to be prepared for all possibilities (e.g., continuing as we did this semester, going online for part of the semester, moving completely online, going back to normal if a vaccine is widely available, etc.). He mentioned how we have made it through 5 weeks of the semester with relatively few blips, so that is promising. The Chancellor has asked if we want to modify the spring semester, so Dr. Hicks wanted to gather feedback from Faculty Senate, and he provided UTC's modified spring schedule as an example. He acknowledged that, no matter what, we will still need to practice social distancing in the spring. After some discussion, Travis McKie-Voerste made a motion to support utilization of the condensed Spring 2020 semester in order to limit exposure to COVID-19. The motion was seconded by Nancy Mason and passed via online poll.

d. Class size policy. Because we were running long on time, John Gullede motioned to table remaining agenda items (Class size policy and Payroll Tax Deferral) until the next meeting. This motion was seconded by Jeff Stanley and passed via online poll.

f. Faculty Evaluation. Tabled until the next meeting.

V. Announcements

- a. Next Faculty Senate meeting on Thursday, October 8 at 3:15pm via Teams
- b. Library laptop policy for students. Amy Burger announced that the initial shipment of laptops was delayed so the library could not fulfill all student requests. It will be roughly

another 3 weeks until they arrive. Melissa Whitesell will review the request forms and make an announcement when the laptops become available.

- c. Other announcements. Committee assignments will be made this week and announced via email the following week. Christian announced that USG has put together a Post-Tenure Review working group to evaluate existing policy regarding post-tenure review because the policy has not really changed in the last 25 years. That is all of the information we have at this time.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Briganti, Senate Secretary