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## Dalton State Faculty Senate: Minutes of April 8, 2021, Meeting

### Members Present:

Christian Griggs (Senate President), Ali Akdeniz, Karren Bennett, Samantha Blair, Alicia Briganti, Amy Burger, Omin Chandler, Cindy Davis, Carl Gabrini, Nick Gewecke, Tom Gonzalez, John Gullledge, Mike Hilgemann, Mike Joseph, Clint Kinkead, Victor Marshall, Nancy Mason, Annabelle McKie-Voerste, Travis McKie-Voerste, Hussein Mohamed, Jennifer Parker, Jennifer Randall, Tammy Rice, Deb Richardson, Patrick Ryle, Kristen Weiss Sanders, Sharlonne Smith, Jeff Stanley, Megan Vallowe, Kevin Yan, Margaret Venable (*ex officio*), Bruno Hicks (*ex officio*), Jodi Johnson (guest), Mary Nielsen (guest), Stacie Kilgore (guest), Lisa Peden (guest), Barbara Tucker (guest), Sarita Gale (guest), Marilyn Helms (guest), Sarah Mergel (guest), Lori McCarty (guest), Jacqueline Boals (guest), Mike D'Itri (guest), Katrina Autry (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 3:15pm and established that a quorum was present. He asked for approval of the minutes of the March 11, 2021, meeting; Carl Gabrini made the motion, and it was seconded by Annabelle McKie-Voerste. The motion was passed via electronic poll.

## II. Reports from Officers

- a. Welcome and General Information – Christian Griggs provided everyone with a brief report about the ongoing work with the Strategic Enrollment plan. Various councils and subcommittees met over the past year to address enrollment issues. The main goal was to come up with a final plan to improve student enrollment overall. A draft of the plan has been created and updates are being made. The intention is to release the plan campus-wide in the fall.

## III: Reports from Committees

- a. Academic Conduct. No report for this meeting.
- b. Academic Programs. No report for this meeting, but they are meeting again on April 9.
- c. Assessment Committee. Megan Vallowe stated that several of the committee members are also on the SACS team, and they are currently working on accreditation reports. Thus, the Assessment Committee will meet again in the fall to focus on ongoing work.
- d. Faculty Development Committee. Kristen Weiss Sanders stated that the committee is reflecting on what went well with BOLD talks in March and what changes they might make for future virtual formats. They are exploring the idea of having another faculty development day in the fall to complement BOLD talks in spring so that there is a professional development opportunity each semester. It would likely be something on a smaller scale than BOLD talks.
- e. Faculty Evaluation Committee. No report for this meeting.
- f. Faculty Resource Committee. Jennifer Randall shared some notes from survey that was sent out earlier this year. These results can be found in the attached document, “DSC Faculty Technology Survey Information.”
- g. Faculty Welfare Committee. No report for this meeting.
- h. Strategic Planning Monitoring Committee. No report for this meeting.
- i. Student Success Committee. Carl Gabrini reported that the committee met this morning. They discussed three topics related to the proposed Diversity statement: the language used in the statement, student reactions to the statement, and the

appropriate placement of the statement. More information about this can be found in Old Business (a).

- j. Tenure and Promotion Committee. No report for this meeting.
- k. Ad-hoc committee on class size policy. Travis McKie-Voerste presented a proposed policy under New Business.
- l. Ad Hoc Committee on Carl Vinson Study Implementation. Clint Kinkead reported that the committee met Tuesday with Dr. Hicks and Lori McCarty to address questions that came up in the previous committee meeting. Lori will reach out to the Carl Vinson team to get clarification on some of the issues brought up (e.g., changes in schools). Also, it is true that some employees are still under minimum pay levels according to the Carl Vinson report, so HR is working to get those employees to the minimum level, but it will take some time. The committee's work will continue into the fall.

#### IV. Old Business

- a. Final Approval of Diversity Statement for Syllabi

The Student Success Committee made recommendations to align the Diversity Statement language with the current Values Statement of the college (i.e., use the term “embrace” instead of “support” in the following sentence: “Thus, we *support* diverse communities; we respect and value their unique experiences and contributions.”). They also recommended that the originating committee seek student feedback on the statement via focus groups.

Because the Faculty Senate already approved moving the common syllabus statements to an online venue, this statement will also be placed online, and faculty have the option to also include it in their physical syllabi. A motion was made by John Gullledge to adopt the changes recommended by the Student Success Committee and to send the statement back to originating committee to do further testing with students. The motion was seconded by Travis McKie-Voerste, and it passed via electronic poll. Carl Gabrini then made a motion to include the final statement, once the changes are made, in syllabi. It was seconded by Jennifer Randall and approved via electronic poll.

## V. New Business

### a. Faculty Evaluation Manual updates—Sarah Mergel

John Gulledge made a motion to approve the proposed changes, and it was seconded by Carl Gabrini. Sarah mentioned minor grammatical changes to the document (e.g., changing “department chair” to “immediate supervisor”), but none of changes alter the overall meaning of the document. The motion was approved via electronic poll.

### b. Faculty Senate Bylaws updates—Christian Griggs

#### i. Plan to adjust committee assignments with update

Carl Gabrini made a motion to approve these updates, and it was seconded by Nick Gewecke. It was approved via electronic poll. The six committees that will move from 1 year of service to 2 years are: Assessment, Faculty Development, Faculty Resource, Faculty Welfare, Strategic Planning, and Student Success). The Academic Programs committee was kept at 1 year of service, and the rest of the committees were already at 2-3 years of service.

Christian proposed a plan to implement these changes: he will first ask committee chairs to work with their committee members to get half of them to stay on for another year. If this does not result in half staying, the second approach will be to directly seek volunteers. If more are still needed, the Executive Committee will make assignments to get to half (though Christian does not anticipate that it will get to this stage). Victor Marshall made a motion to approve this proposal, and it was seconded by Carl Gabrini. The motion passed via electronic poll.

### c. Faculty Handbook updates—Amy Burger

A motion to approve these updates was made by Victor Marshall and seconded by Samantha Blair. Amy Burger commented that there has been no policy as far as how these updates get approved and maintained over time, so she proposed that the Faculty Welfare committee considers introducing a formalized process in the future. Travis McKie-Voerste asked whether the departmental handbooks are still valid after this gets approved. Christian Griggs thinks that they are still valid, but once this gets approved, schools and departments may want to update their own manuals for consistency. After further discussion, the motion was passed via electronic poll.

### d. Substitution Policy

In a previous meeting, the Faculty Senate made recommendations to change the substitution policy. Dr. Hicks and Academic Affairs offered an updated policy that was circulated to the Senate via email. The most common concern was a faculty member having to cover 33% (5 weeks in a full semester) of a colleague's class for compensation to be considered. Christian stated that the Senate can make recommendations back to Academic Affairs if they were not satisfied with this proposal. Travis McKie-Voerste made a motion to reduce 33% coverage to 15%, and it was seconded by Patrick Ryle. John mentioned that 15% would be 2.25 weeks in a full semester. Nick Gewecke stated that, for reference, the original proposal to Academic Affairs was to reduce from two weeks to one week, which would be about 7%, and John Gullledge noted that 15% seems reasonable as a compromise. The motion passed via electronic poll.

e. Class Size Policy Proposal

Travis McKie-Voerste stated that the committee wanted to come up with a policy that could be adopted campus-wide, but they ran into some problems coming up with numbers that could pertain to all schools and disciplines. The full class size policy proposal is attached for review. Travis made a motion that the by full Senate consider this policy, and it was seconded by John Gullledge. Some faculty expressed concerns about the numbers being too small and not having enough faculty to cover the number of classes that would need to be taught with smaller class sizes. Travis stated that faculty could accept a higher enrollment number in these cases, but that the policy ensures that they would not be forced to accept students above these proposed numbers. He further stated that the concern is that there are currently no limitations in place in order to ensure quality instruction. The committee can include additional language to address more disciplines.

Dr. Hicks asked whether these are guidelines for deans to consider, or are they being proposed as a hard and fast rule? Travis answered that they should be seen as a guideline, but he also thought it was important for faculty to have a number in place to say, "I can't have more than that" or "yes I can do that" rather than have numbers change without faculty input. Dr. Hicks replied that this could be a challenge with the budget constraints we already have, but he is fine to consider these as a guideline.

Omin Chandler, a member of the ad hoc committee, stated that they also discussed that the department chair could adjust the class size as deemed necessary, but they did not put that language in this statement. Therefore, it seems like it is a hardcore policy, but that was not the intention of the committee. After further discussion, the policy (to be used as a guideline for class sizes) was passed via electronic poll.

#### V. Announcements

The Full Faculty meeting is scheduled for April 23 at 9:00am via Teams. Christian Griggs will distribute the updated documents to the full faculty for review prior to the meeting. He asked that Faculty Senate members encourage faculty in their respective departments to please read through these documents so that they know what they are voting on in the assembly. Christian then thanked everyone for their service, and offered anyone to contact him if they need assistance with anything over the summer.

#### VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Briganti, Senate Secretary