

Franklin College Faculty Senate

Minutes of the meeting on Nov. 14, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. in room 250 of the Miller Learning Center, Mary Bedell presiding.

Members Present: John Achee, Maor Bar-Peled, Mary Bedell, Brian Binder, Tom Cerbu, Katie Chapman, Elizabeth Davis, Lisa Fusillo, Chad Howe, Richard Hubbard, Maria Hybinette, Takahiro Ito, Kevin Jones, Betina Kaplan, Kristin Kundert, Jain Kwon, Gary Lautenschlager, Megan Lutz, Dan Nakano, Rielle Navitski, Don Nelson, Chris Pizzino, Jennifer Rice, Mike Roden, Leslie Gordon Simons, Jiyeon So, Steve Soper, Nanette Spina, Phillip Stancil, Lianchun Wang, Qun Zhao.

Proxies: Peter O'Connell (proxy for Thomas Biggs), Chuck Kotal (proxy for Suzanne Ellenberger), Tim Hoover (proxy for Jorge Escalante), Eman Saleh (proxy for Lakshmish Ramaswamy).

Members not present: Josh Bynum, Brian Condie, Ming-Jun Lai, Reid Messich, Silvia Moreno, Mike Roden, Piers Stephens.

Guest: Kevin McPeak, graduate student in the Sociology Department.

Approval of the minutes of the September 19, 2017 meeting: Approved without corrections.

President Mary Bedell's Remarks

President Bedell reminded members who submit agenda items for forthcoming meetings to communicate if the items in question are time-sensitive.

Inquiring whether Faculty Senators wished to meet in a new location starting in January, 2018, upon hearing no objections to the current meeting place, President Bedell proposed that the Faculty Senate continue to meet in the Miller Learning Center.

President Bedell concluded by wishing all a Happy Thanksgiving and safe travels over the break.

Dean Alan Dorsey's Remarks

Dean Dorsey began by sharing some sad news: the passing on Sunday, Nov. 5 of Dr. Vicki Davion, long-time Head of the Department of Philosophy and an esteemed scholar of environmental and feminist ethics and political philosophy.

Dean Dorsey then reported on the upwards trend in credit hours and its likely impact on the budget. Preliminary figures for Fall 2017 suggest that the calendar year 2017 will mark the third consecutive year of increasing credit hours, which should result in an increase in the budget following four straight years of budget decreases. Dean Dorsey added that the increase in credit hours in Fall 2017 is due in part to the large size of this year's incoming class (a little under 5,800 students, following several years averaging about 5,400 new students). This year's large incoming class may turn out to be an anomaly rather than a new norm; nevertheless, money has been set aside to cover the increased demand for courses.

Next, Dean Dorsey spoke about the presidential hiring initiative, aimed at providing additional staffing for departments which have seen an increase in enrollments over the past few years. Having announced, earlier in the semester, that a total of 25 new positions will be created – 10 tenure-track positions, 10 lecturer positions, and 5 academic advisor positions – proposals came in on September 18, and the outcome was determined on Sept. 29. The Franklin College of Arts & Sciences was awarded 4 tenure-track positions (2 in Computer Science, 1 in Statistics, and 1 in Genetics), 5 lecturer positions (1 in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, 1 in English, 1 in Mathematics, 1 in Romance Languages, and 1 in Statistics), and 1 academic advisor position in Computer Science.

Finally, Dean Dorsey provided an update on discussions regarding the academic calendar. As local newspapers have reported, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia has determined that all Georgia state universities must offer 15 weeks of instruction (not including exams) each semester; effectively, rather than changing the academic calendar at the University of Georgia, this determination means that other state universities, including Georgia Tech and Georgia State, will need to alter their calendars to conform with our already existing practice. In addition, the Board of Regents determined that university presidents should be responsible for decisions regarding the academic calendar. University of Georgia President Jere Morehead will work with the Vice President for Instruction on this matter, and there has been some preliminary discussion of the possibility of altering the University of Georgia's Fall calendar by shortening Thanksgiving break.

Dean Dorsey then welcomed questions. Asked what kinds of classes the students in the large incoming class of Fall 2017 are taking, Dean Dorsey replied "all kinds," before going on to explain that many first-year students take core classes in the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences. Asked whether next year's academic calendar was set, Dean Dorsey replied that, as far as he knew, it was not. Next, Dean Dorsey was asked about the effect of the Double Dawg program on credit hours. Dean Dorsey replied that higher credit was awarded for graduate level credit hours than for undergraduate level credit hours, but that otherwise the outcome of the Double Dawg program was uncertain, pending more information on student enrollment patterns. Asked about the incoming class size this year in comparison to previous years, Dean Dorsey repeated the figures he mentioned in his remarks (i.e., ca. 5,800 students this year in comparison to ca. 5,400 students in recent years). Asked where power to control the academic calendar resided previously, Dean Dorsey replied that he believed it resided with the Registrar together with the Educational Affairs Committee of the University Council. Next, a Faculty Senator asked why adjunct faculty are now required to register with the Human Resources. Senior Associate Dean Kecia Thomas explained that this new requirement was probably driven by an update in the University's date management system, if not also by the aim of providing greater oversight of adjunct faculty. A Faculty Senator expressed concern over the impact on our graduate students of the tax plans currently under review in the U.S. Congress, in particular, the proposal to make tuition waivers part of a graduate student's taxable income. Dean Dorsey replied that University of Georgia officials, including the Dean of the Graduate School, were aware of the issue and taking steps to address it; he added that he would like to see communication between the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, and Georgia State to help get

such concerns across to government policymakers, and he encouraged Faculty Senators to contact the professional organizations they belong to, and local officials.

Committee Reports

Academic Standards Committee. 4 petitions: 2 approved and 2 denied.

Curriculum Committee. Reviewed 10 new courses and 29 course changes; approved: 4 Bulletin changes in various departments, 3 multicultural course proposals in various departments, 1 General Education Core Course Proposal (LACS 2030/20301), 1 New Minor Program of Study proposal (Latinx Studies), and 1 Double Dawg proposal (in Genetics).

Executive Committee. Proposed a discussion of Senate practices and effectiveness (see separate agenda item below).

Committee on Faculty Affairs. Is gathering results from 271 completed surveys (ca. 34% of eligible faculty) regarding Dean Dorsey's performance, as part of the 5-year review process.

Committee on Planning & Evaluation. Nothing to report.

New Business

Proposal for Minor Program of Study in Design in Latinx. Rielle Navitski answered a number of questions regarding this proposal, including: Q. Who will coordinate the program? (A. The Curriculum Coordinator for LACSI); Q. Are there other programs like this in Georgia? (A. There are approximately 400 across the country, some dating back to the 1960s; and it is worth noting that Georgia now has the 10th largest Latino population in the U.S.); and Q. Why is this program forming within LACSI? (A. Because it makes sense to do so, in part because the discipline has been shaped as much by English-language scholarship as by Spanish-language scholarship. The motion was approved by 35 Senators with 1 abstention.

Discussion of Senate practices and effectiveness. President Mary Bedell began by stating that she and the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee thought it was a good moment to call for a candid discussion of whether the Faculty Senate is operating effectively, and whether it is meeting its charge, as laid out in Section X of the bylaws: in particular, its charge "to consider and make recommendations on matters that concern one or more departments or the College as a whole," and "to assist and advise the Dean on matters of importance to the College." President Bedell explained that neither she nor the Executive Committee wanted to force the issue – thus, if her colleagues felt that the Faculty Senate was operating effectively and meeting its charge, then no further discussion would be necessary – and she assured all administrators present that the call for a discussion of this topic was not prompted by a specific grievance. Using a PowerPoint display (reproduced on a paper handout), President Bedell and the Executive Committee proposed a set of five topics for discussion at the next Faculty Senate meeting (in January, 2018); asked the Faculty Senators to reflect on the issue and gather feedback on the issue from members of their respective departments; and raised the question of whether the forthcoming discussion, if one is deemed necessary, should take place as part of a standard open Faculty Senate meeting (in the presence of administrators and members of the press), or in a special closed meeting (to facilitate a candid discussion, in particular with respect to junior faculty). President Bedell then opened the floor for questions and discussion. President Bedell and Executive Committee chair, Jennifer Rice, answered the following

questions. A Faculty Senator asked what prompted this call for discussion. President Bedell and Executive Committee chair Rice mentioned a few specific examples of policy changes, regarding the academic calendar, the decision to allow guns on campus, and room scheduling decisions. Another Senator asked President Bedell whether she could recollect a time when the Faculty Senate was more effective, a question which prompted a general discussion of various Senators' perceptions of the Faculty Senate's powers or lack thereof. Another Senator asked whether the Faculty Senate has no power whereas the University Council does. President Bedell and Executive Committee chair Rice replied that although the Faculty Senate had limited power to effect policy, its voice and votes on various issues, including the recent ban on undocumented students and the law to allow guns on campus, can be significant. Following discussion, three votes were taken: 1) Should we have a meeting to discuss these issues? (29 Senators in favor, 1 against); 2) Should we use a paper ballot to decide whether this meeting will be open or closed? (25 Senators in favor, 4 against); [after paper ballots were issued to the Senators] 3) Should the meeting be open or closed (25 Senators for a closed meeting, 5 for an open meeting).

Meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven Soper
Franklin College Senate Secretary and Senator for History