

## Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes March 11, 2025

**Senators in attendance:** (no particular order) T. Nupp (chair), M. Rogers (chair-elect), M. Hankins (Secretary), J. Grosskopf, J. Clements, C. Brucker, P. Dykema, C. Austin, C. Capen-Housley, S. Apple, D. Murphy, D. Dunnick, E. Treadway, J. Greer, E. Wondolowski, S. Escobar, S. Huss, V. Jones, S. Tinerella, T. Pennington, S. West

**Guests:** A. Santos (P/VPAA), M. Bradley (Grad. Dean), Sarah Daniel

1. Call to Order (Dr. Tom Nupp)
2. Approval of February 11, 2025 Minutes
  - Motion to approve the minutes (Huss) – Motion Passes
3. Update on budget process: Ms. Suzanne McCall, VP Finance and Administration
  - State appropriations to ATU will be cut by 727k for FY26. This was anticipated and planned for
  - We are projecting a 1.2% increase in enrollment for fall 26
  - Discussion around student fee increases: Ozark will have six fee increases primarily related to certification exams which have increased in cost, \$1 increase for technology fee
  - Noted recent board approval to upgrade some lab spaces and up to six classrooms
  - We anticipate supply budget rolling over to FY26
  - FY27 will move to the zero-based budget model
    - Primary idea is to keep waste down, and tie spending to student outcomes as much as possible.
    - will not be budgetary cuts, will mainly impact supply budgets because faculty salary and benefits are basically fixed
    - Dr. Santos emphasized that this puts crafting budgets for departments in the hands of department heads who are being encouraged to work with their faculty to develop ideas of what is important to prioritize in this process.
  - Discussion points were raised:
    - The budget advisory committee has not been meeting - discussed issues with representation if this committee does not meet. McCall mentioned scheduled meeting for next week to discuss FY 26, which is in line with what was shared earlier. Additional plans to have a recap meeting for FY 25 in the fall, as well as meetings on the transition to zero based budgeting in FY27.
    - Possible issue with FY27 transition to zero based budget – training seminars have been provided but it is unclear these reached certain faculty that it really should have
    - Question of balancing of supply budgets vs fees that are unequal across departments across campus - some departments are completely funded by fees. Fee committee was discussed - has not met as a subcommittee of Budget Advisory Committee (?). There was

discussion of the subcommittee meeting to vote on earlier discussed fees; however, there were concerns that the members of this committee were left out of the conversation and did not participate in the votes. Possible issue of confusion with the subcommittee structure and who should be involved (?).

4. P/VPAA update: Dr. Santos

- Higher ed is a focus of current legislation (e.g., ACCESS) and we have provided feedback on it, in areas at least relevant to Higher ed
  - Concerns with parts of this bill with regard to tenure, which forms essentially a post tenure review
  - Bill also aimed at the perception of universities indoctrinating students. However, we should teach students how to think rather than what to think. May have some PD items in future related to this item.
  - Another bill focused on General education HB 1696- seems to shift focus more towards western civilization and western values. Prescribes a certain set of courses for gen ed. Poses a problem for us because of economics courses required where we do not have enough economics faculty if this were to become law. Also excludes some classes we currently use as gen eds. Noted that we are providing feedback on this bill and hope it will evolve to become more flexible.
    - Point raised about how this bill does disservice to speech courses. Communication was a core value of the Greeks when they developed the arts which are foundational to western civ. Effective speaking is still a valuable commodity today and should be emphasized in our graduates.
- Discussed student retention – In Jan 6<sup>th</sup> meeting it was pointed out the large fraction of students we lose as sophomores, and we are thinking of ways to address this.
- Brief mention of social mobility (interest in return on investment related to obtaining a degree) and how this might be leveraged in next version of funding formula. We need to have our students ready to obtain good jobs after graduation (ties to earlier point about communication and being able to interview well)

5. Status of Discontinuation of Programs, B.S. HIM, M.S. HI, M.Ed. K-12 Literacy

- After last meeting we reached out to curriculum committee and graduate council for input.
  - Curriculum committee did not have all forms required to vote by the time they met. Later had an electronic vote which was 5-4 in favor of deletion for bachelors in HIM.
  - Grad council provided input on this as well and raised several interesting points. They voted to discontinue the M.Ed. in K-12 Literacy, but did not vote to eliminate the M.S. HI program.
  - We have also received many letters of support for the HI, HIM programs from alumni. These items have been shared with the senate membership
- Discussion on the floor:
  - Question raised about if the forms for program deletion were ready? – T. Weaver

confirmed these are now in place.

- Dr. Santos discussed wrestling with the decision around HI/HIM. Have discussed possibility if HI MS is deleted it could become a sort of grad certificate program rather than existing in current form. Feeling that this would be the best track to take for Business program.
- Concern about three related programs HI/HIM and a health information coding (associates or certificate?) available at the Ozark campus. The latter is safe for now, but concern about possible shared faculty that could lead to viability issues?
- **Motion to take up M.Ed. in K-12 Literacy separately for discussion (Rogers)**
  - Confirmed that last student in this program is finishing up and there is an individualized plan being made for them to complete the degree.
  - **Motion to support the proposal for elimination of the M.Ed. in K-12 Literacy program (Clements)- Motion Passes (Vote 16 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstaining)**
- Return discussion to other programs (HI/HIM)
  - Point was raised about timeline in regard to program deletion, and if the 'probationary' period was followed as outlined in changes to the faculty handbook as of last year.
    - From grad council perspective – MS degree has never been notified of being on probation or been on any state-level warning lists.
  - Point was raised about how the Business college might not be the 'right' place to house these programs in order for them to be successful.
    - Many issues faced with this program seem to have occurred in conjunction with reorganizing the colleges and this program going to business
  - Discussion of SSCH cost, but fear that it's an 'apples to oranges' comparison looking at single program compared to entire colleges.
  - Returned to point about concern with how programs become probationary and what exactly that process entails. In the past ADHE lists have been a source of consideration, but notification alone should not necessarily be the reason to end a program.
    - Dr. Santos discussed enrollments as a first consideration, but noted the role many degrees programs have in serving larger degree programs that keep them financially viable. So cost to the university is also an important consideration.
  - Point was raised that the calculation for SSCH may not accurately reflect the current state of the program, which only has two faculty members at present.
  - Point was also raised about long-term viability of the program if additional faculty are needed to make the program run, but Academic Affairs won't make the necessary hires. This is a different way to effectively 'close' the program which is very unfair to the people involved.

- Additional point was raised about how the program could grow because it is now fully Hyflex and can attract new students from around the state. F24 was the first time the degree (BS) was offered fully online.
  - Need to work on recruitment and need support to do this
- Point was raised again by Dr. Santos about the possibility of transforming the program into certificate, which would give better long-term viability in his view. Accreditation would not be needed in this instance, which would drive down cost.
- Discussion of timeline related to this program and concerns about actions taken by administration - Dr. Santos noted that they had not allowed students to come in to this program as freshmen during F24 because it was already viewed for removal. Transfer students were allowed to come to the degree program because they would not be in the program as long.
- Discussion with concern about procedure with the program deletion process in general. This request started in the spring semester, which greatly compresses the timeline. Prior discussions had put this as a process that should begin in the fall (October), which allows for a nominal process that would end in the spring. (Relates to the 18 month nominal 'probationary period').
- Point was raised about the language in the current policy – If a probationary period as is being discussed, exists in the policy. There was note that revision in the final version of the policy omitted earlier language that this process should follow the academic calendar, which is possibly leading to some of the confusion around this process.
  - Mention of probationary process is on p. 43 of the current faculty handbook but a specific timeline is not provided.
- **Motion to take up M.S. HI separately for discussion (Huss)**
  - Observation that this seems more tied to losing a faculty member. Might be a mistake to eliminate if it can be made viable (Rogers)
  - Concern about eliminating a distinct CIP - if we lose this one, then we are right on the edge for our current classification in terms of number of grad programs for SREB rating.
    - Point raised later that CIP for HI MS program is the same as MS nursing. So this move would not eliminate this CIP from the university.
  - **Motion to support the proposal for elimination of the M.S. HI program (Huss)- Motion Fails (Vote 5 in favor, 12 opposed, 2 abstaining)**
- Consideration of BS HIM program:
  - **Motion to support the proposal for elimination of the BS HIM program (Brucker) –**
    - **Original motion amended to cast votes by private vote (West)**
    - **Motion Fails by private vote (6 in favor, 10 opposed, 3 abstaining)**

## 6. Discussion of new policies and policy updates

- A. Campus Council (Huss) – Policy for new campus shared governance council which is ready for

consideration and has been shared with the senate.

- Motion to consider the Campus council separately from the other handbook items for discussion and vote (Dykema) – Motion Passes
- B. Handbook Changes (Huss, Hankins) – including office hours, distinguished professor and DPTC
  - Motion to consider the handbook changes for Office hours policy (now to be called student hours policy), additional handbook changes for distinguished professor and faculty evaluation criteria together for discussion and vote (Dykema)
    - Amendment to distinguished professor section that discusses faculty excellence awards to eliminate specified stipend amount. Language should indicate recipients receive a stipend (unspecified amount) and a plaque. (Dykema)
    - Motion Passes
- C. Active committees (Jones) – Table discussion to next meeting
- D. Other active committee reports
  - i. General Education Committee (Tinerella)- working on 5-year assessment report for current gen ed goals. There is also a survey out for gen eds that needs faculty participation.
  - ii. Institutional Aid Committee (Rogers) – No Report
  - iii. Shared Governance Committee (Huss) – Discussed earlier (See item 6A)
  - iv. Campus Space and Utilization Committee: (Jones) – No Report
  - v. Faculty Salary and Benefits Committee: (Nupp) – No Report
  - vi. Institutional Scholarship Appeals Committee (Murphy) – No Report
  - vii. Professional Development Committee (Dykema) – For the spring cycle of applications, the PDG committee had \$23,500 to disburse. 34 applications were received, requesting a total of ~ \$40,000. The committee approved 23 applications, at a total very close to the available \$23,500. The majority of the approved requests came from two colleges: Arts & Humanities, Education & Health.
  - viii. Technology Prioritization and Impact Committee (Apple) – No Report
  - ix. Emergency Management and Safety Committee (Escobar) – No Report
- E. Ad Hoc & Senate Committees
  - i. Faculty Workload Committee (Huss) – Handbook committee discussed earlier (See item 6B)
  - ii. Insurance Benefit Committee (Clements) – Committee was given presentation by Stephens regarding what it would be like if ATU went to self-insured model vs. current fully insured model. This was just a presentation and no decisions have been made.
  - iii. Recruitment and Retention (West) – No Report
  - iv. Assessment (Murphy and Jones) – No Report
  - v. Common Hour Committee (Clements) – No Report
  - vi. Merit Pay Committee (Rogers) – Draft recently distributed to senate. Some significant changes from earlier versions.
    - Concern about this change reflected as a permanent increase to base. This could raise issues with salary inequity in departments.
    - Potential issue with process outlined if DPTC is in charge, and could lead to issues in departments.

- Recommendation to create a WebEx group to discuss the proposal further that would include senators, department heads and anyone else who might have an interest to be involved in the discussion.

7. New Business

- i. Intellectual Property Policy (Bradley) - intellectual property policy needs revision. It's needed for certain grant applications, and the one the university currently has really needs improvement. Requesting participation from different areas of expertise to form a well-rounded policy.
  - Should have considerations for AI, and should be discussed with AI task force.
- ii. Faculty Senate Elections – Upcoming. Please keep this in mind and talk to your dean if you haven't heard something about this yet. There are also several openings for faculty senate. Please encourage your colleagues who would be good senators to consider putting their name in for consideration.
- iii. Faculty Satisfaction Survey – Short discussion of if we want to carry this out again. Senators were in favor of it. Huss and Murphy will coordinate to create the survey for this year.

8. Old Business

9. Open Forum

10. Announcements and Information Items

Adjournment