Minutes
Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting
June 17, 2020 | 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | WebEx

Members Present
Atkinson, Jaynette; Barker, Jennifer; Butler, Annette; Cantrell, Owen; Carruth, Laura; Chester, David; Cohen, Lindsey; Fox, Charles; Frost, Shelby; Gay, Gerald; Hendricks, Todd; Hensel, Wendy; Kabengi, Nadine; Kanan, Trisha; Kemp, Candace; Lakes, Richard; Lakes, Ryan; Lewinson, Terri; Lim, Elizabeth; Madden, Miriam; Maxwell, Robert; Mcclymond, Kathryn; McCoy, Jennifer; Morrey, Erin; Nahmias, Eddy; Nucci, Anita; Pandit, Kavita; Parsons-Pollard, Nicolle; Rackliffe, Jerry; Reimers, Birthe; Renken, Maggie; Richmond, Susan; Sharratt, Nicola; Tonia, Vicente; Trask, Jeffrey; Vollmer, Niklas; West, Elizabeth; Zayac, Miriam

• 1) Welcome and Introductions • Introduction of Nicolle Parsons Pollard, incoming AP Faculty Affairs.

• 2) Old Business • NTT and P&T manual revision: Friendly amendment from the Executive Committee was discussed and approved by FAC. The adjusted manuals were returned to the Executive Committee. Will be brought up at the next meeting of the Full Senate.

• 3) New Business • Minor Alteration of SEI: The alterations to make the SEI independent of Instructional Modality was approved by FAC. Proposal forwarded to Executive Committee for inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting of the Full Senate.

• 4) Q &A with Provost Wendy Hensel regarding Fall 2020.

• Next week, the Office of the Provost will be opening an FAQ board compiling all the questions that have come from Faculty, Staff, and Students regarding the plans for Fall 2020. This will be updated as situations change.

• The Board of Regents of the USG has mandated that all USG institutions will be ready to resume face-to-face courses (hybrid) in Fall 2020. This is a fluid situation, so all institutions are to ensure that they can switch to fully online if the Georgia Department of Health issues directives to enhance. It is important to note that all USG institutions must abide by the directives that come from GA Dept. of Health.

Syllabus Statement: Face Masks: Statement was moot based on the information presented by Provost Wendy Hensel.
• The President, Provost, and the various task forces are working to ensure the safety of faculty, staff, and students while complying with the limits/mandates set by the USG.
• As a note, GSU’s Government Reps and USG Reps are all working to convey the concerns of the administration, faculty, staff, and students regarding the a returning to Face-to-Face instruction. The concerns expressed by our faculty are not uncommon and have been expressed by the administration and faculty of all USG institutions.
• All faculty who feel that they are at risk are encouraged to submit a request for accommodation. Provost Hensel said that her office and HR are being as flexible as they can be under the constraints imposed by the USG. One thing that the USG has mandated is that having an ‘at-risk’ person at home will not qualify for accommodations.
• The plan for the Blended Instructional Model is based on discussions with public health experts and peer institutions across the country. The goal is to reduce density by 50% or more. Fixed seating in classroom will be marked/tagged to help students, and the taskforce is working to design entry and exit strategies for students and instructors. There is the possibility of requiring seating charts for each class, not only to help maintain distances, but to help with contact tracing if that becomes necessary.
• Regarding Face Masks: GSU must work within the USG Mandate. Individual faculty members CANNOT categorically declare that all students wear masks in their classroom. One exception to this is in laboratory class that have PPE requirements; in this case, the wearing of masks can be considered an extension of existing PPE requirements.
• The taskforce is currently reviewing each classroom on campus, including reviewing architectural plans and even going to the room and walking out the dimensions. In classrooms where effective social distancing cannot be adequately maintained, the administration may be able to require that masks must be worn. These classrooms will have signs that designate that masks must be worn.
• There is no effective means of policing the use of masks, so this is not a police measure. This will primarily be an issue of voluntary compliance. In spaces where the administration has determined masks must be worn, it will be a violation of the student code of conduct to not comply. The university community is strongly urged to avoid any shaming practice regarding people who do not where masks.
• GSU is planning an extensive public health campaign to emphasize the importance and value of wearing a mask in public during a pandemic. To emphasize this, two masks will be issued to every faculty member, staff personnel, and student. Faculty members may also request Face Shields and Voice Amplification Systems.
• If you have questions regarding specific classroom space, you are encouraged to speak with your chair and dean.
• A synchronous online session is not equivalent to an in person, face-to-face class session.
• Graduate Teaching Assistants can also request accommodations if they feel that they are at a higher risk of infection.
• Student who do not wish to come to face-to-face sessions should apply for accommodations with the Access and Accommodations office. Do not categorically give a pass to a person to miss all classes (they must have a verified accommodation). Beyond that, be flexible with student attendance. We do not want to make students feel that they need to come to class when they feel sick.
• Research Productivity: You can pause this year on your P&T Clock.
• Housing: There will be space reserved in housing for students that must isolate or quarantine, but are unable to return home. This space is limited. Utilization of this space will be monitored as it may necessitate a change in the operational model of the University.
• Provost Hensel strongly stressed that the situation is fluid and that the administration is getting new information daily that can affect plans for Fall 2020.
• What can you do? As citizens of the State of Georgia, you can reach out to your representatives and senators to let them know of your concerns. A change at the state level will influence the USG plans for Fall 2020.
5) Meeting adjourned.