**FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**

**North Carolina A&T State University**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Dr. Julius Harp, Chair Presiding**

**Senate Members Present:** Monica Allen,Soonok An,Mohd Anwar, Narayan Bhattarai, Stephen Bollinger, DeWayne Brown, Robert Cobb, Nicole Dobbins, Yewande Fasina, Galen Foresman, Emily Burch Harris, Julius Harp, Leila Hashemi-Beni, Evelyn Hoover, Sherrell House, Shanthi Iyer, Hyung Kim, Luba Kurkalova, Minyong Lee, Anna Lee, Daniel Limbrick, Nicole McCoy, Ahmed Megri, Elsie Moore, Shona Morgan, Robert Newman, Hyoshin Park, Ronald Pedroni, Dave Schall, William Randle, Thomas Redd, Philip Rubio, Amy Schwartzott, Chantel Simpson, Jacqueline Williams, Alexander Yap.

**Departments Not Represented:**  Counseling; English; Applied Engineering Technology.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julius Harp at 3:05 pm.

**Approval of the March Faculty Senate Minutes**

* Senator Fasina moved and Senator Burch-Harris properly seconded to approve the March minutes.
* Senators approved the minutes.

**Committee Reports**

**Nominating Committee Dr. Julius Harp**

Dr. Harp presented the ballot for the election of the following Senate offices: Chair, Faculty Assembly Delegate, Faculty Assembly Delegate Alternate. He called for nominations from the floor; there were none. Dr. Newcomb will send the senators a link to the electronic ballot at the end of the meeting, and results will be shared.

Dr. Harp then shared the newly elected (or re-elected) senator and alternate list, effective August 2020. All departments should ensure that senators have been elected and their names provided to Nina Ingram as soon as possible. In addition, some colleges have yet to supply their representatives for the Grievance and Hearing and Reconsideration committees.

The Nominating Committee will need to identify a chair for 2020-2021, as it operated this year without one.

**New Programs and Curricula Committee Dr. Galen Foresman**

The committee approved packets from Industrial and Systems Engineering, Social Work & Sociology, Economics, Chemistry, Computer Science and Engineering, Family and Consumer Sciences, Computer Science, Applied Science & Technology, Applied Engineering Technology, Math & Statistics, Physics, Computer Systems Technology, Animal Sciences, and the Graduate College. Dr. Foresman shared links to these packets in the meeting chat. Discussion at today’s meeting included:

* Dr. Pedroni said that the Physics packet included incorrect summary pages. New ones will be sent to Dr. Foresman.
* There was a question about the courses that would be included in the proposed Chemistry department changes. Dr. Assefa said that the changes affected existing courses in an existing program (included changes in numbers and credit hours).
* There was also some discussion about the changes proposed by Applied Engineering Technology (AET). Several of the courses in their inventory were proposed to be deleted, with courses from Graphic Communication Systems (GCS) replacing them in degree programs. Dr. Cobb asked if there had been a discussion of resources, since these changes would require more courses/sections to be taught by GCS. Adding to the discussion, Dr. Childress shared that he had previously agreed to these changes with the assumption that the previous AET instructor would move over to teach the GCS courses. However, this instructor was not approved and Dr. Mehta is now responsible for finding instructors to teach three additional course sections.
* Some discussion then ensued about the two new graduate certificates proposed by the Graduate College.
	+ The New Programs and Curricula Committee approved the programs, but Dr. Foresman has since heard several concerns, largely from the College of Engineering (COE).
		- One general concern is that the Graduate College doesn’t currently house degree programs or faculty.
		- Senator Anwar voiced the COE concerns: (1) The COE would like to further discuss the courses included in the program. There are similar courses offered by other programs that could also be included as part of these certificates; (2) The COE would like to have clarity about who will be administering the program, as well as any additional resources that may be needed to teach additional courses/course sections.
		- Senator Morgan asked if any courses from Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISEN) were included in the certificate curricula?
		- Dr. Warrack asked if the colleges and departments involved in the certificates could be shared.
	+ In response, Dr. Gloster, Interim Dean of the Graduate College, provided some information:
		- The Graduate College currently houses Post-baccalaureate Studies programs, and previously housed the PhD’s in EES and Leadership Studies before they were moved to their respective home colleges.
		- The goal is to start offering these certificates in the Fall. Other institutions are already operating in this area and NC A&T needs to be present.
		- Faculty from COE, College of Science and Technology (COST), and the College of Business and Economics (COBE) worked together to identify proposed certificate courses. All courses in the programs are existing courses. Department Chairs of all areas involved were included in the discussions and have assured that courses will be offered in Fall 2020 via assurance letters included in the packet. Two ISEN courses will be included as electives.
		- Currently, the programs are set to be housed in the Graduate College. However, this will be revisited in Summer 2020, at which time a final determination for their “homes” will be made. Programs will be administered through a team that includes representation from all departments involved.
		- These programs are currently being proposed as online certificate programs. The goal is to work toward developing them into online masters programs.
* Senator Redd moved and Senator Newman properly seconded to approve the curriculum revisions presented.
* Senators approved the revisions with 32 in favor and 2 abstaining.

**Academic Calendar Committee**

No report

**Educational Policy Committee**

No report

**Faculty Handbook Committee**

No report

**Constitution Committee**

No report

**Faculty Welfare Committee Dr. William Randle**

No formal committee report, though considerable discussion was held regarding Fall 2020 contingency planning. See next section.

**New Business and Comments**

**Fall 2020 Contingency Planning**

The university is working on plans for course delivery and campus operations in the fall. The UNC System has asked the university to consider approaches for the following three scenarios:

1. Return in fall as normal
2. Return with social distancing
3. Deliver courses fully online

***Faculty Input***

Dr. Harp sent the Contingency Planning document to all senators for review. He would like to gather input that can be provided to the working groups the university has established to take part in contingency planning. There was some discussion about how senators can provide this faculty input.

* Senator Randle suggested that we do a poll to ask faculty about the challenges with continuing online in the Fall based on our experiences this Spring.
* Senator Dobbins asked if we can create a survey to address points specifically that could be sent out to faculty
* Dr. Pride suggested that all recommendations should go to the Senate Chair and then the Provost.
* Multiple senators hoped that the university would utilize the faculty with expertise in areas relevant to the discussion (i.e. using faculty with expertise in microbes and germs in discussions about sanitation and testing).

Ultimately, Dr. Harp said that the Executive Committee would work on a template to allow faculty input in a consistent manner.

Dr. Foresman shared additional background information. Time is very short, because the UNC System wants the planning to happen now. University administrators are in serious planning stages now, with a lot of discussion focused on identifying the areas in which the UNC System should make decisions, and those areas that should best be left to the individual university. Some university-specific Covid-19 information:

* Thus far, the virus response as created a $15 million loss in revenue for the university; NC A&T paid $10 million in student refunds; there are 187 students still on campus and the university has provided free meal plans for students who were moved to off-campus student housing; student workers and some staff have continued to be paid.
* Two people – one student and one staff member – have tested positive for Covid-19 at NC A&T. They are doing well and are not on campus.
* Hiring has been postponed unless it has been specially justified.
* Teaching evaluations are going to be collected but they do not have to be reported by faculty.
* The CARES Act will provide some funds to offset higher education costs and to support students with hardships. Dr. Harp asked Dr. Pompey to share additional information about the CARES Act with faculty.

Senators provided a lot of feedback and asked many questions during the meeting, some verbally and some through the Zoom chat features. An overview follows:

* Senator Randle shared the Contingency Planning document in his department. His colleagues were particularly concerned about the impact to freshmen and sophomores of not returning on campus in the fall. He said there was also concern about faculty being asked to spend the summer working (unpaid) to develop Fall 2020 classes for online delivery. His department suggested that the university provide blue and gold masks to students and sanitizers in all classrooms to facilitate on-campus instruction.
* Dr. Ginger Redd asked if the university might consider reducing class sizes to facilitate social distancing, particular with large-enrollment courses.
	+ Dr. James, Registrar, said there are 14 classes currently slated for 100+ enrollment in Fall 2020.
	+ Senator Dobbins said that the university should also consider room size in this discussion. Some buildings may have smaller rooms, which would limit social distancing capabilities even for smaller class sizes.
* Senator Dobbins said that she would like to see the university make a decision that considers the effects on all involved, and isn’t rushed. Others concurred that a too-late decision could have traumatic consequences for faculty, staff and students. Senators would like to see the Senate stress the importance of a clear, reasonable timeline for this decision-making.
* Senator Cobb believes that the university’s plans should be flexible enough to accommodate students, faculty, and staff who may have health concerns about a physical return to campus. He does not believe individuals should be penalized if they choose to work or attend classes remotely.
	+ Senator Harrison suggested that the university allow remote student involvement in face-to-face course delivery through recordings, etc. He also believes that we should treat students as adults, allowing them to make decisions about course attendance on their own. The university may need to alter typical attendance expectations during this time.
	+ Though the option to allow students to attend face-to-face and online would be flexible, there is concern that this would significantly increase faculty workload.
* Some senators discussed the option of hybrid class offerings.
	+ Dr. James, Registrar, said that the UNC System Office has not approved A&T to offer hybrid courses. One senator asked if it is possible for A&T to be granted temporary approval for hybrid delivery?
* Senator Fasina suggested that the university open physically for freshmen, juniors, seniors, and graduate students, thereby asking sophomores to attend remotely.
* Senator Harrison suggested that we allow for being on-campus for half the semester, thus double-occupancies could become single-occupancies. This would create more flexibility for scenarios of spacing within buildings.
* Multiple senators expressed concern about sanitation, hygiene and testing.
	+ Senator Drye said that courses held in computer labs would need regular sanitation of keyboards and mice.
	+ Dr. Simkins said that the university must also provide for regular, ongoing testing and tracing. He shared the following article with additional information: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/26/opinion/coronavirus-colleges-universities.html>.
* A return to campus with social distancing could increase faculty responsibilities in terms of monitoring for student compliance.
* Senator Dobbins believes that, regardless of the option that the university follows, it could be helpful for the university to establish some formal guidelines for the scheduling of virtual meetings. Faculty should not be expected to be available for meetings outside of normal business hours, and there should be a respect for and encouragement of breaks (also for students).
* Senator Rubio said that it is important for the Senate to remember that everything that is being discussed is contingent on factors that (in some cases) may be out of our control. The spread of the virus and responses from the governor and state policy leaders will influence the final decision. Our role as Senate should be to offer input where possible, and to push back if there is a feeling of decision-making for convenience or bottom-line reasons.
* Senator Dobbins asked if there had been any discussion about pausing the tenure clock or adjusting the RPT process for individuals going up for evaluation next year.
	+ Dr. Foresman said that he has already suggested that administration allow for some flexibility in the process; some faculty may be ready to go up, others may not. Any faculty concerned about their evaluation should contact Dr. Harp and Dr. Foresman.
	+ Dr. Harp said that the Faculty Assembly is pursuing a pause of the clock across the entire UNC System.
* The Senate hopes that faculty, time, effort, mental health, and stress levels will be considered when making decisions.
	+ Dr. Pride reminded faculty of the Employee Assistance Program: <https://hub.ncat.edu/_files/administrative/eapcompsychflyer.pdf>
	+ Dr. Pride also shared the following article on grief: <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>

**Statements from the Senate Chair Dr. Julius Harp**

Dr. Harp thanked senators for their service, particularly those who have worked diligently on committees. Next year, Dr. Harp has encouraged that we fill committee chair positions early. He will organize faculty input processes for the contingency planning document and hopes that the strong enrollment projections for Fall 2020 are realized when school resumes in fall.

Key successes for this academic year

* Chair and Vice Chair had regular meetings with the Chancellor and Provost, allowing for the faculty to hear frequent updates and offer regular input.
* The Senate engaged with and heard from student leaders on campus.
* The Senate worked hard on salary issues and recognized concerns of NTTF; work will continue on both of these complex issues.
* Leaders gained approval from the Chancellor to allow for certain incentives/rewards for faculty involved in high Senate service.

**Other Business**

Senator Han asked if faculty were still being charged for parking permits. Parking has certainly been affected since March, but could continue to be affected through the fall depending on how the university resumes classes.

* Senator Moore said that parking was deducted this month based on an analysis of her pay stub.
* Senator Dobbins shared that UNCG refunded parking permits.
* Dr. Amankwatia asked if the fees can be donated to help students or used for next year.
* Dr. Harp will follow up with this concern. Dr. Pride suggested that we contacted Dr. Robert Pompey since he oversees Parking and Transportation Services.

Senator Ajibade asked if there are resources for technology upgrades and assistance for faculty.

* Dr. Harp said that faculty concerns about technology expenses need to go through department chairs.
	+ Dr. Huscroft shared: There are funds and processes for requesting the purchase of items related to mandated teleworking, unfunded requirements. He has made some monitor and technology purchases using the COVID process, engaging with Kimberlee Bonner in the Budget office. Funds are there, they just need requested properly. Chairs and Deans should know. However, he is unsure about reimbursing already spent dollars.
* Dr. Amankwatia shared that ITS has been trying to help with technology resources and suggested that we follow up with client services to see if they can help.
* Senator Morgan asked how faculty could gain access to UNC Surplus stores.
	+ While all UNC campuses have surplus stores, they may not be open right now, or stocked with resources that would be useful to faculty.
* Dr. Foresman reminded senators that budgets are closing soon; any financial requests need to be completed in the very near future.

Senator Harrison asked if there were any updates about the process for updating faculty members’ webpages? There is ongoing concern about inaccuracies in the information found on webpages, which OSPIE pulls from Digital Measures. He would like to have more information about the kind of website the university is seeking and how issues can be resolved. Improvements and corrections would support Preeminence 2023.

* Dr. Raptis said that new faculty are also experiencing issues because many of them have no information online. Without an online presence, faculty are unable to advertise their research areas and laboratories. This particularly impedes graduate school recruitment.
* Dr. Harp will follow up with Todd Simmons on these issues, with the goal of resolving many of the issues by Fall 2020. In the meantime, Dr. Faulkner suggested that faculty who notice errors contact IT.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00PM

Dr. Elizabeth Newcomb Hopfer

Secretary