**FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**

**North Carolina A&T State University**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Dr. Julius Harp, Chair Presiding**

**Senate Members Present:** Soonok An,Mohd Anwar, Narayan Bhattarai, Stephen Bollinger, Stephen Culver, Nicole Dobbins, Paige Dunlap, 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, Shona Morgan, Nicole McCoy, Devang Mehta, Elsie Moore, Robert Newman, William Randle, Thomas Redd, Philip Rubio, Amy Schwartzott, Chantel Simpson, Jacqueline Williams, Alexander Yap.

**Departments Not Represented:**  Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering; Computational Science and Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; English; Computer Systems Technology; Physics; Applied Engineering Technology.

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

**SACS and COVID-19 Updates Provost McEwen**

*SACS Update*

Reaffirmation of accreditation is critical to maintaining the university and degree integrity.

* Dr. Jost, our previous SACS liaison, resigned in January. Rather than bring someone new into the role, the tasks have been disseminated among current staff. Dr. McEwen is taking leadership for writing the report with OSPIE and Regina Davis is acting as SACS liaison.
* A draft of the written report will be finalized by mid-May, followed by several months of revisions and preparation. The final report is due to be submitted on September 8, 2020. A site visit is planned for March 2021, after which the university will receive a preliminary report of findings (the final report will be issued in December 2021). The visit will likely be held over a 2.5 day period and the team will be composed of 14 members. The site visit will not likely be delayed unless the COVID-19 situation causes significant delays with other schools’ accreditation processes.
* Departments have been asked to complete assessment reports.
	+ Senator Newman asked if assessment findings for this semester would be evaluated in light of COVID-19 impacts on teaching and learning – and if this might impact SACS processes?
		- *Response*: Dr. McEwen believes that we have sufficient assessment data for undergraduate programs (3-5 years). Her main concern is general education data, and she believes more data is needed from this unit.

*COVID-19 Update*

Dr. McEwen shared that, as of today, the university has its first positive case on campus. The university is following protocol to ensure that individuals in contact with the person diagnosed are notified.

* Several senators asked for details about the case, to understand if the case is isolated and whether all individuals in contact with the ill person have been notified.
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen said that she is unsure if everyone has been contacted as of today.

Dr. McEwen also provided the following information

* The university is open but most employees are teleworking. Individuals deemed “essential” have continued access to campus, but administration would like teams of two to work in campus locations, to ensure that someone will know if a concern arises.
	+ Faculty who require access to facilities should contact their deans, who have been asked to prepare lists of essential personnel.
	+ Dr. McEwen stressed that any faculty wishing to conduct COVID-19-relevant research needs to follow proposal and IRB protocols to ensure that groups are not gathering to conduct research.
* Dr. McEwen was very complimentary of the positive faculty response in the move to online learning.
* There has been no official decision regarding refunds of tuition and fees.
* The university has been in significant talks regarding Pass/Fail (P/F) grading. If the university selects to go this route, faculty will assign grades as normal and the system will convert to P/F. However, there is concern that the Banner system will not accommodate a P/F grade. The university is following up with other UNC-system institutions that use Banner (UNC-Chapel Hill and NCSU do not use Banner) to determine if this approach can be accommodated.
	+ Dr. Drye voiced a concern that the P/F grading approach may further dilute the quality/meaning of the grade, particularly considering that most faculty are already making accommodations that influence course rigor. Provost McEwen acknowledged this concern and agreed that the university is being asked to do a lot to accommodate student success during this process.
* As of now, the course evaluation process will continue as planned. She is open to faculty suggestions, however.
* The business the university used for proctoring is no longer available. Provost McEwen encouraged faculty to design and deliver exams in a way that discourages cheating. Faculty can also directly monitor students during exams using zoom or other technology.

Provost McEwen then opened the floor for questions:

* *Concern*: Some software downloads are not working on university laptops – administrative passwords are required. Also, though Adobe has offered Creative Cloud for free, Adobe PDF Writer is not available.
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen will follow up with IT.
* *Question*: Will RPT submissions be delayed in the fall? This is a particular concern for faculty who may have been conducting research that has now been stopped.
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen said that original deadlines will be followed, as of today. This is subject to change, and there is flexibility with some of the deadlines. The RPT 1 deadline is the only one that is not as flexible. However, she also noted that faculty whose research has been greatly affected may need to have further accommodations.
* *Question*: Has the timeline for non-tenure track faculty review or the hiring of new faculty been adjusted?
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen said that these processes will attempt to move forward virtually, though if processes have flexible deadlines, they could potentially be adjusted.
* *Question*: Has a decision regarding summer school delivery been made?
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen said that there has been no official decision, though the likelihood of opening campus for face-to-face course delivery is low. Summer school will likely be delivered online instead.
* *Question*: How many students are still living on campus?
	+ *Response*: 256.
* *Question*: Several faculty have had to purchase equipment and supplies to transition their courses online. Who should they contact regarding potential reimbursement?
	+ *Response*: Those faculty should contact their department chairs.
* *Question*: If campus buildings are closed, how can faculty gain access to remove items from their work spaces?
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen said that faculty needing access to closed buildings should contact their deans and request to have their AggieOne card activated so that it will work to open the building.
* *Question*: Some of the other UNC system institutions have been directed to not issue hiring calls for summer intern or field work positions. How should A&T faculty proceed?
	+ *Response*: This is a system-wide directive. Though students already hired will not be let go at this time, faculty should not advertise for new positions.
* *Question*: Have the UNC system directives been shared with faculty?
	+ *Response*: Yes, these have been added to the NC A&T coronavirus website: <https://www.ncat.edu/coronavirus/index.php>
* *Question*: Has NC A&T considered donating supplies to area hospitals?
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen and Dean Campbell discussed this yesterday. The university would like to donate if possible, but must ensure a sufficient equipment supply to care for individuals still on campus.
* *Question*: Is there official guidance on how to handle courses in which students are required to complete field experiences? There is specific concern in the education and counseling areas, which require field experiences at sites that have closed.
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen acknowledged that this is a difficult issue affecting many programs. Initially, the university intended for students to follow whatever the site was doing. She will follow up with areas to determine the best approach.
* *Question*: Have decisions been made about the hiring of teaching assistants?
	+ *Response*: Dr. McEwen will follow up.

**Faculty Salary and Engagement Survey Updates Ms. Erickia Elbert**

*Strategic competitive salary range*

Ms. Elbert and a team have been working on a comprehensive salary study since December 2019. This study is needed for internal alignment and to help the university recruit competitively. The team has been researching many other websites for data and will be studying salary data from other schools in the UNC system. They plan to use data from October 2018 and will segment faculty by tenured/tenure-track, 9-month/12-month, research/teaching faculty, etc. The group plans to have a plan by May of this year, but will present the information for faculty feedback in advance.

* *Question*: Does the report include clinical and adjunct faculty?
	+ *Response*: Full-time clinical faculty are included in this phase. The next phase will include non-tenure track and adjunct faculty.
* *Concern*: Dr. Randle shared the work previously done by the Faculty Welfare committee and the difficulties encountered in comparing faculty salaries across disciplines. He encouraged Ms. Elbert to have faculty representing the different disciplinary clusters involved in the study to make the data more useful and relevant.
	+ *Response*: Ms. Elbert said that she agrees completely and she plans to expand participation to have diverse representation.
* *Question*: Is the group considering faculty from library services and some of the unique concerns from this area?
	+ *Response*: Ms. Elbert said there are several outlier groups being considered.
* *Question*: Will separate consideration be given to potential raises for faculty going up for promotion and tenure and potential raises that arise from this salary study?
	+ *Response*: Yes, Ms. Elbert said her group will ensure this separation.

*Engagement Survey*

NC A&T had a 71% completion rate on the survey, which is the highest percentage in the UNC system. This is a 21% increase over the last survey. Ms. Elbert will share this participation rate with the A&T body soon and expects to receive detailed survey results in the summer.

**Approval of the February Faculty Senate Minutes**

* It was moved and properly seconded to approve the February minutes.
* Senators approved the minutes by unanimous vote.

**Committee Reports**

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

The committee approved packets from Physics, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Design, Nanoengineering, Industrial and Systems Engineering, several programs in undergraduate engineering and computer science degrees, Computer Science, and the Interdisciplinary Waste Management Institute

* It was moved and properly seconded to approve the curriculum revisions presented.
* Senators approved the revisions with 28 in favor, 1 opposing, and 3 abstaining.

The committee will meet in April via zoom.

**Academic Calendar Committee**

No report

**Educational Policy Committee**

No report

**Faculty Handbook Committee**

No report

**Faculty Welfare Committee Dr. William Randle**

The committee would like to continue with its full-scale salary study, but Dr. Randle would also like to work with Ms. Elbert’s committee.

The committee would also like to get back to work on non-tenure track faculty concerns. Dr. Randle will reach out to Ginger Redd in the next few weeks to determine next steps.

**Nomination Committee**

Dr. Harp encouraged all senators to remind their departments to elect senators and send the information to Ms. Ingram.

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

Dr. Harp and Dr. Foresman met with the Chancellor and Provost on March 23. Some highlights from this meeting:

* If the COVID-19 spread continues unabated, the worst-case scenario is that the Governor may end up shutting down the system. Though this is not planned as of right now, it is important for institutions to keep this in mind.
* Several memorandums from the UNC System have been circulated (or will be soon). One is dated 3/11/20, and two additional ones are dated 3/17/20. They should be accessible via the university’s official coronavirus website: <https://www.ncat.edu/coronavirus/index.php>

Dr. Harp also summarized some of the key activities and Senate efforts over the past year. He is unsure of the status of the Faculty Assembly Retreat that was scheduled for the summer, but will follow up.

He then opened up the floor for questions/concerns that he and Dr. Foresman can communicate to administration:

* *Concern*: If the university does completely shut down, faculty would like to have sufficient lead time to remove necessary office and laboratory items.
	+ *Response*: Drs. Harp and Foresman will share the need for timely and clear communication and encouraged faculty to request permission from their deans for building or laboratory access.
* *Concern*: If there is eventually a “stay at home” order issued for the state, Senator Dobbins would like to see the university issue a statement of concern to address the mental and emotional wellness of its faculty, staff, and students. During this situation, many groups are experiencing significant stresses that impact job and school performance.
* *Question*: If there is the potential for a complete shut down of the university, will faculty salaries be affected?
	+ *Response*: Dr. Harp will pose this question to administration.
* *Concern*: Senator Morgan expressed her desire for NC A&T to follow UNC system directives in this situation.
* *Question*: Has a decision regarding fall course delivery been made?
	+ *Response*: No decision has been made.
* *Concern*: Senator Dobbins expressed a need for students to understand that faculty availability may be different now than what it was prior to teleworking.
* Question: What should we share with new hires who may be starting to work in the near future or during this COVID-19 situation? Currently there are no official guidelines in place that are aimed to smooth this transition for new hires.
	+ *Response*: Dr. Harp will address this question to administration.

Dr. Pride shared a few things that might be important as Dr. Harp and Dr. Foresman discuss concerns with administration.

* Regarding A&T’s instructions compared to the UNC system – Dr. Pride said that UNC system institutions were given five days to transition to online learning. She encouraged us to question why A&T did not take the full five days for the transition?
* While the virus was escalating, different divisional emergency teams were meeting at A&T. However, there wasn’t one person or division coordinating the dialogue. This made the response less consistent than ideal.

The meeting adjourned at 4:58PM

Dr. Elizabeth Newcomb Hopfer

Secretary