

North Carolina A&T State University

FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES

August 25, 2009

2014 Smith Hall

Senate Members Present: Shearon Brown, Salil Desai, Messiha Saad, Patricia Lynch, Roy Coomans, Jeffrey Parker, Edith Archibald, Janis Oldham, Floyd James, Derick Smith, Brian Sims, Wayne Moore, Tony Graham, Angela Lemons, Craig Rhodes, Zhaoqiong Qin, Elizabeth Barber, Cassandra Plater, Thelma King, Mark Burkey, Jeff Nkonge, Muktha Jost, Patricia Whitfield, Pam Chavis, Linda Callahan

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Linda Florence Callahan at 3:10 p.m.

Moment of Silence

Approval of minutes: August meeting is for planning and organizing and therefore, the minutes will not be approved at this meeting, and will be brought up in the Sept. meeting

Welcome & Introductions

SACS report

Dr. Childress shared with the Faculty Senate the features included in QEP, the futuristic element to SACS with a focus on the improvement of the learning environment or related to student achievement. Faculty, staff, and administrators participated in school sessions and contributed to what the QEP topic should be. Students, alumni, etc. also participated in focus groups, surveys and blogs. A list of areas for student achievement came out of the comprehensive data that was collected from the initial stages of preparing for SACS.

Dr. Childress requested senators to read the handout, visit the website, and take a position on the QEP elements. He would like an endorsement from the Senate at the next faculty senate meeting in September. The focus is on the development of critical thinking skills, which is characterized in the rubric.

The QEP plan proposes to evaluate the critical thinking skills of students using the student's own growth as a comparison and aims to help departments integrate a three-pronged approach (curricular integration, undergraduate research, and integration of globalism) in the assessment of the student. Graduate students are currently not included in the QEP plan, but the QEP committee is seeking input related to the inclusion of graduate students. Possible changes following the adoption of the QEP may include assessment coordinator positions in schools and department to report results, revised syllabi for faculty, plans to remediate low-performing students, etc.

In responding to questions, Dr. Childress said that extensive professional development for faculty, quasi-experimental efforts at the initial years, and standardized institutional assessments may all be part of the outcomes of implementing the QEP.

Several senators, particularly Dr. Oldham, cautioned that the process of implementing QEP be carefully thought through, especially the role of faculty, since even the best ideas often become a burden to faculty because they are added to existing responsibilities without adequate support. Ultimately, this affects student learning and engagement.

Goals and Challenges for the new academic year

Dr. Callahan introduced the topic with a reminder of last year's 'satisfaction' survey of senators. A&T ranked second to last in a national study on faculty morale, and Dr. Callahan encouraged the Senate to make efforts to understand and address the issue of morale on campus. As a result of her sharing of the results from a faculty survey last year with the Board of Trustees, faculty salaries, ranking and comparisons to peer institutions were included as part of the opening presentation at the Faculty Institute.

In order to understand and address the issues bottom up, Dr. Callahan requested that senators get input from their departments on specific factors that would raise faculty morale. Suggestions could range from factors for a more pleasant working environment, changes, improvements, etc. Based on suggestions from faculty

Senators discussed the need for changes in faculty workload and environment, and the critical need for organized faculty advocacy. Dr. Callahan requested that Senators solicit information on at least five factors (what would make a more pleasant working envt? what do faculty think? what would help what needs to change/improved? What would it take to raise faculty morale?) from their departments, and the feedback could serve as the foundation for a plan that could be shared with the Chancellor and other administrators.

Senators also discussed the need for an online platform to disseminate information about the Faculty Senate and the decisions that have been made as a group. One suggestion was to use the existing Blackboard site for senators since the site is already set up, and senators with current emails have access to the site. Dr. Jost and Ms. Plater will collaborate to design the site, and update information.

Other issues related to the lack of administrative support for the Senate were discussed in details by faculty senators, and those present were overwhelmingly in support of providing half-time help for the President Dr. Callahan in addition to office space and course relief. Such supportive measures are a given in other UNC institutions, and senators strongly felt that the lack of support is directly related to low morale among faculty. A practical issue related to lack of administrative support for the Faculty Senate president translates to loss of important records from previous years with each change in leadership.

Dr. Whitfield raised the question of policy changes that are made at the Senate, but failure at the administrative level to implement those decisions and changes. For instance, faculty are not required to enter grades for graduate students based on an earlier decision made in the Senate,

but the policy is not being implemented. Dr. Coomans will follow up on this particular issue and bring information back from the Registrar's Office.

Senators also discussed the role of the Faculty Senate. Does the Senate have bylaws? What are the guidelines for action? Dr. Callahan reminded everyone that while we have a handbook, many of the guidelines may not be clearly articulated. She encourage the handbook committee to revisit these issues and to make recommendations for change.

Dr. Oldham requested that the faculty senate be involved in the assessment of University Studies since several programs are affected by UNST. She insisted that there are several issues with students in her department having to take low level math courses as cluster courses since UNST hasn't addressed those issues.

Dr. Barber raised concerns related to her unit – the interdisciplinary doctoral program in Leadership Studies. She shared that communication was shared with Deans and departments to 'bid' for the doctoral program without any consultation or engagement with the faculty or the director in the program. She encouraged the Faculty Senate to observe the changes being made to the the program, and to support faculty to play a lead in the changes.