

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA**  
**Faculty Senate**

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**Faculty Senate Plenary Meeting**  
**Oct 16, 2024, 3:00-5:00 p.m.**  
**MCOB 265**  
**MINUTES**

Present (In-house): G. Abeynanda, J. Adams, R. Bates, C. Baughn, M. Black, G. Borchert, C. Brock, G. Brower, W. Cutchen, C. Davidson, T. Davis, B. Dzwonkowski, L. Fleck, Y. Getch, R. Godang, C. Hauff, P. Henning, Y. Huang, G. Hudson, Z. Khan, B. Merritt, M. Migaud, S. Ni Chadhain, A. Pavelescu, B. Rabideau, J. Richardson, J. Robertson, A. Shea, A. Stenson, D. Streeter, V. Tate, E. ter Horst, L. Vrana, S. Walker, C. Wassenaar, B. Webb, and C. Wu.

Present (Zoom): S. Davis, A. Donaldson, J. Huang, A. Marass, T. McDonald, D. Meola, J. Miller, K. Pancione, C. Rawlinson, R. Thomas, and D. Turnipseed.

Excused: J. Bunch, J. Ellzie, S. Ferguson, C. Holliday, N. Holliday, M. Lin, B. Minton, T. O'Connor, J. Pfleeger, C. Shaw, J. Swofford, and C. Thompson.

Unexcused: Y. Coronado, C. Gavrilita, W. Kilgo, C. Raczkowski, M. Sehgal, and A. Williams.

Guests: J. Estis (Speaker), C. Selwyn (Parliamentarian), T. Cole.

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm with President Christina Wassenaar, presiding and Vice President Bret Webb, co-presiding. Quorum was met.

**I. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS:**

Approval of Minutes: Approved by a majority of quorum.

Approval of Agenda: Approved, as amended, by a majority of quorum.

Presentation: Julie Estis (Exec. Dir., Academic Enhancement) gave an update on the LevelUP Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

- Promotion video with an overview of LevelUP – a campus-wide initiative aimed at preparing students for what comes next after graduation.
- The project started in 2020 with the initial planning and was instituted in 2021 as we moved toward our SAC COC accreditation site visit in 2023.

- It started with determining an area of focus for the QEP, developed a logic model to outline what LevelUP would be about the aims for the project, and how we would measure it.
- The first year of implementation and development was in the 2023/2024 academic year. This included developing all of the learning resources and materials for faculty to use in their courses.
- The QEP is a continuous improvement process, rather than a research model where you would have on plan until it is completed.
- We are currently in year 2 of implementation of a 5-year cycle, allowing for engaging others in this work and continuing the implementation, support, assessment, and revision for the process.
- Dr. Michelle Hale is the Project Manager who will help faculty with the materials to be embedded within their courses and support them as they implement the LevelUP activities.
- 100% of all colleges were involved in the first year of LevelUP, with 20 of our academic programs implementing our Ready, Set, Go student learning activities.
- The project is grounding a lot of their work in those Nace career readiness competencies that employers value the most.
- The student learning activities follow a Ready, Set, Go framework. The models that have been developed so far are available on Canvas, and are ready for faculty to plug them into their courses.

President's Report [Full report distributed]:

- Christina requested assistance from the Senate on finding the appropriate faculty to serve on the Professional Development (PD) committee. In her President's Report there is a link to a nominate form that interested volunteers can self-nominate or suggest someone else for the committee or possible working groups.

**II. OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Motion to update the Faculty Senate Bylaws regarding Standing Committees—Sections 3.1.1-3.1.2 & 3.2.1.-3.2.8.**

A motion was made by J. Adams and seconded by C. Donaldson to approve the corrected version of the Bylaws regarding Sections 3—Standing Committees.

There was no further discussion on the motion. Motion was passed by 47 ayes, zero nays, and no abstentions.

**III. COMMITTEES REPORTS:**

Standing Committees

- Evaluation (Davidson) *[Full report distributed]*
- Faculty Development & Mentoring (Black)
  - MéPLE will have a program by Don Davis (Georgia State U.) who specializes in positive psychiatry. He has a lab called the Humility and the Advancement of Positive Psychology Lab (i.e. HAPPY Lab).
- Faculty Salaries & Benefits (Pavelescu)
  - Andrei reminded the senators that the Benefits Open Enrollment ends soon. There are some web links that would provide helpful information.
- Research & Creative Activities (Migaud) *[Full report distributed]*
- Sustainability & Environmental Quality (Turnipseed) *[Full report distributed]*
- Teaching, Learning, & Technology (Vrana) *[Full report distributed]*
  - TL&T Com., Evaluation Com., and FD&M Com. have all been working together to respond to the University's *ad hoc* Committee of Teaching Effectiveness (AHETEC) with suggestions and recommendations for how we might expand on other metrics in addition to student perceptions of instruction. The committees would like any feedback you may want to give.
  - Sinead requested that the original AHETEC report be recirculated to the faculty.
  - Bret added that a distillment of the comments from various groups be included.
  - Christina indicated that there are three groups with some others weighting in with their list of concerns so it would be useful if all of the documents would be pulled together for everybody's examination. The Chairs Professional Development program that is being developed should be included in the discussion.
- University Planning & Development (Walker) – no report.
- University Policies & Handbook (Ní Chadhain) – no report.

#### Caucus Leaders

- Nursing (R. Thomas) – the Nursing caucus met a couple of weeks ago. The topics of discussion included:
  - The need to standardize promotion and tenure evaluations methods
  - Parking issues
  - Unaccounted work in their teaching load that is uncredited and unpaid

#### University Committees –

- General Education Committee (Sinead) – They are educating themselves on various general education models. No radical overhauls are planned. They are starting with defining “what is general education”.
- Sustainability Committee (Christina) – the new director of the program, Dr. Steven Scyphers (Marine Sciences) will be working on getting AASHE certification for the university. There is a push to include sustainability in course syllabi.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

- Proposal to change the Faculty Senate Bylaws [Section 4.1] to add summer meetings (June and July) and possible year end (December) as Zoom-only meetings to conduct to address extraordinary issues.
  - There are three months out of the year when we may need to conduct business but do not have meetings scheduled.
  - The purpose of these meetings would be to vote on issues that are important to keep the process moving along.
  - There would be no need for a full plenary meeting, with guest speakers or committee reports.
  - There is an “efficient exchange of policy procedures” document that governs how policy is exchanged between Faculty Senate and the Council of Academic Deans. Because there are three months out of the year where the Senate does not meet, we cannot put timelines/deadlines in the policy.
  - The proposal is for these meetings to be optional-as-needed meetings that would be virtual in attendance.
  - If the proposal were to pass, it would mean that CAD would need to work on our proposals in a timely manner (as defined in the “efficient exchange of policy procedures”).
  - Concern that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of December might fall within the closure of the university, but a review of past years, this has never happened.
  - One issue is those faculty on a 9-month contract cannot be required to participate during the summer months when they are off contract.

#### **V. MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- American Heart Association’s Heart Walk – Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> we will meet around 8 am, at the TRP Building III parking lot 902, with the walk starting at 9:00. The Faculty Senate has a team so everyone is welcome to join and walk together. We will be walking on the Glen Sebastian Nature Trail. There are currently 20 teams representing the University, with the top team (J Bonner) meeting their \$2,500 goal. The Senate team is, at the time of this meeting, in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. There are a number of activities already scheduled for the day – USA Day and home football game.
- SB 129 Discussion Group – Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>.

- Research Round Table @ Huddle – Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Faculty Club. The purpose is to have discussion on research topics and networking activity. There will be free food while drinks will be available for purchase.
- Andrei reminded us that the health enrollment period is currently underway. There is a tool where you can compare the plans.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm

Minutes submitted by Vicki Tate, Faculty Senate Secretary