# FACULTY SENATE MEETING

**April 15, 2025**

**1008 Nursing**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Sharla Biefeld, Sheila Black, Serena Blount, Rachel Cajigas, Ibrahim Cemen, Rona Donahoe, Ellary Draper, John Giggi, Jessica Goethals, Kim Lackey, Matt LaFevor, Jeff Lozier, William Martin, Tricia McElroy, JoAnne Payne, Margaret Peacock, Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley, Laura Rubio, Doris Sung, Edith Szanto, Matthew Valasik, Laura Erin Watley, Kelsey West, Thejesh Bandi, Craig Cummings, Gayle Faught, Susan Williams, Greg Cottrell, Matthew Hudnall, Tom Lopez, Jackson Mills, Amy Smith, Anneliese Bolland, Ch’Ree Essary, Dimitrios Latisi, Bharat Mehra, Cynthia Peacock, Mallory Scogin, Andrea Wright, R. Miller Wright, Nirmala Erevelles, James Hardin, Cailin Kerch, Lauren McNeill, John Petrovic, Firat Soylu, Stacy Hughey Surman, David Walker, Libba Woodruff, Kayley MacDonald, Klaus van Benthem, Thang Dao, Jamie Harris, Xiaoyan Hong, Qiang Huang, Mark Weaver, Weihua Su, Darren Surman, Stephen Compston, Babs Davis, Jeri Zemke, Clare Ryan, Anil Mujumdar, Brian Clark, Lindsey Lowry, Kristi Acker, Shameka Cody, Abby Horton, Jessica Johnson, Kim Parker, Connar Franklin, Brenda Smith, Carrie Turner, Robert Riter

**Absent with an Alternate:** Christy Adams/Tyler Walker, Carla Atkinson/Michael McKain, Jacob Humphries/Sophia Kennedy, Lisle Hites, Alison Hooper/Elroy Alguiar, Patrick Kung/Keith Williams, Benjamin McMichael/Luke Herrine

**Absent:** Rebecca Allen, Stacy Alley, Paulo Araujo, Jonathan Cumberland, Xavier Granja, Matthew Minicucci, Gina Stamm, Diane Tober, Rebecca Totten, Solodad Sanchez Valdes, Karen Epermanis, Sree Patiballa, Blake Berryhill, Shinae Choi

Guest: Alyson Holliday

**Guest:** Charlie Taylor, Vice Chancellor of External Affairs talked about the current legislative environment. The topics discussed were challenges in Higher Education, Federal actions and investigations, funding and budget concerns, State-level legislative developments, addressing First Amendment and academic freedom, reliable sources of information for faculty, and impact of Federal and State policies on employment and funding.

### Roll Call/Quorum Check – Quorum confirmed.

### Approval / Correction of the Minutes for March 18, 2025

### Minutes from March 18, 2025, were reviewed and approved, with minor corrections. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes with corrections: Approved unanimously.

### Committee Assignments and Co-Chairs – (*Matthew Hudnall*)

* It was noted that committee assignments were distributed via email on Friday, April 11th. The assignments were based on committee preference, balance, and tenure. Co-chairs for various committees were determined during the Faculty Senate meeting.
* A motion was made and seconded to approve the committee assignments. The motion passed.
* Committees met in separate groups and elected co-chairs for each committee.
* **Committee Co-Chairs**:
* **Academic Affairs**: Babs Davis and Dona Donahoe
* **Community & Legislative Affairs**: JoAnne Payne and Katie Grayson
* **Opportunities, Intercultural Connections, and Success**: Tricia McElroy and Anil Mujumdar
* **Faculty Life**: Darren Surman and Stacey Hughey Surman
* **Faculty & Senate Governance**: Ruth Ann Hall and Jeri Zemke
* **Financial Affairs**: Anneliese Bolland and Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley
* **Information Technology & Strategic Communications**: Connor Franklin and Patrick Kung
* **Student Life**: Cailin Kerch and Carrie Turner

### President’s Report (*Matthew Hudnall*)

* **Discussion of A Resolution Reiterating a Defense of Academic Freedom**
* The resolution, which addresses issues related to SB 129, was introduced and discussed.
* Suggestions were made to remove references to the “System” and revise certain sections. It was noted that there is a gap between the resolution’s intent and its specific actions.
* A motion was made to postpone the vote on the resolution until August. This motion was made to allow new senators to discuss the resolution with their constituents. It was noted that there needed to be more discussion before a vote is made.
* Another motion was made that post-discussion a vote be taken by secret ballot to postpone the vote on the resolution until August.
* After extensive discussion, changes were made to the resolution that was presented, and a motion was made and seconded, to vote on the resolution via secret ballot. It was noted that “abstains” are counted as “no” votes and that only senators were allowed to vote, unless an alternate was attending as a stand-in for an absent senator.
* The resolution passed with .

### VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT – (*Serena Blount*)

* Renewable Contract Faculty: Discussion on renewal contract faculty promotions, research FTE, and guidelines, with concerns about exploitation and lack of clear guidance.
* It was noted that the Provost’s baseline for research FTE for renewable contract professors is reportedly 2.5%, contrary to previous statements of 10%.
* The renewable contract task force sent a letter to Lesley Reid with requests regarding promotions, including respecting employee protections and limiting scholarship, research, and creative activity ranges.
* A request was made for an interdisciplinary group to review guidelines from across the University to ensure equitability. A request was also made for Faculty Handbook alignment, and it appears that this semester, promotions at the Provost level are in alignment with Faculty Handbook provisions and restrictions.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT** – (*Kim Parker*)

* Working on getting lists updated and making sure the information is correct. Senators and Alternates who need changes, should email if you haven’t already. Once the list are updated and information is correct, updated copies will be sent to everyone.

**Senate Committee Reports:**

**Community and Legislative Affairs** (*Katie Grayson & John Giggie)*

* The April 28th meeting scheduled with Legislators has been indefinitely postponed. There is a lunch scheduled for April 18th with the Student Care and Well-Being Office for 10 of their employees.

**Academic Affairs** – (*Rona Donahoe & Babs Davis*

* A new survey regarding plus/minus grading was sent to graduate students in November, with the majority of those who responded to the survey favoring the option. The Graduate Council voted against adopting plus/minus grading with a reported vote of 21 against and 9 in favor. It was a disappointment to have the Graduate Council not adopt plus/minus after the survey results showed the majority of graduate students were in favor of plus/minus grading.

**Student Life –** (*Carrie Turner & Dale Dickinson*)

* Discussion on support for international students, focusing on visa issues and available resources.
* Met with Teresa Wise and Charter Morris. They are checking twice a day to see if visas are expiring and then reaching out to students who have expiring visas. There are open office hours and one-on-one appointments available for students who have questions.

**Research and Service** (*Natasha Dimova & Shreyas Rao*)

* + No report.

**Faculty Life** – (*Kim Colburn & Stacy Hughey Surman*)

* No report.

**IT and Strategic Communications** – (*Patrick Kung and Connar Franklin*)

* Summer and Fall is the last chance to voluntarily operate Blackboard Ultra.

**Financial Affairs** – (*Shane Stinson & Aislinn O’Donohoe Riley*)

* + No report.

**Faculty and Senate Governance – (***Jeri Zemke & Ruth Ann Hall*)

* Two people were nominated/self-nominated for the Grievance and Mediation Committee. Please look at the QR Code and read through the two essays. You can vote “yes,” “no,” or “abstain.” The QR Code will also be emailed out to everyone on April 16th.

**Opportunities, Intercultural Connections, and Success** – (*Anil Mujumdar & Sheila Black*)

* It was noted that the committee worked on a revision of the resolution that was presented but received no response from the author(s) of the original resolution, so it was not presented.

**Reports from Other Committees:**

* **Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee** (*Rona Donahoe*)
	+ Meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 17th.
* Compliance Committee (Babs Davis)
	+ No report.

**Old Business**

* A question was asked about returning to the discussion on Principles of Community. President Hudnall noted that this would be discussed again at the August 2025 meeting.

**New Business**

* It was asked if OAA and the Deans would reconsider TT requirements regarding grants, given the current situation. This is especially critical for TT faculty whose focus has been on DEI issues. Would we reconsider these requirements like we did during COVID? M. Hudnall noted that was a great point and asked that this be pushed to OAA to see, because some disciplines may be more impacted than others.

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for August 19th.

Meeting Adjourned