

University Faculty Meeting

Friday, November 3, 2023

Agenda:

1. Comments from President Chris Roellke
2. Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp
3. Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust
4. Discussion of the Critical Thinking GLO and Senior Project (UGEC members Tom Vogel, Harry Price, Mayhill Fowler, Christopher Bell, Amy Smith, John Rasp, Anthony Hose, Melissa Parks, and Megan O'Neill)
5. Update from the Generative AI Task Force (Josh Eckroth and Megan O'Neill)

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 by Provost Skomp.

Provost Skomp gave a brief welcome and then turned the floor over to President Roellke.

1. Comments from President Chris Roellke

President Roellke opened with a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson: “What has become clear to you since we last met?” He then shared his thoughts in response to that question. Stetson University, and universities around the nation, face a very challenging geo-political context. President Roellke continues to be impressed with Stetson’s ability to engage with students not only despite this context, but also to create dialogue about it. He is grateful to be a part of the Stetson University community, especially as Stetson continues to move forward together.

The last few days have been filled with important events and discussions about Stetson’s present and future trajectory, including a Board of Trustees meeting, Stetson’s 140th anniversary celebration, and the opening of the new Advocacy Institute at the College of Law.

President Roellke thanked faculty for their participation in and attendance at the recent admissions open houses on the DeLand campus. He also thanked Josh Rust for the Senate Chair Newsletter and encouraged everyone to read it.

President Roellke then provided an update from the Board of Trustees meetings. Board committees have been reduced in number to 5, and the primary committees include several faculty representatives. The Board of Trustees passed a number of resolutions, including ADA accessibility construction projects and investments in Residential Living and Learning. The timeline for these projects has not yet been finalized, since fundraising for the approved projects is still in progress.

2. Comments from Provost Elizabeth Skomp (12:10)

Provost Skomp summarized her experiences listening and learning across colleges, schools, and the duPont-Ball Library. She has met with many committees and faculty leaders and has

observed excellent work in progress. After thanking the faculty for all of their work, she reviewed progress on critical priorities.

The first critical priority is expanding opportunities for experiential learning, embodied most prominently by the 3/2+1 initiative. The second critical priority is strengthening the collaboration between DeLand and the College of Law campuses. There has been much excitement on this priority across the University. While pre-law is an evident area of focus for connecting the two campuses, there is considerable potential for collaboration across all schools. The third critical priority is to streamline transfer pathways and student experience, and the Faculty Admissions Committee is working on this topic. The fourth is an integrated approach to academics and career, a strategic direction for Career and Academic Success that is underway with new projects, new programs, and increased employee takeovers on the DeLand campus. The fifth critical priority is to ensure a sustainable context for grantseeking through creating and maintain appropriate infrastructure. The last two critical priorities Provost Skomp shared are fostering connections across colleges and areas within Stetson and continuing to center diversity, equity, and inclusion. She shared that she feels much excitement about Stetson's direction and potential.

Provost Skomp shared updates on the searches for the Dean of the duPont-Ball Library and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences: both are underway and actively recruiting. The full job postings for both positions are on the Stetson University website. Several candidates have expressed concern about Florida but have responded positively to Stetson's values. The search for Stetson's next Registrar has ended, and Jamie Vanderlip has been selected for the position.

Lastly, Provost Skomp shared excitement for her upcoming CIC Chief Academic Officers' conference in Tampa. She is excited to learn and hear from other provosts across the nation and share information with colleagues about the good work that is taking place at Stetson.

3. Comments from Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust (12:22)

Chair Rust shared a brief overview of his impressions from the Board of Trustees meetings. He had many short but fascinating conversations about a variety of topics—including philosophical and theoretical ideas—with the members of the Board. He believes that our Trustees chose to serve on *our* Board because they love Stetson University and Stetson's values. Chair Rust also shared that he was deeply struck with how serious the Board is taking our financial and enrollment challenges. Our Board members want the best for our students and are looking for ways to engage with our students. He also stated that the 3-2 +1 initiative can help to address the enrollment challenge we are facing. It will differentiate Stetson University from other colleges and universities, and it will help to attract more students. Chair Rust ended by stating that the Stetson University faculty stand with the Board in facing this enrollment challenge and implementing the changes needed to fix it.

4. Discussion of the Critical Thinking GLO and Senior Project (UGEC members Tom Vogel, Harry Price, Mayhill Fowler, Christopher Bell, Amy Smith, John Rasp, Anthony Hose, Melissa Parks, and Megan O'Neill) (12:30)

Tom Vogel, Chair of UGEC, began by reviewing the assessment calendar and explaining how assessments under UGEC work. There are 13 GLOs that are assessed; one is handled through language placement testing, and the remaining 12 are handled by faculty. Typically, members of UGEC volunteer for those faculty-led assessments, but they are not limited to UGEC members. The assessments follow a 3-year cycle, and in 2023-24 integrative learning, values, speaking, and critical thinking will be assessed.

UGEC Chair Vogel then explained the proposal to use senior research/capstone projects for the critical thinking assessment. A random sample of students from across all schools would be selected. Two faculty from each department of the students selected would be chosen to conduct the assessment. Those faculty would then assess the project based on the GLO rubric. This change, if adopted, would situate critical thinking assessment within senior research on a permanent basis.

In response to a question about how other SACS schools evaluate critical thinking, Vogel explained that there is a range in what peers do. Stetson is more rigorous than our peer institutions in terms of assessment, but there are a number of possible ways to assess critical thinking.

In response to questions about the benchmarking we use for critical thinking and whether we are looking for an increase or change in critical thinking, Vogel explained that there is no delta assessed. It is a snapshot intended to show whether our courses meet standards for learning critical thinking. The general success rate is given based on the rubric, not a change in student comprehension. It is a static, not dynamic, measure.

Vogel explained that the proposed timetable should be for a cumulative fall/spring project, and no weight will be given to one semester over the other. He then reviewed the critical thinking rubric and stressed that faculty controls the rubrics; they can be changed if needed to fit what we are looking to assess. UGEC has been giving careful consideration to the best location for the assessment of critical thinking. JSEM is currently used for integrated learning, values, and critical thinking. JSEM and FSEM are used greatly for assessment, which is why adding a source such as senior projects would be valuable.

In response to a request for additional clarification about whether we are tracking learning gains or assessment of learning, Vogel explained that the assessments are meant to be static measures of whether students are learning critical thinking, not tracking how much they are learning.

Faculty asked why critical thinking needs to be assessed through one specific course, and one expressed a concern that critical thinking is often spread out across programs and can be difficult to assess outside of the faculty in a given program. Vogel explained that it is easiest to track through a single course, as is done with the integrated learning assessment in JSEM. He also clarified that faculty in a student's program would conduct the assessment.

In response to an observation that the current critical thinking rubric is oriented to Arts and Sciences, and that disciplines may need an edited rubric, Vogel agreed and stated that the rubric

can be altered to fit all colleges and schools. Lastly, he confirmed that conversation will continue within the committee.

5. Update from the Generative AI Task Force (Josh Eckroth and Megan O'Neill)

Co-chair Josh Eckroth introduced the members of the Generative AI task force and the charge provided by Provost Skomp. The process to gather information began with a faculty survey (71 respondents) that revealed most respondents are unsure about AI/ChatGPT. A student survey followed.

The task force is working on several syllabus statements, as there is not a single broad statement that will be applicable to everyone. Eckroth provided some suggestions for what a syllabus statement should include; for instance, students need to know if AI detection software will be used on assignments.

Co-chair Megan O'Neill shared information about considerations for a university policy. A university-level statement should direct questions related to a course-specific policy to each faculty member. Faculty are encouraged to contact Professors Eckroth and O'Neill with any questions or input.

Provost Skomp thanked everyone for their good work and concluded the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20.