

University Faculty Meeting

Friday, September 1, 2023

Agenda:

1. Welcome by Provost Elizabeth Skomp
2. Remarks by President Chris Roellke
3. Remarks by Provost Elizabeth Skomp
4. Remarks by Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust
5. Time Reserved for Announcements and Questions

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m.

1. Opening Remarks and Welcome (Provost Skomp)

Provost Skomp provided a brief introduction and reviewed the agenda for today's meeting.

2. Remarks from the President (Chris Roellke) 12:11

President Roellke welcomed all faculty to our first faculty meeting of the 2023-24 academic year. He thanked the faculty for the great turnout at the opening convocation on August 23 and made note of the keynote speaker, Board Chair Steven Alexander. Mr. Alexander gave an incredibly authentic and moving address that resonated deeply with our community.

President Roellke then provided remarks about the newly renovated Chaudoin Hall (originally constructed in 1892), which opened on budget (and nearly on time). Student housing renovations are an increasingly important part of our business model and certainly vital to student retention and success.

The College of Law continues to thrive with the grand opening of the Advocacy Institute this fall. This year the College of Law has jumped over 30 spots in the rankings of US News and World Report to break into the top 100 in the nation; in addition, the College of Law holds the top rank nationally for Trial Advocacy.

Following Convocation last week was the ribbon-cutting for the new home of our Cross Cultural Center at 145 E. Michigan Avenue. Our students, coming to us from a wide range of backgrounds, will activate the space to promote dialogue across difference and a vital sense of belonging, and to boldly reaffirm Stetson's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

President Roellke reflected on his first three years of service at Stetson University and outlined some challenges facing higher education today. The initial themes in the earliest parts of his presidency continue to underpin our approach at Stetson: *kindness, empathy and shared ownership*.

Enrollment, including net tuition revenue at the undergraduate level, continues to be our most pressing challenge and opportunity. President Roellke stated that he is delighted that our new Senior VP for Enrollment and Marketing, Jeffery Gates, is now part of the Stetson family. Jeff will need our help in facilitating clear and attainable curricular pathways both for First Time in College Students and for our highly capable transfer students. Despite the enrollment challenges

in terms of overall numbers, there is promising data on the quality of the students that we are enrolling.

President Roellke concluded his remarks by sharing an excerpt from a letter he received from a high school senior—McKenna Hirten from Orlando, Florida.

3. Remarks by Provost Elizabeth Skomp (12:28)

Provost Skomp began by acknowledging the recent storm and its impact on our community. She expressed support for those affected by the storm and asked faculty to begin planning in the event that another storm impacts our campus.

Provost Skomp explained that our final enrollment numbers for the fall semester will be provided following September 6 (census date).

Provost Skomp welcomed the 24 new full-time faculty members who are joining (or transitioning into a new role) at Stetson. She encouraged all faculty to create connections with faculty across colleges and schools. In addition, faculty who were recently awarded tenure and promotion and promoted to the rank of professor were recognized. Interim Dean David Hill and Interim Director Debbi Dinkins were recognized for their respective leadership roles in the College of Arts and Sciences and the duPont Ball Library. Lastly, Ben Barros was recognized as the new dean of the College of Law.

Provost Skomp next outlined the format for this year's university faculty meetings. The year's first and final meetings will take place in person, while the remaining meetings will be conducted on Zoom. Two meetings in April have been designated for discussion of matters related to finance and faculty compensation.

Provost Skomp then outlined the key academic affairs priorities for the 2023-2024 academic year.

- Strengthen connections and collaborations between the DeLand campus with the College of Law.
- A focus on expanding opportunities for experiential and integrative learning.
- Examining the student academic experience and working where possible to streamline the transfer student experience.
- Strengthen links between academic areas and Career and Professional Development.
- Ensure a more sustainable context for seeking grants.
- Continue to foster and develop collaboration among university institutes and centers.
- Continue efforts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Provost Skomp then provided some updates related to faculty development. There will be two new faculty development awards that are made possible by the generosity of two members of our Board of Trustees. The Professional Development Committee chair, Roslyn Crowder, will be communicating information related to pre-tenure faculty awards. Information about a second competition for funding for student/faculty collaborative research will be circulated shortly, and deadlines for both applications will be communicated later this fall.

Three special committees will be convened this year to make progress on (or enact) areas of greatest strategic importance:

- Steering committee for the 3:2+1 initiative.
- Streamlining and revising the Faculty Annual Review (FAR)
- One-semester working group on Generative AI

The Faculty Admissions Committee will continue their work this year, with special attention to the transfer policy.

As a new cycle of faculty hiring has begun, Provost Skomp thanked all faculty who will serve on a search committee this year. She explained that Stetson will be conducting dean searches for the duPont-Ball Library and the College of Arts and Sciences. Lastly, a search is underway for a new University Registrar to succeed Terri Richards upon her retirement.

In closing, Provost Skomp explained that she and Dr. Rust have established regular meetings to encourage a collaborative partnership.

4. Remarks by Faculty Senate Chair Josh Rust (12:56)

Dr. Rust began his comments by noting his background in Social Ontology and explaining his interest in the possibility of collective action: transforming a group of “I’s” into a “we” that is capable of acting toward a unified goal. This is challenging when a group of constituents do not know each other and have different or conflicting agendas. Dr. Rust encouraged everyone to be an example to our students by working together in shared governance. Dr. Rust then drew attention to Stetson’s 2023 Strategic Priorities framework (Forward Together).

Dr. Rust announced the following areas of primary focus for the faculty senate in 2023-24:

- The collaborative work that will be done on the 3:2+1 initiative.
- The FAR task force
- Generative AI
- Working with the Admissions Committee to review the transfer student admissions process.
- The Faculty Welfare Committee (Parental Leave Policy for both faculty and staff)
- Senate Faculty Finance Committee
- Policy and Procedures Committee

Dr. Rust concluded by explaining that he would like to meet with all department chairs.

5. Time Reserved for Announcements and Questions (1:02)

Roslyn Crowder provided additional information related to pre-tenure faculty awards.

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.